

**THE SOCIAL CONTRACT PODCAST:
SEASON 2 EPISODE 7
GEORGIE & GIGI
MEET
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON**

TAVIA:

Hello everyone!

You're listening to Season 2 of the award-winning podcast The Social Contract.

I'm Tavia.

GEORGE:

I'm George.

CLEO:

I'm CLEO.

MAYA:

And I'm Maya. Welcome to this episode of the Social Contract—the new way to Saturday!

“There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.”

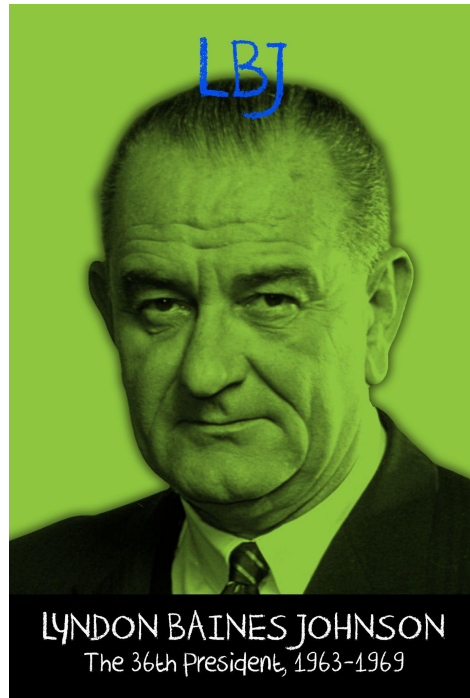
That's a quote from President Lyndon Baines Johnson (but we can call him LBJ for short!).

TAVIA:

Thanks Maya, and Happy Summer, everyone! I hope you're having fun, staying safe, and, of course, enjoying The Social Contract podcast!

In this season, we follow ten-year-old BFFs Georgie and Gigi on their adventures traveling through time on a magical skateboard as they encounter U.S. presidents throughout history.

In this episode, we meet President Lyndon Baines Johnson—“LBJ” for short—who became our 36th president after his predecessor JFK was assassinated.



But first, I wanted to share some fun news. The Social Contract podcast has tapped writer-producer Tatiana St. Phard to serve as production supervisor. Yay! Let’s say a quick hello:

Tatiana, welcome. It is so great to have you here. I'm so glad to see your smiling face, and I'm sorry that our listeners can't see your beautiful smiling face right now, but I'm happy to get to talk to you. And I'm wondering what drew you to this *Presidential Conversations/Social Contract* universe that George and CLEO created. How did you get here?

TATIANA ST. PHARD:

I'm a mom, and I am working on my own program for STEM and youth education, and this was so exciting to me, because I think that history is one of those things that we don't talk enough about. And for us to have a book that led to a podcast about conversations with presidents and these cool characters, I was like, yeah, please sign me up.

TAVIA:

I love that. I love that. Now, you are both on the production side and you are on the talent side. You've narrated another MarCOMM award-winning podcast *Crossing the Line*, and along with me(!), you performed as part of an all- star audio dramatization for Wally Lamb's best selling novel, *I'll Take You There*. Which side of the mic do you prefer? I love both. But do you have a preference?

TATIANA ST. PHARD:

I mean, I love both. I also love being on camera. I love anything that allows me to be creative and use my energy. The voiceover stuff is newer. I've been acting since '96, and so it's just another part of me that I was able to bring forth. And to be able to participate in such incredible projects like *Crossing the Line*. And Wally Lamb, I was a fan before I got an opportunity to work on the audio dramatization. So it's all a dream. I will do whatever I need to do to be a part of these kinds of projects in these kinds of worlds. Behind the camera, in front of the camera, in front of the mic, behind the mic. Just yes. Sign me up.

TAVIA:

Yes, I love it. I love it. I understand that you are developing a feature film called *Christmas Crossing*, which you wrote, and so it's amazing that you're also a writer. And it was just named semi-finalist in the Stage 32 Family-Friendly screenwriting contest. Congratulations. That's so, so cool. I want to share the logline with our listeners: *Christmas Crossing follows Briana, an inquisitive African American 11 year-old who suspects that her ancestor was a free soldier at George Washington's crossing of the Delaware. Briana makes it her mission to find proof of that and to convince a surly historian to let her join the annual reenactment of Washington's crossing the Delaware.* So, correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds to me like Briana would definitely be friends with Georgie and Gigi. And this is really synergistic! It really sounds like these two stories have a lot in common. Tell us a little bit about *Christmas Crossing*.

TATIANA ST. PHARD:

Yeah, it's crazy. The three kids would have definitely been causing some good trouble in the world that they were in. *Christmas Crossing* - I as an adult went to Washington's crossing and had never heard the story that there were free Black soldiers that were there at the crossing with Washington and thought, why? Why is this not part of our education? Why is this not part of what we've learned? And then I thought, how cool would it be for someone to come on a school field trip and then find out that perhaps their ancestor was a part of this? And then on December 11 of the past year, I actually went to go see a rehearsal of the crossing. And it's cool, and there's reenactors. So I love this story, I love this family. It's a strong Black family that loves each other, and a mom that's going back to work, and so all these things that I think are really relevant to today but tied to history in a way that I think George and CLEO have done with *Presidential Conversations for Kids* and and this podcast.

TAVIA:

Well, that's so inspiring. I love that you are incorporating that real-life history into your screenplay. I can't wait to see it when it comes out, when you realize this vision. And you are the perfect partner for this podcast, so I'm so glad to talk to you today. I'm so glad that you're a part of this team that we have, bringing *Presidential Conversations for Kids* to kids!

TATIANA ST. PHARD:

Thank you so much. It has been a joy and an honor to be part of this team, and I'm so inspired and love contributing to this and helping these stories get out into the world. So, thank you.

TAVIA:

Tatiana St. Phard, everyone!

Now, back to LBJ, who served as president from 1963 to 1969. Before that he was a member of Congress and a United States senator from Texas—and of course, Kennedy's vice president. In this episode, Georgie and Gigi befriend not only LBJ but also his wife, who was known as Lady Bird. I love how Lady Bird Johnson plays such an active role in this episode – *and* in CLEO's beautiful art – just as she had as First Lady.

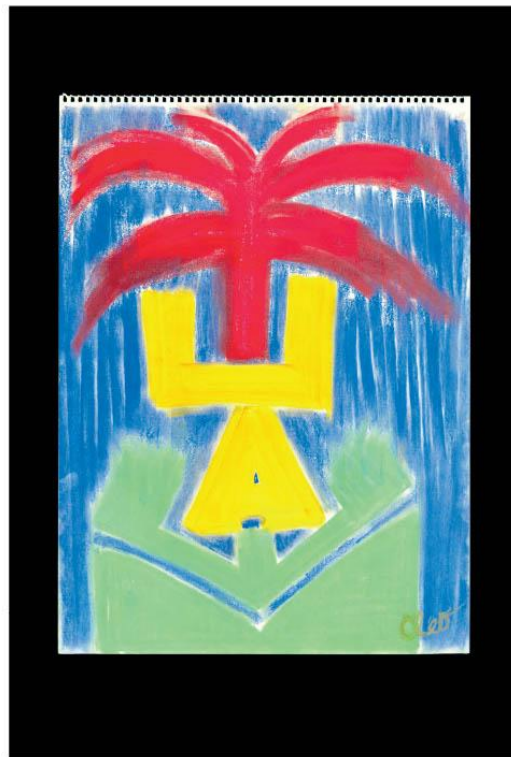
Passing it over to you, CLEO...

CLEO:

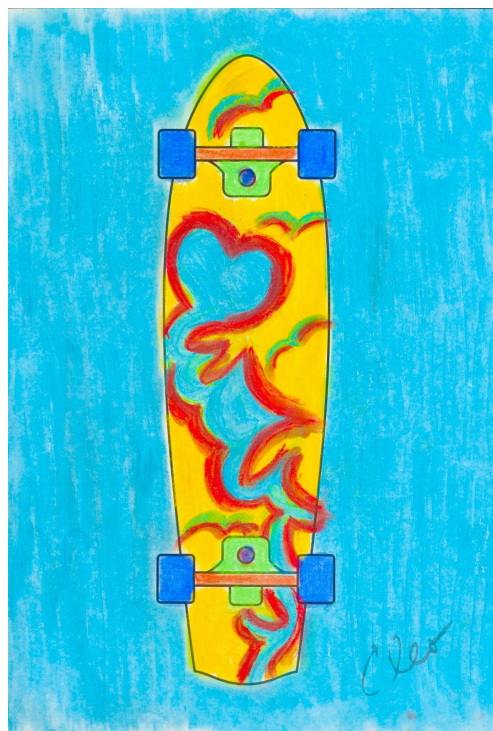
Thanks, Tavia.

In honor of Lady Bird Johnson and all she did to beautify our country, I created an entire word art series called BEAUTY.

In the first two pieces, I used florals in vibrant colors to spell BEAUTY.



I also designed two BEAUTY-themed skateboards.



Finally, in honor of the Voting Rights Act, one of the first chalk pastels I created was a Word Art piece called VOTE.



TAVIA:

We're getting *a lot* of Word Art by CLEO this episode! Lucky us. As a reminder, illustrated transcripts can be viewed and downloaded at [myTSCpodcast dot com](http://myTSCpodcast.com). And you're always welcome to discover CLEO's Word Art and more at [TheArtistCleo dot com](http://TheArtistCleo.com).

Stephen, take it away!

STEPHEN:

Georgie and Gigi found themselves back in the present day, standing outside Apparition Skateboards, a store in Austin, Texas.

Gigi looked up and read the street sign with an exaggerated Texan twang, "Guadalupe Street."

An expert mimic who quickly picked up accents of all kinds, Gigi learned her South Texas accent from her next-door neighbor, Mrs. Mariette, who hailed from San Antonio.

"It's the first time on this adventure that everybody is dressed like us!" said Georgie. "And look,

a 7-Eleven! Score!”

“Oh, I know,” said Gigi excitedly. “Let’s check out this super cool-looking skate shop, then go get Slurpees!”

“Not so fast now,” a voice said. Out of nowhere, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, otherwise known as LBJ, appeared and introduced himself. “Howdy, young people!”

The two G’s gazed up at the tall Texan in a 10-gallon hat.

“Y’all were taking long enough to get to me, and I ain’t a patient man,” the 36th president told them. “Now, I don’t have a magical skateboard, but I do have a train that some folks say is magic. It’s called the Lady Bird Special.”

“What’s a Lady Bird Special?” asked Georgie. “It sounds like something on a diner menu.”

“Nooooo siree,” said Johnson. “Lady Bird is my wife, the finest first lady in history, I’d say.”

“What kind of name is Lady Bird?” asked Gigi.

“Her given name is Claudia, but everybody calls her Lady Bird, and it suits her just fine,” replied LBJ. “Now, how about we skedaddle out of this skateboard situation. We’ve got a train to catch.”

“A *magic* train,” Georgie added.

“What makes it magical, Mr. LBJ—I mean, Mr. President?” asked Gigi.

“Y’all will see,” Johnson replied with a smile.

And just like that, the two G’s and LBJ were aboard the Lady Bird Special—the 19-car train that had carried Lady Bird Johnson on a four-day whistle-stop tour on behalf of her husband’s presidential campaign in 1964.

As the train chugged along, Georgie and Gigi gazed out the windows and marveled at the breathtaking scenery.

“Aren’t those just the prettiest wildflowers and forests you could imagine, straight out of a fairytale. Why, even the frogs are mighty handsome. That’s what Lady Bird made her mission when we were in the White House—the beautification of America! In fact, it was called the Beautification Project.”

“Aw, your wife sounds amazing,” said Gigi. “I wish we could meet her, too.”

“Say no more, children,” said Lady Bird, suddenly appearing with a brown bag lunch in each hand. She wore a sheath dress with matching jacket, and her dark hair was styled in a retro bouffant. She was soft-spoken and had kind eyes. As she handed Georgie and Gigi the lunch bags, she said, “Now, children, you all are old enough to appreciate what I’m about to tell you. Every living person and thing responds to beauty. Whenever you face challenges, I want you to remember all the beauty this country holds. And I hope you are as inspired by it as I have been. You may read these words of mine in one of your schoolbooks. And I can assure you they are just as true, if not more true, today.”

Though the word beautification makes the concept sound merely cosmetic, it involves much more: clean water, clean air, clean roadsides, safe waste disposal, and preservation of valued old landmarks as well as great parks and wilderness areas.

Georgie and Gigi loved hanging out with Lady Bird. She was smart, kind, told great stories—and had a very cool nickname.

After an unforgettable train tour with LBJ and Lady Bird as their guides, they were back in Austin, where the doors of the LBJ Presidential Library were opened to them.

“Wow,” Gigi marveled. “I’ve been to libraries before, but I’ve never been to a presidential library.”

“There must be a lot of books in here,” Georgie said.

“Not just books. My papers, too. You can watch my speeches. And uh, I taped many of the conversations I had during my presidency. No other president can offer that to you—not even Nixon, who I’m sure you’ll encounter soon enough. And you can listen to ’em all right here.” “It’s like eavesdropping on history. But because it’s a library, it’s okay!” exclaimed Georgie. “Now y’all hunker down like jackrabbits in a dust storm,” LBJ told them. “You’ve got some serious learning to do. Go on now.”

The two G’s spent the rest of the day unleashed in this presidential playground. The first thing they did was watch LBJ’s famous “We Shall Overcome” speech before Congress. It was from 1965 and in black and white, but the president’s words were as colorful as Lady Bird’s wildflowers.

....My first job after college was as a teacher in Cotulla, Texas, in a small Mexican-American

school. Few of them could speak English, and I couldn't speak much Spanish. My students were poor and they often came to class without breakfast, hungry. They knew even in their youth the pain of prejudice. They never seemed to know why people disliked them. But they knew it was so, because I saw it in their eyes. I often walked home late in the afternoon, after the classes were finished, wishing there was more that I could do. But all I knew was to teach them the little that I knew, hoping that it might help them against the hardships that lay ahead. Somehow you never forget what poverty and hatred can do when you see its scars on the hopeful face of a young child.

...It never even occurred to me in my fondest dreams that I might have the chance to help the sons and daughters of those students and to help people like them all over this country. ...This is the richest and most powerful country which ever occupied this globe. The might of past empires is little compared to ours. But I do not want to be the president who built empires, or sought grandeur, or extended dominion.

I want to be the president who educated young children to the wonders of their world. ... I want to be the president who helped the poor to find their own way and who protected the right of every citizen to vote in every election.

I want to be the president who helped to end hatred among his fellow men and who promoted love among the people of all races and all regions and all parties.

Then they learned about all the incredible laws that were passed during LBJ's presidency. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act made discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin illegal. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibited racial discrimination in voting.

Also in 1965, at the base of the Statue of Liberty, President Johnson signed into law the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allowed more people from around the world to become United States citizens.

Later, Georgie and Gigi met up with LBJ to share all that they had learned. "Wow, there's so much about you we didn't know," said Georgie, beaming. "Because of you, my family was able to come to this country from Lebanon and Egypt!"

Then Georgie did something unexpected. He stood military straight, and saluted LBJ like a Marine, saying, "Thank you, Sir."

He remained in that position until the president returned his salute.

Gigi then said, "And I want to thank you for helping Black people exercise their constitutional right to vote in this country. I cannot wait until I'm 18 so that I can vote!"

“I didn’t realize that you actually *knew* Martin Luther King!” exclaimed Georgie.

“Neither did I! That’s so cool,” added Gigi.

LBJ said that while he was proud of all that he had accomplished as president, the work wasn’t done. It never is, he told Georgie and Gigi, because democracy is a living thing—not just some ideal you read about in history books.

The two G’s collected the longboard from the coat check (there’s no skateboarding in libraries, and *definitely not* in presidential libraries), and LBJ bid them farewell with these words: “Remember this, as you make your way into the world— something I’ve always believed: Don’t spit in the soup. We all gotta eat.”

And with that, Georgie and Gigi were off, picking up speed on the magical skateboard until they were once again skimming the clouds. Their next destination on this wild adventure: the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, right in the nation’s capital, where a song-and-dance routine like none they’d ever seen awaited them.

TAVIA:

That is quite a cliffhanger, but I’ll let you kids in on a little secret. Our next episode will be a *musical extravaganza!* I cannot wait.

And now, some closing thoughts by our very own George.

GEORGE:

In many ways, LBJ was a giant. I’m not referring to LBJ’s height— although he did stand 6’3” and looked even taller when he wore a ten-gallon hat.

He was a *political* giant, because, as we just heard, he used his skills as a statesman to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I’d like to add to those accomplishments something that is very important to me: President Johnson chose the very first Black Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall—who himself became a giant of the court.

TAVIA:

And that brings us to the conclusion of this episode.

Thank you, George, for imbuing each story, and each episode of this podcast, with these golden historical nuggets. Indeed, Justice Marshall was a giant. We need more like him.

Our next musical episode premieres on Saturday, August 26th. Remember, kids, new episodes drop on the last Saturday of the month.

We welcome you to follow The Social Contract wherever you find your favorite podcasts, and please visit our website: [myTSCpodcast dot com](http://myTSCpodcast.com).

The Social Contract podcast is created by George S. Corey and CLEO. Produced and hosted by Tavia Gilbert. Music courtesy of liCten audio. Mix and master by Kayla Elrod. Additional dialogue editing by Cathleen Conte. Production coordinator for Talkbox Productions and additional editing by Bryan Wilson. Social manager Suzette Burton. Production supervisor Tatiana St. Phard.

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