



Obama on 'Tonight Show' with Jay Leno: Full video and transcript

By David Nakamura

NBC has released the full video and transcript from President Obama's appearance with Jay Leno Tuesday night, during which he talked about subjects ranging from Libya policy to what he thinks of Sasha and Malia watching the Kardashians' reality show.

Watch the video and read the transcript after the jump.

THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO

JAY LENO: It's an honor and a privilege to welcome my first guest back to the show. Welcome the 44th President of the United States, President Barack Obama. (Applause.)

Welcome back.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you. It is good to be back.

JAY LENO: It's good to have you back, sir. Of course, the big news this week, Gaddafi is dead. Rebel forces -- killed by rebel forces. Your reaction? Your take on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this is somebody who, for 40 years, has terrorized his country and supported terrorism. And he had an opportunity during the Arab spring to finally let loose of his grip on power and to peacefully transition into democracy. We gave him ample opportunity, and he wouldn't do it. And, obviously, you never like to see anybody come to the kind of end that he did, but I think it obviously sends a strong message around the world to dictators that --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- people long to be free, and they need to respect the human rights and the universal aspirations of people.

JAY LENO: Now, the mob mentality -- and it was a rebel mob, I guess. It wasn't a government --

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

JAY LENO: -- they televised the death. Your thoughts on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, obviously, that's not something that I think we should relish. And there was a reason after Bin Laden was killed, for example, we

didn't release the photograph. You know, I think that there's a certain decorum with which you treat the dead even if it's somebody who has done terrible things.

JAY LENO: Now, you took some heat for the whole leading-from-behind tactic here with Libya. Explain that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the truth was, we -- this was a phrase that the media picked up on.

JAY LENO: Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: But it's not one that I ever used.

JAY LENO: No.

THE PRESIDENT: We lead from the front. We introduced the resolution in the United Nations that allowed us to protect civilians in Libya when Gaddafi was threatening to slaughter them. It was our extraordinary men and women in uniform, our pilots who took out their air defense systems, set up a no-fly zone. It was our folks in NATO who were helping to coordinate the NATO operation there. And the difference here is we were able to organize the international community. We were able to get the U.N. mandate for the operation. We were able to get Arab countries involved. And so there was never this sense that somehow we were unilaterally making a decision to take out somebody. Rather, it was the world community. And that's part of the reason why this whole thing only cost us a billion dollars --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- as opposed to a trillion dollars. Not a single U.S. troop was on the ground. Not a single U.S. troop was killed or injured, and that, I think, is a recipe for success in the future.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Let me ask you about that because, with Osama Bin Laden, I remember the night before you were at the correspondence dinner and the whole deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

JAY LENO: How hard was it to make that decision to send in those Navy SEALs? because that could have been --

THE PRESIDENT: It could have been a disaster, but the reason I was able to do it was -- when you meet these SEALs and you talk to them, they are the best of the best. They are professional. They are precise. They practice. They train. They understand what exactly they intend to do. They are prepared for the worst in almost every circumstance. So even though it was 50/50 that Bin Laden would be there, I was a hundred percent confident in the men, and I could not have made that decision were it not for the fact that our men and women in uniform are the best there is.

They are unbelievable.

JAY LENO: Now, you just announced the troops coming out of --

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

JAY LENO: -- Iraq. We have, like -- 4,000, I think, were killed.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, 4-.

JAY LENO: Billions of dollars spent, nine years. What was accomplished? What did we accomplish there?

THE PRESIDENT: Look, Saddam Hussein is gone, and that's a good thing.

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: The Iraqis now have the opportunity to create their own democracy, their own country, determine their own destiny. And I'm cautiously optimistic that they realize that the way they should resolve conflict is not through killing each other but, rather, through dialogue and discussion and debate. And so that would not have been possible had it not been for the extraordinary sacrifices not just of our Armed Forces, but also their families. You know, when you think about the rotations that over a million of our troops went through --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and reservists and National Guardsmen and -women and the strain that that placed on those families during this long period, it's remarkable. So I think Americans can rightly be proud that we have given Iraqis an opportunity to determine their own destiny, but I also think that policymakers and future Presidents need to understand what it is that we are getting ourselves into when we make some of these decisions. And there might have been other

ways for us to accomplish those same goals. But the main thing right now is to celebrate the extraordinary work that our men and women did. Having them home for the holidays for good is going to be a big deal.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Let me ask you now, many members of -- many members of the GOP opposed withdrawing from Iraq.

THE PRESIDENT: It's shocking that they opposed something I proposed.

JAY LENO: But, I mean, wasn't it originally -- didn't they want to get out of Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, I don't know exactly how they are thinking about it. You know, as you said, we've been in there for years, over 4,000 young men and women killed, tens of thousands injured, some of them for life, spent close to a trillion dollars on this operation. I think the vast majority of the American people feel as if it is time to bring this war to a close --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- particularly because we still have -- (Applause.)

You know, we still have work to do in Afghanistan. We are transitioning to Afghan lead there. Our guys are still -- and gals are still making sacrifices there. We would not have been able to do as good of a job in decimating al Qaeda's leadership over the last two years if we had still been focused solely on Iraq. And one of the arguments I made way back in 2007 was, if we were able to bring the war in Iraq to a close, then that would allow us to go after the folks who perpetrated 9/11, and obviously, we've been very successful in doing that. We are not done yet.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: But al Qaeda is weaker than anytime in recent memory. We have taken out their top leadership position. That's been a big accomplishment.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Can I ask you about taking out their top leadership, al-Awlaki, this guy, American-born terrorist? How important was he to al Qaeda?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you what happened was we put so much pressure on al Qaeda in the Afghan/Pakistan region --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- that their affiliates were actually becoming more of a threat to the United States. So Awlaki was their head of external operations. This is the guy that inspired and helped to facilitate the Christmas Day bomber. This is a guy who was actively planning a whole range of operations here in the homeland and was focused on the homeland. And so this was probably the most important al Qaeda threat that was out there after Bin Laden was taken out, and it was important that working with the enemies, we were able to remove him from the field. (Applause.)

JAY LENO: I'll tell you, we are going to take a break. When we come back, I want to ask you about Hilary Clinton and her role with the President right after this.

(Commercial break.)

JAY LENO: Welcome back, talking to the President of the United States. So tell me about Hilary Clinton and the job she's doing.

THE PRESIDENT: She has been, I think, as good of a Secretary of State as we've seen in this country. She's been outstanding.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Very good.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm really proud of her.

JAY LENO: I mean, something I think is really great is the fact that you guys are both rivals. And I did a lot of jokes about you guys going after each other, but you come together for the sake of the country. And I thought that was pretty interesting.

Tell me about how that works.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, it really wasn't that difficult. The truth is Hilary and I agree on the vast majority of issues. We did during the campaign. In fact, one of the problems with all of those debates was you started running out of stuff to say because --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- we had a similar world view. She was, I think, understandably tired after the campaign and hesitant about whether or not this would be a good fit, and I told her that I had complete confidence in her, that the country needed her. She stepped up to the plate. She works as hard as anybody I've ever seen. She is tenacious, and we are really very proud of her.

The entire national security team that we've had has been outstanding, and it's not just rivals within the Democratic party. My Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates, is a Republican.

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: He was a carryover from the Bush Administration.

He made an outstanding contribution. So I think one of the things that we have done is been able to restore a sense that whatever our politics, when it comes to our national security, when it comes to the national defense, everybody has to be on the same page. And so the question now is, as we end the war in Iraq, it is time for us to rebuild this country, and can we get that same kind of cooperation when it comes to fixing what's wrong here?

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Now, let me ask you something. And this is a fun story. This is stuff I love, this rumor that Joe Biden and Hilary might swap, and she might run for Vice President and he might -- is there any --

THE PRESIDENT: You know, Joe Biden is not only a great Vice President, but he has been a great advisor and a great friend to me. So I think that they are doing great where they are, and both of them are racking up a lot of miles.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Joe tends to go more to Pittsburgh.

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: Hilary is going to Karachi.

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: But they've both got important work to do. They are doing great.

JAY LENO: Yeah. But you don't want to say "big f'ing deal" in Karachi. That could have some problems. Now, I want to -- now, the approval rating -- the bad news is your approval rating is 41 percent.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

JAY LENO: The good news is you are still three times better than Congress. They are at 13 percent. So explain. I mean -- so if you are grading on a curve -- if you are grading on a curve, you are killing. You are just killing.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, look, we have gone through the worst financial crisis, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. People are hurting out there, and they've been hurting out there for a while. And people were having a tough time even before the crisis. You know, incomes, wages, we are all flat. Costs of everything from college to health care to gas to food, all of it was going up, and so people were feeling a lot of pressure even before this crisis. And so I -- every day I wake up saying to myself, "Look, you can't expect folks to feel satisfied right now." I'm very proud of the work that we've done over the last two or three years, but they are exactly right. We've got more work to do, and that's why, right now, for example, our biggest challenge is to make sure that we are putting people back to work. We stabilize the economy, but there are not enough people working. And so we put forward this jobs bill that has proposals that traditionally have been supported by Democrats and Republicans. I mean, we've got -- we are putting construction workers back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges. I suspect folks here this L.A. would say that there are some roads that could be fixed. You know, that's just my guess.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: See, here's the problem. And the thing that angers me and I think a lot of Americans is I didn't like what they did to President Bush. I don't like when they do it to you. When Mitch McConnell says, "Our goal is to make this guy a one-time president." I mean, why -- does that anger you? How is that a goal? That doesn't help the --

THE PRESIDENT: Look, I think the things that folks across the country are most fed up with, whether you are a Democrat, Republican, Independent, is putting party ahead of country or putting the next election ahead of the next generation.

(Applause.)

And so what we need -- there are some real differences between the party in terms of where we want to take the country. I believe we've got to invest in education and research and infrastructure in order for us to succeed in the long-term, and I think that there's nothing wrong with us closing the deficit and making our investments by making sure that folks like you and me who have been incredibly blessed by this country are doing a little more of a fair share. They have a different philosophy.

We can argue about that, but on things that, traditionally, we have agreed to like infrastructure, like tax cuts for small businesses to give them incentives to hire veterans, on things that traditionally haven't been partisan, we should be able to get together. The election is 13 months away. We've got a lot of time, and the last thing we need to be doing is saying to the American people that there's nothing we can do until the next election. We've got to do some work right, putting people back to work.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Well, you are by passing congress now and giving these executive orders.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

JAY LENO: Explain that. Explain that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, if Congress is gridlocked, if the Republicans in Congress refuse to act, then there is going to be a limit to some of the things we'd like to do, but there's still some actions that we can take without waiting for Congress. So yesterday, for example, we announced working with some of the federal housing agencies. Let's make it easier for people to refinance. A lot of these folks, because their homes are underwater now, their mortgages are higher than what their homes are worth, a lot of them are having trouble getting refinanced by their banks. And so they are locked in at high rates when

rates should be a lot lower for them. We've said, "Let's figure out a way to waive some of the fees, waive some of the provisions that are preventing them from being able to refinance." And that could mean an extra couple thousand bucks in people's pockets right now. They then have that money to buy a computer for their kid for school or what have you, and that will get the economy going again. So we are going to look for opportunities to do things without Congress. We can't afford to keep waiting for them if they are not going to do anything. On the other hand, my hope is that, at some point, they start listening to the American people, and we can work with Congress as well.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Well, you are talking about listening to the American people. As President, you look out your window. Do you see this occupy Wall Street movement? What do you make of it from your –

THE PRESIDENT: Look, people are frustrated, and that frustration has expressed itself in a lot of different ways. It expressed itself in the Tea Party. It's expressing itself in occupy Wall Street. I do think that what this -- what this signals is that people in leadership, whether it's corporate leadership, leaders in the banks, leaders in Washington, everybody needs to understand that the American people feel like nobody is looking out for them right now. And, traditionally, what held this country together was this notion that if you work hard, if you are playing by the rules, if you are responsible, if you are looking out for your family, you are showing up to work every day and doing a good job, you've got a chance to get ahead. You've got a chance to succeed. And, right now, it feels to people like the deck is stacked against them, and the folks in power don't seem to be paying attention to that. So if everybody is tuned in to that message and we are working every single day to figure out how do we give people a fair shake and how do we make sure that everybody is doing their fair share, then people won't be occupying the streets because they will have a job and they will feel like they are able to get ahead. But, right now, they are frustrated. And part of my job over the next year is to make sure that if they are not seeing it out of Congress at a

minimum, they are seeing it out of their President, somebody who is going to be fighting for them.

JAY LENO: We'll take a break. When we come back, we'll talk more with the President, ask him some personal issues. We'll get to an issue, of course, that's very big here in Hollywood, this issue on the Kardashians. We'll find out more about that.

Okay. Right back with President Obama right after this.

(Commercial break.)

JAY LENO: Welcome back to our President, President Obama. We're going to talk about some lighter stuff, about dealing with the pressure of being President. Now, I know you quit smoking.

THE PRESIDENT: I did. I did, definitively.

JAY LENO: It's out.

THE PRESIDENT: It's out.

JAY LENO: All right. Remember you are under oath.

THE PRESIDENT: I am.

JAY LENO: So tell me how you cope with the daily pressures. How does --

THE PRESIDENT: Big on exercise.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Work out in the morning with Michelle. We've got a little gym in the White House. She's in better shape than me, though. So --

JAY LENO: And she's very competitive.

THE PRESIDENT: She is.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: And so it's embarrassing sometimes.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. She'll get up there a half an hour earlier than me. She will have already run 10 miles or something.

JAY LENO: You know --

THE PRESIDENT: And I'm, you know --

JAY LENO: Speaking of that --

THE PRESIDENT: -- staggering up to the gym.

JAY LENO: As President, everything is public. And I turned on the news last night, and I see my President at a very famous restaurant here in Los Angeles called "Roscoes Chicken and Waffles." Now, I think you ordered the Country Boy Special.

What is that?

THE PRESIDENT: Wings and waffles.

JAY LENO: Wings.

THE PRESIDENT: With hot sauce.

JAY LENO: So the fried chicken wings, waffles with syrup, and wings with hot sauce. Now, is Michelle -- I mean, she's sitting back, watching the news. Here you are scarfing down the waffles.

THE PRESIDENT: Originally, it was just a way to be out there and say hi to everybody, but --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- once we got in the car, it smelled pretty good.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: So, I mean, I'm eating the wings. You've got the hot sauce on there.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: The fancy presidential limousine --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- smelling like chicken.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: And we were actually going to a fund-raiser --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- with Will Smith and Jada.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: And I didn't realize it was so close. So, suddenly, we pull up, and my sleeves were rolled up, and I got a spot on my tie. And my fingers are --

I'm looking for one of those Wet Ones, you know, to see if I have chicken on my teeth.

Anyway, it was not elegant --

JAY LENO: No.

THE PRESIDENT: -- but outstanding chicken.

JAY LENO: Outstanding chicken.

THE PRESIDENT: Outstanding chicken and --

JAY LENO: Now --

THE PRESIDENT: Now, here's the secret, though. Here's the secret. Michelle, she's done a great job with this healthy eating --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: - and let's move and get exercise. But Michelle, as quiet as this is kept, she loves french fries. She loves pizza. She loves chicken. Her point is just in moderation.

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: So she does not get upset as long as, you know, it's not every day.

JAY LENO: Right, right. Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: And that's the theory. She doesn't mind the girls having a -- having a snack, although Halloween is coming up.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: And she's been giving, for the last few years, kids fruit and raisins in a bag.

JAY LENO: Ooh.

THE PRESIDENT: And I said, "The White House is going to get egged" --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- "if this keeps up. We are going to" --

JAY LENO: Yeah. You've got to go -- yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: "You need to throw some candy in there."

JAY LENO: Yeah, moderation. Come on. Exactly. Exactly.

THE PRESIDENT: A couple Reese's Pieces or something.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

JAY LENO: Okay. You turned 50 recently.

THE PRESIDENT: I did.

JAY LENO: Okay. Biggest gripe?

THE PRESIDENT: My hair is getting a little gray.

JAY LENO: Yeah, it is getting a little gray, a touch in there, I see.

THE PRESIDENT: But, you know, overall, I feel great. You know, Michelle thinks I look old, but that's okay. She still thinks -- she still thinks I'm cute. That's what she tells me.

JAY LENO: How are the girls doing, Malia and Sasha?

THE PRESIDENT: The girls are doing wonderfully. You know, they are growing -- they just grow up so fast. They are thriving. They -- it's amazing how steady, well-mannered, kind they are. You know, they are just good people.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: And part of this, I think, is a testimony to Michelle, also having my mother-in-law in the house --

JAY LENO: Oh, yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- because she doesn't take any mess. So --

JAY LENO: Do they have cell phones?

THE PRESIDENT: We have -- Malia got a cell phone, but they're not allowed to use it during the week just like they are not allowed to watch TV during the week.

JAY LENO: Really? Boo. Boo. Really? Wow.

THE PRESIDENT: During the weekends, they get their TV time, but --

JAY LENO: Oh. Speaking of TV time --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

JAY LENO: -- now, you recently said that you didn't like the girls watching the Kardashians.

THE PRESIDENT: That's --

JAY LENO: Have you seen the show?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not seen the show.

JAY LENO: Ah-hah. So you are making a judgment without ever seeing the show.

THE PRESIDENT: I am probably a little biased against reality TV partly because, you know, there's this program on C-SPAN called "Congress" --

JAY LENO: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: -- that is -- that I -- that I -- that -- (Laughter and applause.)

No, I have not seen the show. And do you recommend it, Jay? Do you think that --

JAY LENO: I just think it's a wonderful show. I don't know if it's something -- I don't know. Has Michelle seen it? Have the girls ever seen it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the girls have seen it, yeah.

JAY LENO: Now, have you been watching the GOP debates?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to wait until everybody is voted off the island before --

(Applause.)

Once they narrow it down to one or two, I'll start paying attention.

JAY LENO: Well, I know you are a huge basketball fan. This lockout, this is really depressing.

THE PRESIDENT: It's heartbreaking.

JAY LENO: What needs to be done here? Who is wrong?

(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, if you look at the NFL, they were able to settle theirs.

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: And I think they understood. Players were making millions of dollars. Owners, some of us are worth billions of dollars. We should be able to figure out how to split a nine-billion-dollar pot so that our fans, who are allowing us to make all of this money, can actually have a good season. And I think the owners and the basketball players need to think the same way.

(Applause.)

JAY LENO: Do you think the whole season is going to go? I mean, it's two weeks, and it's another -- it's a month.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm concerned about it. I think they need to just remind themselves that the reason they are so successful --

JAY LENO: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: -- is because a whole bunch of folks out there love basketball. And, you know, basketball has actually done well, but these kinds of lockouts a lot of times take a long time to recover from them.

JAY LENO: Exactly. Now, who have you got in the World Series?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, my White Sox are not in there. So I just want to see a good game.

JAY LENO: I'm with you.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not take sides unless it's my side.

JAY LENO: Wow. Wow.

(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Do not take sides unless it's your side.

JAY LENO: Well, Mr. President, it has been an honor and a privilege to have you here.

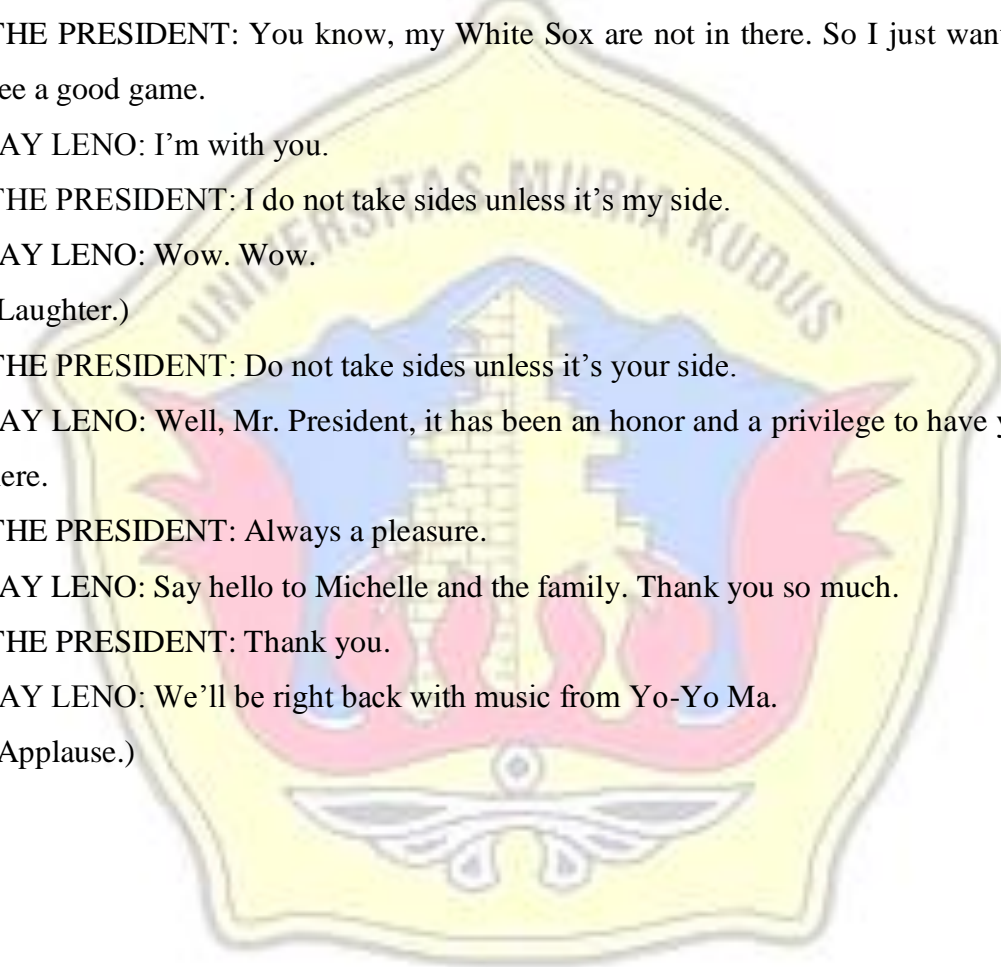
THE PRESIDENT: Always a pleasure.

JAY LENO: Say hello to Michelle and the family. Thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

JAY LENO: We'll be right back with music from Yo-Yo Ma.

(Applause.)



CURRICULUM VITAE

I, Eny Kusrini. I was born on July, 2nd 1989 in Pati. I am the third child of my beloved parents, Mr. Khamid and Mrs. Kuswati.

I was graduated from MI Tsamrotul Huda Pohijo in 2001, and I continued my education level by joining MTs Raudlatul Ulum Guyangan and graduated in 2004. Then, I studied on the next level into MA Raudlatul Ulum Guyangan and graduated in 2007. Because of my interest in studying English, I decided to continue my study in Muria Kudus University by taking English Education Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty in 2008.



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STATEMENT

I, Eny Kusrini (2008-32-204) state that my skripsi entitled: Speech Function Analysis of the Obama and Jay Leno's Interview on NBC 'Tonight Show' is ended the scientific work of mine. However, I just take some certain quotations from others' scientific works as my references.

I'm fully responsible for this statement.

Kudus, July 2012

The writer

Eny Kusrini