

So Who Wants to Elect a President?

by
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SETTING

Set of the game show "So Who Wants to Elect a President?" America, the not-too-distant future

CHARACTERS

BILL RODMAN, the host and MC for the show

DON PARDO, Voice-over only. The announcer for the show

CLIO HILL, Bill's ex-wife and one of the two final candidates

PENNY SALIN, the other of the two final candidates

OPEN on game show called "So Who Wants to Elect a President?". Set is garishly decorated in red, white, and blue. The more garish and noisy, the better- canned applause and laughter, announcements and answers can be met with bells or buzzers, spinning lights, etc. There are stands for two contestants and one for the MC. No one is on stage.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to "Who Wants to Elect a President?" As you know, tonight is the final episode of this election cycle. There are only two candidates left, and one of them will become your president as soon as all your votes are cast. Remember, you must logon and vote before the final chance countdown at the end of this show. So tell all your friends to tune in- it all comes down to this. And now, let's greet the host of "Who Wants to Elect a President", Mr. Bill Rodman!

Wild applause from audience as Rodman bounces on-stage.

RODMAN

Thank you! Thank you all! And thanks to you, Don Pardo! Folks, you might not know this, but we have a special celebration tonight. Don Pardo is celebrating his 700th birthday!

Laughter.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

That joke is getting old, Bill.

RODMAN

So are you, Don.

Laughter.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

You never age in cyberspace, Bill.

RODMAN

More on that later folks, but now it's time to introduce our contestants. As you know, our episode tonight is historic, because both of the final candidates are women. First up, we have our top vote winner so far. She has been in the political realm-

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Since you used her money to get elected-

Laughter, applause.

RODMAN

That was a long time ago, Don Pardo-

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Back when I was only 650?

Laughter.

RODMAN

All right, I take it back. Folks, Don Pardo actually doesn't have birthdays any more. He just gets remastered once a year.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

No need for that old technology, Bill. I get backed up every night. I'm going to live forever.

RODMAN

As I was saying, please welcome my ex-wife and currently the regional governor of the eastern seaboard, Ms. Clio Hill!

Applause as Clio comes out to the first contestant stand.

CLIO

Thank you. I-

RODMAN

So how does it feel to be in the Tremendous Two?

CLIO

I don't really like those cutesy labels, Bill. Frankly, I find this whole process to be demeaning.

RODMAN

Not like the good old days of national campaigns, when you could go bankrupt and run yourself ragged for years, lying about your opponents and-

CLIO

Can we just get on with it?

RODMAN

There you have it folks! Refreshing honesty! Now let's meet your other favorite candidate, the babe of Butte- Montana, that is, mom, homemaker, bull rider and motorcycle enthusiast, Miss Penny Salin!

Wild applause as Penny comes out, showing off to the crowd.

PENNY

Oh, God. I just love you guys. All of you.

CLIO

I'll bet.

RODMAN

Hey, Pretty Penny. You look all polished up today.

CLIO

Oh, for God's sake-

PENNY

Thanks Mr. Rod-Man. I'm feeling like a lucky penny today.

RODMAN

Well, you're both lucky gals to be here, one short step away from becoming the most powerful person in the free world. And besides, not only will one of you become president, but we have some great prizes for both of you, just for making it this far. Tell 'em, Don Pardo.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Thanks, Bill. Tonight, we know that the runner-up will quickly sink into political oblivion, so we want to make that transition a little easier. And the loser tonight can

do this in their new home on the beach in beautiful Puerto Vallarta, Mexico! Bask in the Mexican sun, wander the shops and galleries, and enjoy the ocean at your door front until the ice caps melt, then enjoy it in your living room! It's all yours, as runner up for President of these United States.

RODMAN

And what about the winner?

DON PARDO (V.O.)

The winner gets to be President, Bill. But that's not all. As soon as you complete your presidential duties, you'll be whisked away to New York city, where you'll be given a book contract with a major publishing house. You'll dictate your story to the best ghost writer money can buy, and you'll make number one on the New York best sellers list. Not only will you receive a guaranteed advance of \$5 million, but you'll be able to have fun with your adoring fans during your year-long world promotional tour. See all of your favorite countries while having fun a getting paid- a perfect way to wind down after four gruelling years as President.

RODMAN

Thanks, Don Pardo!

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Thank you, Bill Rodman.

RODMAN

So let's get started. Contestants, are you ready?

PENNY

I'm always ready.

RODMAN

I'll bet you are, Pretty Penny.

CLIO

Of course.

RODMAN

OK, first question: What is your opinion on the Goldidoodle Planet proposal, and what will you do about it? Clio, as vote leader for our last round, you go first.

CLIO

Well, in the first place, I don't understand how an Internet company was able to generate the trillions of dollars it cost to build an artificial planet, so we need to investigate that with regard to anti-trust laws. Second, there's really no precedent for allowing an entire company to secede from the earth so there's a legal question there. And frankly, I have been concerned about Goldidoodle ever since they changed their company slogan to "Destroy all Evildoers".

RODMAN

I'm sure we all appreciate that totally political non-answer. What about you, Penny?

PENNY

We have a saying in Montana, Bill. If a bear does it in the woods, we might as well do it in the Winnebago. And I think that is way more true if you build your own Winnebago. So unless you do something stupid like peeing out the window or a naked trampoline act, you should be OK-

RODMAN

I'd love to visit that Winnebago of yours, Penny, but what about Goldidoodle Planet?

PENNY

Oh. Oh! I'm just saying that we can see the sky from Montana, and we have some really good telescopes, so they could be in big trouble if they think they can just pee out the window anytime they want.

RODMAN

So what would you do?

CLIO

You're coaching her!

RODMAN

I'm here to serve.

CLIO

Your gonads, maybe.

RODMAN

Well, it's my show, so do you want to get a shot at this president thing or not?

PENNY

That's kind of mean.

RODMAN

I was just trying to help you answer the question, Penny.

PENNY

OK, what would I do? I guess it depends on the size of my telescope.

RODMAN

All right, let's move on. Since people can now digitize themselves and exist only in cyber space- like Don Pardo here- should digital people be afforded the same rights and privileges as the rest of us? Penny, you first this time.

PENNY

I have always supported people's right to chose whether they have a body or not. The problem comes in when you want to have it both ways.

RODMAN

Uh, could you elaborate-

PENNY

Um, well, if a body has a body-

RODMAN

And you definitely do-

PENNY

Um, but if they don't-

RODMAN

In your case, that would be a shame- Maybe after you win this thing, we could talk more about-

CLIO

My God, you haven't changed a bit, have you?

RODMAN

Not at all. And I'm still in charge.

CLIO

I don't know why I'm even here-

RODMAN

If you're getting cold feet, you can always play your forfeit card-

CLIO

You're joking.

RODMAN

Well then, if you want to keep playing, I need your answer.

CLIO

All right. I think what Penny is referring to is the flash drive folks who upload and download themselves depending on the situation, and I agree with her that you shouldn't be able to have it both ways. Right now, there are criminals who can steal your identity by uploading into cyberspace and then downloading themselves into your body. All they need is access to your DNA records. I think everyone needs to choose- do you want to be real or virtual? You can't flip-flop back and forth.

PENNY

Thank you.

RODMAN

All right. Now it's time for the lightning round. Are you ready?

Both contestants pull out controllers or big red buttons which they push or slap during the lightning round, activating buzzers or bells. The first to respond gets to answer first, so Rodman waits to see who won before calling on them.

PENNY

OK, I'm ready.

CLIO

Let's get on with it.

RODMAN

First category: Taxes.

Buzzers buzz. Clio wins.

RODMAN

Clio?

CLIO

We simply have to do something to improve revenue. We simply cannot sustain a fourteen gazillion dollar deficit.

RODMAN

Penny?

PENNY

Taxes are like polio. There's only a few places left for them.

RODMAN

OK, Death panels?

Buzzers- Penny wins

PENNY

Somebody has to reduce the surplus population. That's in a book somewhere. I think it was by Everett Dirkson.

CLIO

The government shouldn't be in the business of killing people. We should leave that to fast food restaurants.

Laughter.

RODMAN

Fusion powered cars?

Buzzers- Clio

CLIO

It's just too unstable. They're still trying to remove the black hole on the Autobahn from last year's multi-car accident.

PENNY

I'm not very good with technology. I've always had fusion about how cars work anyway.

RODMAN

Environmental regulation.

Buzzers- Penny

PENNY

I'm very passionate about the environment. I think it's very important to have one, and so we need to protect it so it doesn't go away.

CLIO

There are a lot of things we can do, right now, to help reclaim our environment. For instance, even though the industry started making edible plastic years ago, only 12% of people actually have their baggies for desert. The rest of us still throw them away, or put them in the dishwasher, where they dissolve and get into our lakes and rivers.

PENNY

Really?

CLIO

It's a fact.

PENNY

Wow. You're pretty smart.

RODMAN

No time for mutual admiration here. We're closing in on the moment of truth. Topic: Transporter travel.

Buzzers- Clio

CLIO

Well, they certainly are environmentally friendly, as long as you can capture the ozone that's emitted at the point of origin. But once again, we have to be careful with our technology, because hackers and cyber crooks can intercept your molecules, rearrange you in mid transport, and you won't know who you are when you reconstitute. Meanwhile, they duplicate your identity and can steal everything you own before you realize what has happened.

PENNY

Really? They can do that?

CLIO

Yes, it's terrible.

PENNY

How can we stop them?

CLIO

Well, they've been experimenting with wormhole technology-

RODMAN

We're in the lightning round here. You guys aren't supposed to be talking to each other.

PENNY

I think it's interesting.

RODMAN

And I think you're hot, but there's a time and place-

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Time for the final count, Bill.

RODMAN

All right. You heard Don Pardo, folks. It's time to tally those votes. If you haven't made your selection, log in now! You've only got ten seconds left. Come on, folks! This is the president we're talking about. Let's all count with Don!

Get audience to count.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Ten- nine- eight, seven- six, five, four, three, two, one!

RODMAN

And who will it be, Don Pardo!

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Well, Bill, it's 145 million votes for Penny and only ninety-eight million for Clio. Looks like Penny is our new president!

RODMAN

Wow, that's great! OK, Penny. Now that you're president, who do you want to be your vice president? As you know, it can be anyone you want. It could even be me!

PENNY

I don't know. It's a pretty hard decision.

RODMAN

Take your time. We're talking about choosing the second most powerful person in the free world here. So Don, put 60 seconds on that clock!

Tick-tock sound starts.

PENNY

Oh, gosh. Shit. I don't know. I just don't feel ready for all this.

RODMAN

If you need some advice-

PENNY

No. I know! I know what I want to do! I'm playing my forfeit card!

Clock stops

RODMAN

What?

PENNY

I forfeit, because Clio is a lot smarter than me and deserves it.

CLIO

What?

RODMAN

You've got to be-

PENNY

Nope. That's my decision.

RODMAN

You can't do that.

PENNY

Of course I can. I'm the President.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

She's right, Bill.

RODMAN

Wait a minute. I'm calling the supreme court.

DON PARDO

No point it doing that, Bill.

RODMAN

Why not!

DON PARDO (V.O.)

SECTION 14, PART B, subpart 17A-2 of the "So Who Wants to be President Game Show Authorization Act" says, if a Tremendous Two candidate shall forfeit, whether before or after the final count, the other Tremendous Two candidate shall immediately and forthwith become President of the land. But you couldn't be bothered to actually read the law, could you-

CLIO

Just like when you were president.

RODMAN

Look, you-

PENNY

Don't disrespect her. She's the President now.

RODMAN

This is not what was supposed to happen.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

It's time for Clio to pick a Veep, Bill.

RODMAN

No! I refuse to believe-

CLIO

I pick Penny.

PENNY

What?

RODMAN

No!

PENNY

I think we'll do just fine.

CLIO

Don Pardo, would you like to be my Technology Director?

DON PARDO (V.O.)

I'd be honored.

RODMAN

But then what am I going to do?

PENNY

Get a new show, Bill.

DON PARDO (V.O.)

Get a new show, Bill

CLIO

Get a new show, Bill.