

The Late Show With Stephen Colbert — Sample Monologue — July 2020

WELCOME TO A LATE SHOW. I'M YOUR HOST, STEPHEN COLBERT. IT'S GREAT TO BE HERE. THE WALLS ARE FINALLY STARTING TO ANSWER ME BACK, SO THAT'S BEEN A LOT OF FUN.

BUT WHILE I'VE BEEN HAVING FUN HERE, OUR NATION'S ANTI-SEMETIC SWEET POTATO HAS BEEN KILLING IT IN THE POLLS. NOPE. SORRY. I MISSPOKE. HE'S BEING KILLED IN THE POLLS.

(TAKE: SOT: CNN NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 0:21 AND ENDING AT 0:27, TRUMP LOSING IN THE POLLS BY DOUBLE DIGITS

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2020/07/16/trump-biden-polls-coronavirus-economy-chalialn-newday-vpx.cnn/video/playlists/this-week-in-politics>)

(ON CAM) TRAILING BY DOUBLE DIGITS. I THINK LORD SAURON WOULD'VE HAD BETTER POLLING NUMBERS IN THE SHIRE.

(TAKE: FF: MOCKUP: LORD SAURON CAMPAIGN FLYER WITH THE SLOGAN "VOTE SAURON: HE MAY BE THE PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF PURE EVIL, BUT AT LEAST HE KNOWS FREDERICK DOUGLASS DIED 150 YEARS AGO.")

SAY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT SAURON, BUT HE'D HAVE THE ORC VOTE IN THE BAG.

(TAKE: FF: PHOTO OF AN ORC <https://i.redd.it/tcgbsdrm8eb31.jpg>)

THEY'RE FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE, BUT THEY CLEARLY DON'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR DENTAL COVERAGE.

(ON CAM) SO, TO TRY TO CONTAIN HIS RAGING DUMPSTER FIRE OF A CAMPAIGN, TRUMP MADE THE KIND OF STAFFING CHANGES THAT SCREAM "EVERYTHING IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN."

(TAKE: SOT: CBS NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 0:08 AND ENDING AT 0:14, PARSCALE HAS BEEN REPLACED BY BILL STEPIEN. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-campaign-manager-brad-parscale-replaced-bill-stepien/>) (FLASH) CBS NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 1:05 AND ENDING AT 1:16, PASCALE FELL OUT OF FAVOR WITH TRUMP AFTER THE TULSA RALLY

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-campaign-manager-brad-parscale-replaced-bill-stepien/>)

YEAH, I'M NOT SURE HOW BRAD COULD'VE TALKED HIMSELF OUT OF THAT ONE.

(STEPHEN AS BRAD) YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR? IS THIS ABOUT THE TIME I PROMISED A CROWD THE SIZE OF PHILADELPHIA, AND THE RALLY WOUND UP BEING THE SIZE OF A SUGAR RAY CONCERT? OK, YEP, I'LL SHOW MYSELF OUT. BUT CAN I POST ONE LAST MEME OF AOC PHOTOSHOPPED OVER THE COMMUNIST FLAG? I SPENT 12 HOURS ON IT ON MY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.

(ON CAM) TRUMP ANNOUNCED THE REPLACEMENT ON TWITTER, SAYING THAT BOTH BRAD PARSCALE AND BILL STEPIEN...

(TAKE: FF: SCREENSHOT OF TRUMP'S TWITTER ANNOUNCING THE CHANGE <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1283566319405797378>)

(STEPHEN READING AS TRUMP) "...WERE HEAVILY INVOLVED IN OUR HISTORIC 2016 WIN, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING A BIG AND VERY IMPORTANT SECOND WIN TOGETHER. THIS ONE SHOULD BE A LOT EASIER AS OUR POLL NUMBERS ARE RISING FAST."

(STEPHEN AS TRUMP) THAT'S RIGHT. OUR POLL NUMBERS ARE RISING FASTER THAN SCIENTISTS ARE CAPABLE OF MEASURING. EVERY TIME I USE A RACIST EPITHET ON FEDERAL PROPERTY, MY POLL NUMBERS SKYROCKET AMONG THE VERY IMPORTANT, VERY SOUGHT-AFTER DEMOGRAPHIC OF BITCOIN FARMERS WHO DON'T BELIEVE IT'S INCEST IF SHE'S HOT.

(AS STEPHEN) NOW, AS A QUICK REFRESHER FOR ANYONE WHO GOT LOBOTOMIZED AFTER THE 2016 ELECTION, TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER BACK THEN WAS COREY LEWANDOWSKI...

(TAKE: FF: PHOTO OF COREY LEWANDOWSKI <https://rb.gy/kmztrp>)

... A MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE HE'S LOCKED AND LOADED WITH PLENTY OF REASONS WHY MENSTRUATION AFFECTS CRITICAL DECISION-MAKING SKILLS.

COREY, YOU MIGHT REMEMBER, WAS CHARGED WITH BATTERY AFTER ACCOSTING A FEMALE REPORTER. SO BILL STEPIEN...

(TAKE: FF: PHOTO OF BILL STEPIEN <https://rb.gy/kmztrp>)

...A.K.A. THE KIND OF GUY WHO PAYS MORE IN COUNTRY CLUB DUES THAN IN CHARITABLE DONATIONS, YOU'VE GOT SOME BIG SHOES TO FILL.

NOW, IT CANNOT BE OVERSTATED HOW BADLY TRUMP IS DOING IN THE POLLS. IN A JULY QUINNIPIAC POLL, BIDEN WAS LEADING TRUMP BY 15 POINTS. I'M NO CAPITOL HILL INSIDER, BUT I THINK THE INDUSTRY TERM FOR POLLING THAT BAD IS A "KANYE WEST WING FLOP."

(TAKE: MOCKUP: RED STAMP OVER DANCING STEPHEN THAT SAYS "A TOPICAL JOKE THAT WON'T MAKE SENSE IN 48 HOURS!")

SAYS QUINNIPIAC ANALYST TIM MALLOY:

(TAKE: FF: SCREENSHOT OF QUINNIPIAC REPORT WITH QUOTED PORTION

HIGHLIGHTED ON PAGE 1. https://poll.qu.edu/images/polling/us/us07152020_ulvz33.pdf)

(STEPHEN READING) "THIS IS A VERY UNPLEASANT REAL TIME LOOK AT WHAT THE FUTURE COULD BE FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP. THERE IS NO UPSIDE, NO SILVER LINING, NO ENCOURAGING TREND HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THIS SURVEY FOR THE PRESIDENT."

(ON CAM) GO FIGURE. MAYBE THE PRESIDENT'S POLL NUMBERS AREN'T DOING TOO WELL BECAUSE THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS HAVE DIED FROM A PREVENTABLE DISEASE, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS SKY-HIGH, AND TO ADD SALT TO THE WOUND, THEY DIDN'T FILM SEASON 3 OF 'SUCCESSION' BEFORE THE PANDEMIC. A TRAGEDY.

TRUMP'S LOYAL UNDERLINGS OVER AT FOX, THOUGH, ARE TRYING THEIR DARNDDEST TO DOWNPLAY HOW BAD THINGS ARE LOOKING.

(TAKE: SOT: FOX NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 1:50 AND ENDING AT 1:53, "INTERNAL POLLS LOOKS GREAT." <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/where-its-at>)

I'M SURE THEY ARE. I'M SURE YOUR INTERNAL POLLS ALSO SHOW THAT 200% OF AMERICANS WANT TO HAVE SEX WITH DONALD TRUMP, TOO. OH WAIT, THERE'S MORE.

(TAKE: SOT: FOX NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 0:57 AND ENDING AT 1:00, "TRUMP'S IMPROVED EVERY AMERICAN LIFE" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aspSaSVxdkg>)

IMPROVED EVERY AMERICAN LIFE SINCE TAKING OFFICE. THAT'S LIKE THE ICEBERG TELLING THE TITANIC IT IMPROVED THE LIVES OF ITS PASSENGERS BY EXPOSING THEM TO THE WONDERS OF ATLANTIC MARINE LIFE.

(TAKE: SOT: FOX NEWS CLIP STARTING AT 3:20 AND ENDING AT 3:21, “WE SHOULD IGNORE THE POLLS RIGHT NOW.” <https://www.foxnews.com/media/pete-hegseth-trump-biden-2020-campaign>)

SOUNDS GREAT, STOCKBROKER JONES. NOW, NORMALLY, I’M NOT A FAN OF IGNORING BAD THINGS AND HOPING THEY GO AWAY. PERHAPS A RECENT PANDEMIC HAS MADE ME A BIT PRICKLY ABOUT OUR NATION DOING THAT. BUT IF ANYONE FROM TRUMP’S CAMPAIGN IS LISTENING, I SAY THIS: IGNORE THE HELL OUT OF THOSE POLLS. YOU, AND YOU ALONE, WIELD THE POWER TO SIMPLY MAKE THEM DISAPPEAR BY PRETENDING THEY DON’T EXIST. TRUST ME. YOU WON’T COME TO REGRET IT IN NOVEMBER.

AND SPEAKING OF REGRET: THE CRUISE INDUSTRY – BEST KNOWN FOR KEEPING MILLIONS OF MARRIAGES ALIVE FOR FAR LONGER THAN THEY SHOULD BE – FOUND ITSELF IN TROUBLE WITH THAT PESKY CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL.

EVEN IN THE WEEKS THAT THE CORONAVIRUS WAS SPREADING AROUND THE WORLD, CRUISE SHIP COMPANIES DID NOT ... HOLD ON, LET ME TAKE A BIG INHALE.

(STEPHEN TAKES A DRAMATIC INHALE)

(TAKE: FF: SCREENSHOT OF CDC REPORT WITH RELEVANT PORTION HIGHLIGHTED: https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/pdf/No-Sail-Order-Cruise-Ships-Second-Extension_07_16_2020-p.pdf)

(STEPHEN READS QUICKLY, ALMOST GOING OUT OF BREATH) PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING, ISOLATE ASYMPTOMATIC CREW MEMBERS, CANCEL SOCIAL GATHERINGS, KEEP CREW IN SINGLE-BED CABINS, CLOSE GYMS, CLOSE SALONS, CLOSE BUFFETS, OR WEAR MASKS.

I COULD’VE PUT “FAILURE TO CLOSE THE DOORKNOB-LICKING STATION” IN THERE, AND NOBODY WOULD’VE FLINCHED. MY GOD. CRUISE SHIP EMPLOYEES: DO YOU REALLY WANT SOMEONE TO HAVE TO MENTION THE WORD “BUFFET” IN YOUR OBITUARY?

NOW, THE CDC HAS SUSPENDED ALL CRUISE SHIP OPERATIONS UNTIL SEPT. 30, AND THAT’S ONLY IF CRUISE COMPANIES PRESENT A PLAN TO DEAL WITH THE VIRUS. AND WE ACTUALLY HAVE LIVE FOOTAGE FROM INSIDE CARNIVAL CRUISE HEADQUARTERS, WHERE THEY’RE WORKING HARD ON A PLAN:

(TAKE: OTS: "PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN" CLIP WITH JACK SPARROW PASSING OUT DRUNK ON THE BEACH.)

BUT HEY. I GET THAT IT'S NOT EXACTLY UNCHARTED TERRITORY FOR THERE TO BE A VIRUS RUNNING RAMPANT ON A CRUISE SHIP. THEIR PRIMARY CLIENTELE IS 85-YEAR-OLDS LOOKING FOR ONE FINAL HURRAH, AND TWENTY-SOMETHINGS LOOKING FOR ONE FINAL HURRAH BEFORE THEY ACCIDENTALLY BECOME PARENTS ON THE CRUISE SHIP.

IN FACT, IN MY WILDER DAYS, I, TOO, WAS KNOWN TO LET LOOSE ON A CRUISE SHIP.

(TAKE: FF: MOCKUP OF PEOPLE PARTYING ON A CRUISE SHIP, AND STEPHEN IN THE CORNER WITH THE STAFF, DOING MAGIC TRICKS IN A TOP HAT AND HOLDING A DECK OF CARDS AND MAGIC WAND)

(ON CAM) OH, NO. MY WIFE'S GONNA KILL ME.

(STEPHEN GLANCES OVER AT HIS WIFE) I PROMISE, IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!

WE'VE GOT A GREAT SHOW FOR YOU TONIGHT. PHOEBE ROBINSON IS HERE. STICK AROUND! STAY OFF CRUISE SHIPS, AND WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK.