

POLITICALLY MINDED

written by

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INT. ANDREW SHEPARD CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Norman is scrawling ideas on to a flip-chart. Every surface is covered with the trappings of a failing electoral campaign office: including a map on the wall with a disappointingly high proportion filled in red; and several posters from the course of the campaign, such as "Andrew Shepard: No Longer Contagious". Ollie walks in holding a clip-board overflowing with paper.

OLLIE

So, Norm: do you want the good news, or the bad news?

NORMAN

There's good news?

OLLIE

Relatively speaking.

NORMAN

As it happens, Ollie, I'm in just the mood to have my hopes and dreams shattered, so let's start with that.

OLLIE

We needed to bail out another five leafleters this morning.

NORMAN

I'll reallocate our remaining campaign funds, what was the even worse news?

OLLIE

The polls are back: we're down another seventeen points.

NORMAN

Weren't we only at eleven to begin with?

OLLIE

Out of two hundred and twenty eight people polled, two hundred and forty two said they'd vote against him. But that's not the worst of it. The fourth differential trend analysis cam in as well.

Ollie flips the clip-board over to reveal a ":(" face drawn on to a set of graph axes.

OLLIE

This happens every time he speaks.

NORMAN

We could try to persuade him to stop talking.

Ollie throws Norman a look stuck half way between doubt and surprise.

NORMAN

Or cut out his tongue.

OLLIE

Better, but this just slows the plummet How do we fulfil our contractual obligations and make someone - anyone - vote for him.

NORMAN

Give me that.

Norman grabs the clip-board and flicks through it.

NORMAN

(Gesturing to a page)Here! Whilst we're losing more ground than an absent-minded mole in almost every demographic, we still have solid support with politically minded twenty four to twenty four and a half year old gainfully employed males who eat trifle every third Tuesday. We need to forget everyone else, and focus all of our efforts on them.

OLLIE

You do realise that we are that demographic?

NORMAN

Which only makes it easier for us to relate to them, and present them with convincing arguments to vote for Shepard.

OLLIE

No, as in the two people standing in this room are the entire demographic.

NORMAN

Well then we take the opposite approach and reduce the other demographics: relaunch the "Voting: It's a bit shit" campaign.

OLLIE

My only worry is that it's a bit too successful. Last time you were taken in and abstained.

NORMAN

What about inducing a world-wide pandemic? If they have more supporters than us, they're more likely to die.

OLLIE

I like where you're going with this, make r and d an action item for our next meeting. But for now I'd like to suggest an entirely new idea.

NORMAN

Go on

OLLIE

This election is basically a two-horse race...

Norman returns the look Ollie threw him earlier.

OLLIE

Okay, a one-horse race, but the point stands: if you shoot the mustang, the limping mallard has to cross the line eventually. We just need to make our opponent even less electable than us.

NORMAN

With bullets?

OLLIE

No, that was just a metaphor. We tamper with his food.

NORMAN

Don't you think the police would be suspicious as to why an otherwise healthy up-and-coming politician in what I can only assume is the prime of his life dropped dead suddenly?

OLLIE  
You're still being too heavy-handed. Think about this: is our candidate in any way electable?

NORMAN  
No.

OLLIE  
And is he dead?

NORMAN  
No.

OLLIE  
Exactly! Therefore there must be some way of making our opponent unelectable without killing him.

NORMAN  
And what, exactly, are you thinking of?

Ollie takes a packet of bacon out of his back pocket, and throws it to Norman.

OLLIE  
Read the serving suggestion.

NORMAN  
"Raw bacon makes a fantastic treat for children, the elderly, and the otherwise immunocompromised."  
That's (pause) brilliant. I'll roll these out immediately.

Norman leaves

INT. ANDREW SHEPARD CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Norman enters holding one coffee, and drinking from another. Ollie is sitting, reading a newspaper with the headline "Bacon cures AIDS". Smaller headlines state that it is the first time multiple Nobel prizes have been retroactively awarded. Norman performs a spit-take.