



Ned Hickson

Politics could use a dose of reality (television)

Aside from watching something on "The Dust Channel," I can't think of anything less interesting than the upcoming political debates and conventions. Watch, I'll show you....

See?
Nothing.

And the worst part is, they'll be on every major network, with commentary offered by shell-shocked correspondents picking confetti from their hair and wincing between air horn blasts that are supposed to make us all wish we were part of that kind of fun! In actuality, news anchors David Muir, Lester Holt and Scott Pelley don't want to be there either, but they will be; and by God, if they've got to be stuck in a skybox for a week, we're going to watch!

Now, that's not to say making the debates and conventions even remotely interesting isn't possible. In fact, if the campaign gurus would study the ratings, there are

plenty of examples of what could be done to make things more exciting by following a few, simple rules.

Rule number one:

Voyeurism is in Big Brother, Survivor, American Greed, Who wants to be a Millionaire are, at their core, really about watching someone squirm on national television. So why not presidential nominees? If nothing else, it'll give Americans a chance to see how their future president will handle his or her affairs under pressure.

Maybe "affairs" isn't the right word, but you know what I mean.

Rule number two:

There needs to be something at stake

In most cases it's an enormous sum of money. However, considering that the Republicans' 11 nominees alone probably make more a year than everyone reading this, for this scenario we'll just offer "The-most-powerful-person-in-the-world" prize. And maybe throw in a pharmaceutical lobbyist and Lipitor endorsement spot for later.

And, **rule number three:**
You've got to have a

sharply dressed, highly irritating host

My first suggestion would've been Kanye West, but he's already busy running for the 2020 election, assuming he hasn't left the country by then. This leaves Ryan Seacrest and Chris Harrison.

Both are sharp dressers and, although I wouldn't call Harrison "highly irritating," it would be good for him to help Seacrest keep track of how many questions are left during debates.

Combine these three key elements, add a political context, and you have the ultimate in convention coverage:

Big Brother Wants A Greedy Survivor

Each episode will begin with host Seacrest in a helicopter as he flies over the nominees, who have been dropped into the heart of East

L.A. with nothing but a "Straight Outta Compton" T-shirt, lots of bling, black Cargo pants and a pair of \$200 basketball shoes.

During the five-day airing, each nominee will have to scrounge for food, at times resorting to ethnic cuisine and L.A. tap water, as they battle to survive long enough to reach Friday night's finale: a question and answer session for cumulative electoral votes.

Example:

Seacrest: Complete this famous quote from our U.S. Constitution: "We the (BLANK) of the United States..?"

Is it,

- a) Pot-smoking liberals ruining everything,
- b) Mexicans from outer space,
- c) People

or
d) Canadians

Donald Trump: "If I get this wrong, you're fired."

Hillary Clinton: "Is this a trick question?"

Scott Walker: "Canadians.

Nailed it!"

The bottom line is, by convention time next July, there's about as much anticipation as there is in watching milk curdle; in both cases the result is always the same — and neither is pleasant to swallow.

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