

Colbert Report Sketch Script—An Interview with Al Gore

(Set in a patriotically decorated studio. Stephen sits behind a large desk.)

Stephen:

Thank you, thank you, America. You are the American flag pin on the lapel of my life: Near to my heart, and getting bigger *(Makes gesture like he's getting fatter)* with each election.

Today, America, I am profoundly excited to announce that the impossible has happened! *(Looks at camera with excited face, mouth wide open for a lengthy moment)* . . . Surprised? *Me too.* Especially after the impossible *just happened* in the election *(turns to a different camera dramatically)*.

(Pulls out a hat from under his desk, puts it on his head, and then takes it off and then holds it forlornly against his chest) For those of you who haven't yet heard, because, well, maybe you live in Colorado and everything's a bit fuzzy right now, I'm sorry to inform you that Osama—excuse me—*Obama* Bin—sorry, honest mistake, really—Barack Hussein Obama *(whispers dramatically to the camera, "that one's real")* has indeed won the election. And no, fellow tax-payers, it is not some elaborate prank played on us by those wily reporters down at the "real news stations" *(does bunny ear quotes)* as I may have at first thought *(looks back at first camera, puts away the hat)*.

But another impossible has happened, my dear democracy-elicitors. And one more astonishing than the reelection of President BO himself. Yes, that's right. *Time travel.* Time travel has finally been made available to the public. And by the "public," I mean

me. And by “finally been made available to,” I mean that *The Daily Show* has been holding it hostage! What? Yes. *I know*.

But don't worry, America, because I've got it now and I'll use it for what's really important. What's that, you say? Going back in time to 1998 when J.K. Rowling was writing *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and let her know that they could've used the Time-Turner to save Harry's parents and defeat Lord Vv—I mean, You Know Who? A worthy cause, yes, but *no*. (*dramatic pause*) I'm going to interview the semi-recently dethroned Vice President from 2008.

So please give a great, big and super-futuristic welcome to my guest. Here to talk about his book, *The Assault on Reason*, the man who brings purpose to a dolphin party—Please welcome 2008 Al Gore!

Al, thank you so much for joining us. What an honor to have you here.

Gore:

Thank you, Stephen.

Stephen:

So Al, Al Gore, still-sore-Gore. You've been a rep in the House of Representatives, a senator for Tennessee, Vice President of our beautiful United States, and now *author?*

Gore:

Yes, yes.

Stephen:

A bit of a back step, don't you think? From VP, I mean. As Vice President, it's just you. No other VPs up there beside you. It's the AL Gore show, minus that pesky president guy, but now, as an author, you're one in a million. Heck, you're not even the only one at this table.

Gore:

(Laughs) Was it a back-step for you?

Stephen:

Al, *I'm* just a lowly news anchor. Being an author only makes *me* look *better*, especially after my *Grammy*.

Gore:

(Laughs) Alright.

Stephen:

Let's get some politics out of the way, shall we?

(Looks down at his papers) You don't like Bush... *(Looks up at Gore as if to make sure he agrees with this—Gore might say yes at this point—then back down at his papers)* I

think he's misunderstood. *You think he crossed lines in his presidency (Looks up at Gore again—Gore might nod here—then back down) I call that initiative.*

Gore:

Well, you can call it whatever you want, Stephen, but it won't make George Bush overstepping Congress any less unacceptable. He's our President. If anyone should, he should be the one to uphold the checks and balances set in place by our forefathers.

Stephen:

But if anyone should be testing that system, shouldn't it be the guy who doesn't have a couple hundred House members to convince to go along with it? In fact, isn't it his *duty* to make sure those dusty old rules haven't lost their touch? Yes, they've worked for the past couple centuries, but that doesn't mean that the Bush's term couldn't be a game changer.

Gore:

Now, this is exactly what I mean by an "assault on reason." We can't justify a President taking liberties he doesn't have. Especially when it ends in the war it did.

Stephen:

But didn't they have it coming? You know, "You kill hundreds of our citizens in a terrorist attack—we go to war with you." It makes sense to me, Al.

Gore:

(Shakes his head) You're evading reason. You're not addressing the way he went about instigating this war—

Stephen:

Okay, okay, *but . . .* how do we even know there ever *was* any reason to begin with? *Hmm?* Seems like a pretty steep claim to me, Al. *(Raises an eyebrow)* And how can we assault something that wasn't ever actually here?

Gore:

(Pauses, then just continues on with the argument) But reason existed in our nation's past. It was there in the creation of the Constitution, in the Emancipation Proclamation, in Kennedy's "New Frontier."

Stephen:

And nothing after that?

Gore:

Some, but very little. It's a progressing disease, Stephen.

Stephen:

So, what you're saying is that the last bit of *real* reason ended with the Democrats.

Gore:

Well—

Stephen:

Then doesn't it follow that the Democrats are then responsible for the end of reason?

Gore:

Or the Republican that entered into office after him.

Stephen:

And that was the beginning of the end?

Gore:

Perhaps, but it's a culmination of many factors.

Stephen:

Well I have a theory, Al. Do you want to know what that theory is?

Gore:

(Bemused) Sure.

Stephen:

It takes a couple of years for each president's policies to really start affecting America, doesn't it? *(Al might start talking but Steven cuts him off)* Sometimes a whole term, even. So wouldn't it make sense to say that all the "alleged" bad things from Bush's era came from the Clinton terms before him? And when things started looking better, say sometime after 2008, *that* was the real effect that Bush had?

Gore:

(Struggles for words)

Stephen:

How's that for an inconvenient truth?

Did I just assault your reason?

Gore:

(Laughs) I think so, Stephen—But we actually start seeing the results of presidential policies much sooner than that, usually about halfway through a term do they begin fostering results.

Stephen:

Let's focus on another topic from your book. Technology and, specifically, television.

Gore:

Okay.

Stephen:

You describe television as a tool of manipulation?

Gore:

It really is. Think about it—the music, the images, the pathos-induced words of promise. It's all been researched, tested, and used to defend and, more often, *offend*.

Stephen:

You mention a specific instance in here (*Points to book*) where one of your early teams of advisors told you that if you put out a certain commercial, then you'd see a certain percent increase in the polls.

Gore:

Yes, they predicted eight percent and that's exactly what we saw. It was impressive, but disturbing, of course.

Stephen:

So should we be worried about the government using these mind-controlling commercials on our gullible citizenry?

Gore:

Possibly—

Stephen:

So less government involvement is the answer?

Gore:

Well not exactly—

Steven:

But maybe.

Gore:

(Pauses) Well, no. What we need is to be aware. Aware that politicians are conscious of everything that tugs at our heartstrings and gutstrings and know how to manipulate them.

Stephen:

Well I don't know about *you*, Al, but I don't think I want politicians anywhere *near* my gutstrings.

Gore:

(Laughs) I don't think any of us do.

Stephen:

What I'm curious about, is *why*—if you distrust television so much—are you on a television show (*Whispers, "right now?"*).

Gore:

(*Thinks for a moment*) Sometimes, Stephen, to get a message out to nonbelievers, you can't read straight from the Bible.

Stephen:

So just conform instead?

Gore:

It's not that all television is bad, but technology isn't aiding conversation in the public sphere; it's impeding it.

Stephen:

What if I told you that just a few years down the road—say, four or so maybe—the Internet and social media in particular will be fostering much more conversation than the web in 2008? In 2012, social media like MySpace that stunts networking and conversation will fall by the wayside to sites that at least seemingly promote political activism.

Gore:

I'm not sure I can believe *that* until I see it.

Stephen:

Oh, just wait, Al. Just wait. But let's move on to the global warming controversy then. What's the issue for you there?

Gore:

Global warming used to be an accepted thing, Stephen. But now, all of a sudden, people think it's a myth. Something made up for the government's benefit.

Stephen:

And you don't think so? Couldn't the government do that? Doesn't a good leader instill fear in the hearts of his people?

Gore:

A good leader trusts the facts, especially when ninety-eight percent of the nation's top scientists who've researched global warming have found it to be a real concern.

Stephen:

Al, Al, Al, Al (*sighs*). Didn't your mother ever tell you that you shouldn't always jump on the "scientifically proven" bandwagon?

Gore:

Well I'd rather be there than left in their dust, sitting on the side of the road on the "unsupported" bench.

Stephen:

C'mon Al, if the rest of the democratic politicians were running for president, would you do it to?

(Awkward Pause) Oh...um...

Gore:

It's not about what I'd do or wouldn't do. It's about what's been lost in these last few decades. People have lost faith in the government because they've lost touch with it. The public sphere has deteriorated thanks to factors like television that have changed politics from a conversation to a lecture—and a biased one at that.

Stephen:

But isn't it easier that way? Why think when we have Fox News—or, I guess CNN for you—to do it for us? That way, we don't actually have to have the government all up in our grills, right? Serious news anchors like *me* can be the completely neutral middlemen this country so desperately needs.

Gore:

But that's not the way this country was intended to work. When we're cut off from government, we have no voice, and the nation ceases to be led by the people, and then it can't be led for the people. That's you and me, Stephen. And if the government's not working for us, then what's its purpose?

Stephen:

Well, I know it's working for *me*, Al.

(Gore starts speaking but Stephen cuts him off)

Al Gore everybody! And *The Assault on Reason*.

(To Gore) Thanks for coming on.

Sources:

Gore, Al. *The Assault on Reason*. 1st ed. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. Print.