

POST-APOCALYPTIC DEBATE

A Sketch By

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INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - DAY?

Two men in tattered business suits stand at adjacent podiums. Behind them hang the tattered remains of an American flag. In front of them sit a moderator and a small huddled mass of people.

MODERATOR

Candidate Blakeman, you've clearly laid out your position on the soaring food prices and housing crisis. Candidate Allister, your response.

CANDIDATE A

I know that every one of you proud, hard-working Americans is asking yourself the same question: what's up with garbage mountain?

Crowd murmurs in agreement.

CANDIDATE A

On your way to work, when you are out for a stroll with your children, you look up at that 2-mile-high heap of steaming trash in sector J. And you think to yourself: when are we going to get a colony on garbage mountain? Well folks, if I'm your President, you might as well pack your tents and your protein purifiers, because we are going to build a settlement next year. 2022 will be our year!

Crowd cheers. They like this guy.

CANDIDATE B

Why would anyone want to live there?

CANDIDATE A

My opponent claims that building a settlement on a mountain made of garbage is "unsanitary" and "extremely dangerous." Well, sir. People said the same thing to the brave pioneers who settled the forests and plains of the West. Back when we had forests and plains, and a West!

Crowd cheers

CANDIDATE B

I've said it before, and I will say it again; living on a mountain of garbage is a terrible idea.

Crowd boos and jeers.

CANDIDATE A

You, sir are a terrible idea. People, where there is garbage, there is food. We will go there, we will make it our home, we will dig through the refuse and we will eat anything we can find!!

Crowd roars with applause. They are on their feet.

CANDIDATE B

Let's not let these false promises distract us from the real issue: taking accountability for our mistakes. Looking back, of course it was a terrible idea to build robots. But we did it. It was a grave mistake to give those robots the ability to learn, evolve, and use their built-in military-grade weapons. Yes, we know this now! I'm not going to pretend that I didn't vote to weaponize the robots. I did. We all did. But I also voted to install kill-switches that would override the robots if they ever decided to revolt and wage war against us. Do you know who voted against kill switches? My opponent. And where are we now? Hiding. Underground.

CANDIDATE A

So he wants to attack my record? Well, while we are speaking of integrity, lets look at my opponent's record. We've all read the news can, we've all heard about the scandal. Last summer, before the bromillion famine, my opponent was caught with a prostitute.

Crowd fills with scandalized murmurs.

CANDIDATE B

I have issued a formal apology-

CANDIDATE A

That's right, only ONE prostitute!
In the past year alone, I have solicited the services of at least fourteen prostitutes. Why? Because I care about our economy. Because I buy local. When is my opponent going to step up, be a team player and begin doing business with the prostitutes, food smugglers, and medicine traders that serve as the mainstays in our tattered black market economy? I've been endorsed by both the Bully-Gang Prostitutes Union and The Antibiotics Mafia of Sector C.

Crowd cheers. Prostitutes howl. Supporters of the Antibiotics Mafia wave pill bottles and filthy plastic bags like campaign pennants.

MODERATOR

We're going to turn now to the audience for more questions.

A young woman on crutches comes to the mic.

CROWD MEMBER 1

Hello, my name is Emily Beasley. I live in the nitrogen mines of sector J.

CANDIDATE A

I hear that's a lovely sector-

CANDIDATE B

(hushed to Candidate A)
It's a barren wasteland!

CROWD MEMBER 1

I have a question for Candidate Blakeman. What is your position on drilling?

CANDIDATE B

I know this is a contentious issue for some.

(MORE)

CANDIDATE B (CONT'D)

But the truth about drilling is this: if the robots keep drilling, they will eventually find us, and kill us all. So I am against drilling.

CANDIDATE A

He says he's "against it", Emily. But what has he *done* to stop it? I, on the other hand, have proposed a plan whereby we send a message to the surface that says: "all humans are dead. You can stop looking for us now. Please stop drilling."

Crowd goes wild. They love how solutions-oriented he is. Candidate B looks on in horror and disbelief.

A second candidate steps to the mic. He is an old man. He is pushed in what appears to have once been a wheelchair.

CROWS MEMBER 2

Hello, my name is Harry Tervalon. I'm from the steam ghetto, red level of the Oxygen Reserve.

CANDIDATE A

My grandmother was born there-

CANDIDATE B

(hushed and now furious at Candidate A)
The Oxygen Reserve has only been around for a year!

CROWD MEMBER 2

I have a question for both candidates. What is your position on jagged scrap metal knives?

CANDIDATE B

Look, I'm in favor of shiv control.

CANDIDATE A

And by that, he means he wants to take away our constitutional right to carry knives made out of jagged scrap metal.

Crowd boos. They wave rusty metal shards in the air. Like campaign pennants.

CANDIDATE B

They are unsafe. Each year, 10 of our children die in accidents related to jagged scrap metal knives. 10 kids a year. That is half of our child population. The scrap metal is unnecessary...they certainly don't work against robots.

CANDIDATE A

You don't know that for sure.

CANDIDATE B

Robots are made of metal.

CANDIDATE A

(back to crowd)

See...He's soft on security.

CANDIDATE B

(back to crowd)

He's an actual idiot!

MODERATOR

We have time for one more question.

A shadowy figure emerges from the audience. Covered in rags, he walks with a hunch, and shields his small furry eyes. He is a mole man.

MOLE MAN

I'd like to thank both of you for your careful treatment of the issues. My people and I...

CANDIDATE A

You shut the fuck up, Mole! We may have to share this underground with you mole people, but don't you go and start thinking you have rights.

MOLE MAN

Well I can see that you are not the candidate who you claim to be.

CANDIDATE B

You can't see a goddamn thing, you blind-ass mole.

The candidates exchange a no-look high five.

CANDIDATE B

So why don't you take your
disgusting little face, scurry
back to your mole king, and tell
him, for the last time, he has no
standing in the Council of Five!

Mole Man scurries away. The candidates collect themselves.

MODERATOR

Candidates, your final statements...

CANDIDATE A

Three words: Colony. On. Garbage.
Mountain.

CANDIDATE B

My opponent and I don't agree on
many things. From food rations to
water mines to settlements on
mountains of garbage. But when it
comes time for you to cast your
vote for President of the human
survivors, remember this. Out of
the world of differences that
exist between us two candidates,
there is one thing we can agree
upon: the Mole King and all of the
disgusting mole people need to be
persecuted and eventually killed.
God bless us all.

The candidates grasp hands and raise them triumphantly.

LIGHTS OUT