

Campaign Close Extravaganza

Seattle, Washington

SirPandaMaster steps onto the stage, filled with determination and excited to cap off another exciting campaign.

“HELLLOOOOO SEATTLE!”

The audience cheers with deafening volume.

“As you can see, we are in a *lovely*, naturally-lit tent filled with ovens and stuff. I have with me Paul Hollywood, all the way from England!”

“Hullo, hullo.” Paul smiles at the crowd. “Welcome to the Great SR-3 Bake Off!”

Panda reclaims the microphone. “Today, we’ve got five contestants from around the district, and for our first challenge, we’re going to be making a signature pie! On your marks! Get ready!”

Paul and Panda shout the word: “*BAKE!*”

The five contestants begin baking their signature pies, based on family recipes.

Panda strolls over to a middle-aged man, cutting some potatoes for his pie.

“Hello! Tell me about yourself and about your pie.”

“Right, so I’m Simon and I’m a potato farmer from rural Idaho. I’m making a potato pie that was my grandmother’s recipe.”

“Potatoes! Are you going to make us some vodka too?”

Simon stares blankly at Panda.

“Anyway, how big’s the farm you work on?”

“It’s pretty small, been owned by our family for generations. These potatoes are from our farm, actually. They’re an heirloom variety.”

“Wow, how convenient! So you’d benefit from my National Food Security Through Biodiversity and Make Agriculture Great Again Acts!”

“Oh? How so?”

“Well, if you’d like to up production on your heirloom potatoes, when the NFSTB Act passes you’ll be able to apply to the Department of Agriculture for increased subsidies!”

“What if I don’t want to?”

“No problem! You’d still benefit from the MAGA Act, which would give farms like yours an extra \$500 in subsidies per year, at no extra expense to the taxpayer!”

“Wow, that sounds amazing!”

“It sure does. Looking forward to the pie.”

Paul intercepts Panda on his way to the next bench. “Are we actually going to focus on the baking part... or....”

“You do baking, I’ll do politics! Win-win!”

Paul seems confused.

“Hi, I’m Panda! Tell me a bit about yourself.”

“I’m Jonathan, and I’m a lawyer from Seattle. I’m making a banana-cream pie.”

“Ooh, delicious! Say, did you hear about how vulnerable the global banana supply is to disease?”

“I think I read about it somewhere.”

“It’s pretty scary stuff - there’s not enough biodiversity in our food supply. My NFSTB Act would help fix that by promoting biodiversity, strengthening our national food security.”

The next contestant is Tamra, a nurse in Portland. She’s making a blueberry pie.

“Awesome! Say, what’re your thoughts on the healthcare issue?”

Paul, who’s standing beside Panda, cringes.

“I support universal healthcare - it’s better for everyone, and it’s cheaper.”

Panda smiles. “I agree! But there are different ways that people like to implement ‘universal healthcare’. I support single-payer - it’s far superior to a public option. Single-payer removes the profit motive from the industry entirely, removing the rapacious mafia middle-man’s role entirely. With a public option, they’d only push the sick people onto the government system and lower the quality of care - the risk pool isn’t spread out enough. This means that a public option would be more susceptible to Republican funding cuts.”

“Wow, okay. I didn’t know about that, I’ll keep it in mind.” Paul looks deeply uncomfortable.

The next contestant is Cassandra, a senior citizen. She's making a chicken pie. Panda talks about his plans to increase retirement benefits and reduce retirement age. "Meanwhile, my opponent, Sun, wants to privatise retirement benefits and gut social security - he says it's a Ponzi scheme."

Paul, for once, looks genuinely engaged in what Panda's saying. "Wait seriously? That's absurd."

"I agree, Mr. Hollywood. It is absurd."

The final contestant is Peter, a factory worker who recently lost his job to automation. He's making a pumpkin pie.

"My Funding the ETA Act would help you, you know. The bill would help the ETA retrain 1 million more workers per year who have lost their jobs to automation, just like you."

Peter nods. "This automation stuff is scary, the toasters connect to the internet now..."

"And Russian hackers can get into your network from these toasters, it's ridiculous! I'd introduce more regulations for Internet of Things security!"

The time for baking the pies runs out.

"Alright, step away from your bakes! Line them up on the table over here."

The pies are lined up. Paul and Panda stand behind it.

"Mmmmm, delicious pies! Potato, banana, blueberry, chicken and pumpkin! Not all together!"

Paul begins critiquing. "Yes, well I can see that this one has a lovely golden crust-" Paul looks up at Peter as Panda jabs a fork in.

"Mmm, yummy! I love pumpkin pie! Just in time for thanksgiving!" Paul looks annoyed, but Peter smiles and laughs!

The two of them eat a slice of each pie. Paul eats small slices, and Panda eats absurdly large ones.

"Wow, chicken pie!"

The two are now ready to make their verdict. Paul starts.

"Right, so on a technical level, the potato pie had a lovely sheen to it, the texture was just lovely-"

"Blueberry pie! Congratulations! You win! I love it! Good job everybody!"

Paul has a very brief existential crisis.

"Thanks everyone! We've had a great group of very conveniently-employed people here to bake us some lovely pies. That concludes the Great SR-3 Bake Off! I'm just going to make some closing statements to cap off the campaign."

"We've run a great race on both sides. But I think the choice is clear - funding the ETA, seeing through agricultural reform, fighting for seniors and reforming our dysfunctional healthcare system, getting a Green New Deal - ...or making post offices fiscally responsible. And deregulating nuclear and privatising retirements, selling out our seniors. Choose wisely, Sierra! Pick real progress for SR-3, pick the candidate who'll fight for a voice for every Sierran! This is SirPandaMaster with Paul Hollywood, signing off!"

In reality, Paul Hollywood stormed off several minutes ago.