

New Mexico Rally and Barbecue

SirPandaMaster, WS-1

/u/SirPandaMaster, now more confident after holding his first rally, socialises with the crowd. He shakes hands, greets supporters and checks on the barbecue, which will start cooking shortly. He makes his way to the stage, which has posters and other promotional material scattered around the base of the outdoor stage. The candidate beams at the audience and begins to speak.

“Good day, Los Alamos!” The rows of supporters cheer, dozens of them having heard about the campaign tour and decided to come along and show their support.

“This is my first time here, and can I just say that it is beautiful! What a picturesque place. I was in Santa Fe earlier today doing a radio interview, and coming out here in the cool afternoon, just- mwah. Sorry.” He smiles and laughs.



“The barbecue’s starting up, so in a bit we’ll start giving out sausages and burgers. I’ll do my speech, then man the barbecue for a bit, then chat some more with you wonderful people.

“I’m here in New Mexico to discuss some issues that are really pressing the Western State. This is a beautiful area, and it needs to be protected; the environment needs to be protected. I’ll go into more detail about my environmental campaign tomorrow in Phoenix. Today, it’s mostly based around you guys, I’ll be taking plenty of questions, stuff like that.

“The first thing I want to talk about is how we’re making change. As I said at my last rally, I don’t like doing this attacking stuff, but I guess it needs to be done. My opponent, Sun, is advocating for the status quo. He’s claiming that he’ll reform the immigration system and save the environment. Last I checked, the GOP wasn’t exactly the environmentalist party, were they?” *Murmurs of agreement sweep through the crowd.* “Like, I think that if the GOP doesn’t agree with reasonable policies such as my 100% renewables goal by 2030, then they can’t claim the environment as their priority. It’s these guys that help to get rid of national park land in the name of industry, stuff like that. And in such a beautiful area as Los Alamos, I somehow doubt that that’s what the people want! Regardless of Sun’s position on that specific issue, a vote for Sun is a vote to give Republicans more power, and that party is more than willing to damage our environment.” *Loud boos are heard.*

“Also, since we’re in the birthplace of the atomic bomb, I’d just like to quickly denounce interventionist policy and military warmongering. We’re America, not the global police. Let’s deal with our issues and aid our allies rather than interfere with others that we deem inferior. I mean, yeah, let’s disapprove and denounce unethical policies, that sort of thing, but for the most part, let’s not mess things up. The Iraq War is a great example of ridiculous interventionist policy. At the same time though, I fully support globalism and international diplomacy through the United Nations, NATO, etcetera.”

"Next on the agenda: /u/LieutenantLiberty, the Classical Liberal. So I praised this guy this morning on the radio, but he's attacked me in his latest post." *He smiles.* "Come on, man. Let me read y'all an excerpt from his recent public address."

"I see that SirPandaMaster just posted that he's on my same capitol tour. He's a few days behind. I'm guessing he saw how well my numbers were doing, and he thought that it would be a good idea to follow in my footsteps. ... his Left Wing policies ... can't mimic what I'm offering to do for the people of WS-1. He can ride my coattails in an effort to bring his numbers up, but that will not represent what the people really want, nor will it get him the votes he'll need. People will see through this."

"Well, well, well, I feel compelled to apologise to all of you who showed up to my phony tour. Mr Liberty, believe it or not, a campaign tour is not an original idea on my part or yours. They're done all the time. Yes, I did see that you were on tour, because I actually check my opponents' posts – unlike Sun, as we discussed on the radio. But that doesn't make mine invalid. Like, this has been in the works for a few days now. But he's right, you all here had better see through my "effort to bring [my] numbers up." Disgusting of me, right?" *The audience seems to disagree.* "My efforts to bring my positions to the people and get to know the citizens of Western State aren't some vain attempt to bring my numbers up; they're me trying to actually connect with the populace and learn real perspectives from real people. Mr. Liberty doesn't seem to understand listening to the people here, since he advocated for eliminating farming subsidies and 'leaving things for the free market to work out.'" *Loud boos erupt from the audience.* "My "left-wing" policies have roots in the interests of the people, not corporations or the "free market," that obsession of Mr Liberty's. He also attacked Sun for copying the concept of liberty, by the way."

"So that's my little rant." He laughs for a moment. "Jeez, I hate being so aggressive."

"So you might be thinking: why'd a social democrat choose to campaign in Los Alamos? This place has the highest percentage of millionaires in America! That's true. I picked this town because, despite that statistic, it's not an elitist place. It's still full of normal people, in addition to the rich history of scientific and academic advances here. Plus, it's beautiful. This town is a great place to pay homage to the academics of Western State, who I care a lot about, as they've done a ton for the country. While I personally despise nuclear weapons, the Manhattan Project was a huge leap forward for science."

"Alright, that concludes my speech, let's get to the barbecue, eh?" *The audience applauds and cheers.*

/u/SirPandaMaster eats a sausage in bread with attendees, then mans the barbecue for a while, turning sausages and flipping burgers like a pro.

"Hey, man, great speech!" A young woman says.

"Thanks!"

"Also, you seem pretty confident with the barbecue. It's almost like you're an Australian or something!" The pair laugh for a moment.

A news crew for KOB news approaches the barbecue, asking for an interview.

"Yeah, sure, give me a sec," the candidate says as he finishes up at the barbecue, giving the station to someone else.

"Hi," starts the reporter, "I'll just get Jerry to start the camera."

Suddenly, it dawns on the candidate that this is the news crew that talked to Sun earlier today. Deciding that that doesn't at all matter, the candidate turns to the reporter.

"I'd just like to ask, what makes you think that a socialist like yourself has any traction whatsoever with the reasonable people of New Mexico?"

Taken aback, the candidate keeps a cool demeanour and begins to respond. "Well, I'm actually not a socialist, in fact I'm a social democrat. The difference being that I'm not advocating the end of capitalism, just the reigning in of it to take the power out of the hands of corporations and back to the people."

"But that's the same thing."

"Some might think that, but that's not based in facts."

"As your opponent, Sun, and I discussed earlier, such an ideology is very dangerous. Your positions are quite radical left-wing policies, and many fear that you stand for government overreach and surveillance."

"Well, I actually care a lot about people's privacy. I'm not at all advocating governmental input or control over people's social lives – I have never done and will never do so. Instead, I advocate for the government to give power to the people, like a democracy should be, rather than to corporations, big business and money."

"But you are advocating for government overreach. Sun advocates liberty."

"I've got no interest in controlling people's personal lives. That's dystopian and terrifying, and any politician who ever advocates that is a serious danger to democracy and the foundations of our society. Sun advocates for liberty, as do I. I'm not 'practically a socialist' as he claims. The point of him saying that is just to beat down my positions without rebutting them."

Frustrated, the reporter begins to signal to Jerry to finish the filming. "Alright, that's about all the time we have. Thanks."

The news crew leaves.

The candidate mingles with the crowd while they eat more sausages and burgers, listening to their personal stories and experiences, while sharing his, before the event winds down and starts to clear out.

"Goodbye everyone! I'll see you in Phoenix, WS-1!"