

Veep and Four Seasons Total Landscaping: Politic Satire Became Reality Show

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Disclaimer: This article includes spoilers for Veep (2012-2018).

On November 7, shortly after the four-day-long vote-counting process resulted in Joe Biden being called as president-elect, President Trump tweeted that his team would hold a press conference at “Four Seasons Philadelphia”, to announce their lawsuits regarding the recounts in several flipped states. After 8 minutes, Trump tweeted “Four Seasons Total Landscaping”, specifying the venue. His initial tweet was interpreted as the venue was Four Seasons Hotel in Philadelphia which is the more expected option of the two for a press conference about the US Presidential Election to take place. To look more into the Four Seasons Total Landscaping, it is a landscaping company in a neighbourhood outside of Philadelphia, located between an erotic shop and a crematorium. Seeing Rudy Giuliani, one of the lawyers of Trump, standing in front of the landscaping firm’s garage door covered with 42 A4-size “TRUMP 2020” posters and talking about suing the election results which they lost was like a scene out of *Veep*.

Veep is a political satire comedy series that aired for 7 seasons from 2012 to 2018. In the series, famous *Seinfeld* and *SNL* actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus portrays a Vice President who accepted the positions after an unsuccessful attempt to be a presidential candidate in the series. Selina Meyer, the show’s protagonist and the “*Veep*”, is a long term politician, with the political party undisclosed, the show achieves to criticize not only one side of the US politics, but the US politics itself. The show has no shortage of criticizing the problematic aspects of Washington D.C. while making the audience laugh successfully with the characters’ explicit and harsh language towards each other. The steady impact of the lobbyists and the benefit of the public often clash and create the conflicts that our characters, Selina Meyer and her political inner circle, face and most of the time fail to solve. By showing how incapable and imperfect the people holding these powerful positions are, the show is both humanizing them and making fun of them. During these conflicts that Selina’s team face, many of the international relations get jeopardized and damaged.

To move on to the reason why the “Four Seasons” incident reminded me of *Veep*, two scenarios seem possible for the incident. Firstly, the person in charge of the booking the venue got “Four Seasons Total Landscaping” confused with “Four Seasons Hotel”, and second, the “Four Seasons Hotel” refused to hold the conference there, in a similar manner to some TV channels refusing to air Trump’s speeches during the vote-counting process not to cause a spread of misinformation, and to save the already-tweeted-venue, Trump’s team finds another

place with the same name by incredible luck. Both scenarios are pretty hilarious when you think about that the team realized their mistake and had to fix it during those eight minutes between two tweets. Most of the 65 episodes of Veep include some sort of a scandal, a half-way short-term solution, and a ridiculing outcome for the Veep just like this whole incident.

Quick and incapable thinking of Selina Meyer's team often gets them in trouble deeper than before, when the political ambitions and personal flaws/mistakes of Selina conflict, watching the ineffectual solving process makes the audience laugh, in contrast to Selina's team, effectively. Political criticism is not the only goal of the show, even though the personal arc of Veep gets darker and more ambitious to the point of her giving up on her own team, besides her principles and morality, to become the president. Her struggles as a woman in politics and the very common pressure of being a woman anywhere is the other storyline of the show, which are very realistically told. Her ex-husband causing a press-drama and hurting Selina's reputation, media referring her as Mommy Meyer because of her "Families First" bill, and not being able to talk about getting sexually assaulted by a politically powerful man are some of the storylines told in the show.

Four years prior to Trump Presidency, the Veep was all about laughing at the politicians and pointing out their flaws when the show started airing. After Trump was elected as the 45th President of the US and started his political career full of scandals in 2016, the harsh truth of reality became visible to everyone and people realized the show is not a satire anymore, as it became almost a reality show. I would like to share a very recent quote from Julia Louis-Dreyfus. Upon being asked to compare the Trump Administration to Veep in February 2020, the leading actress Louis-Dreyfus said that: "I feel like he (Trump) is doing a far superior version of our show, except that it is not even remotely funny, it is deadly serious". ⁽¹⁾ Even though the incident of "Four Seasons" had its comedic moments, the last four years of his political disasters were nothing but horrifying for the whole world. Telling the story of the turbulent environment of Washington D.C. while making the audience laugh is definitely a success, however, that made-fun-of-environment becoming a reality with no jokes is bone-chilling.

1- https://youtu.be/eK65F_P7PIQ