

10.21.24 Inside J!

[00:00:00] From the Alex Trebek stage at Sony Picture Studios, this

is Inside

Jeopardy!

Sarah: Hello and welcome back to Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. I'm Sarah Foss, and I'm joined once again this season with our favorite man about town, Sam Buttrey!

Sam: Coming to you live from the Inside Jeopardy!

remote studio, currently located in the passenger seat of a Formula One car, zipping around somewhere in Monaco.

Sarah: Nice, Sam. I love to live vicariously through your fake travels.

Sam: Oh, you think they're fake, do you?

Sarah: Oh, no, no, no. I too have just returned from some travels, of course. Secret Jeopardy! recordings, but I spent a fantastic 36 hours in New York, made it home just in time to join you on the pod.

Sam: And we're gonna keep you busy with, uh, some more Jeopardy! activities we're gonna talk about, is that right?

Sarah: That's right, let's see, if we call it Jeopardy! Production Time J P [00:01:00] T, we are about to head into some serious C J P T! Celebrity Jeopardy season three. We've got three fun filled days, 27 celebrities.

We're following the similar format we've done in the past where you have to win your quarterfinal, then your semifinal, and then three finalists. Battle it out in a two game total point of fair of sorts and the winner not only earning a huge amount for charity 1, 000, 000 for the charity that they choose to support, but also a chance to come back and represent in the Tournament of Champions.

Sam: Well, it certainly worked for Ike Barinholtz who stunned a strong field to make it to the second round of his Tournament of Champions.

Sarah: Yeah, and if not for a, you know, maybe we could say a not awesome Final Jeopardy wager. A non

Sam: standard amount, for sure.

Sarah: There you go. We could have seen him in the finals, which is just crazy.

What do you think of Celebrity Jeopardy, Sam? You know, you're a Jeopardy contestant. You're [00:02:00] one of the, the OGs. What's your, what's your thought on Celebrity Jeopardy?

Sam: I love all forms of Jeopardy, but my only concern about Celebrity Jeopardy is that it does seem as if maybe the questions have been made a little easier than I might like, a little easier than the regular syndicated show.

Sarah: Sure.

Sam: But I enjoy watching celebrities who are very good at things outside the realm of Jeopardy also do well in the realm of Jeopardy, so it was always great to see somebody like Cheech Marin or Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Who are really good at what they do also turn out to be fun, smart, knowledgeable people.

So I, I watch it. I like, I enjoy it.

Sarah: Yeah. Well, I will say what I say every year when we do Celebrity Jeopardy. Just think that these people who you see on the stage, these are the ones that were willing to put their egos aside. for charity. You don't know the people who said no because they didn't want to possibly look bad.

These are the people, they have no idea what the categories will be, they have no idea what the clues will be, [00:03:00] but they're willing to come up on the Alex Trebek stage and put it all on the line for the chance to win at least 30, 000 for the charity that they are supporting. So, I love everyone who says yes, and they will always be my favorite celebrities because these are the people that really are willing to put it on the line.

Sam: I hear what you're saying. It's a possibility that things could go badly wrong, but it's beautiful to see these people looking human.

Sarah: Yes! We will see many of them looking human, or as human as any celebrity can look. Now we've had one week of our new and improved set. And various things I need to know, Sam, what did you think?

How did you like it? What's your takeaway?

Sam: Well, I was lucky enough to be in the studio audience for the, this opening week's games, so I got to see, uh, up close what the changes are. I love the changes. I'm just a little sorry that the people at home can't appreciate how great the new board is. I've mentioned it before, but for the players, the new board is a huge improvement.

It [00:04:00] used to be that you'd have to sort of squint in at that tiny little monitor on the array of monitors. Because although at home it looks as if the clue expands to fill the board. In fact, it doesn't but here under the new board. It really does. It's big. It's easy to read and it's one less piece of stress for the players so I love that but the colors and the lights are all very uh fun and welcoming and I would like to make a pitch to those you listening to. The podcast see if you can't come down and watch the show being taped live down in beautiful Culver City, California. There's a way to get tickets on the website and I encourage people to try it.

It's a lot of fun.

Sarah: Yeah. And it's free.

Sam: And it's free. You can't beat that.

Sarah: You can't beat that. Well, I saw a lot of nice comments online, mostly nice. Uh, one thing we did incorporate was putting the white highlight bar around the category before we blow the clue out. We've heard for years, people want, they forget where the category is.

They're kind of, you know, disoriented about the board and they want a quick reminder. So this is a solution we had done. In Masters and in Celebrity, and we decided to bring it into [00:05:00] syndication. Few people said they found it distracting. I think this is one of those things distracting for maybe half a game, but once you get used to it, it's really a nice reminder, I feel, and overall, that's the sentiment that people seem to share.

You know, people for years have also wanted us to put the category onto the clue, but you just don't realize how much real estate that takes up and that can be distracting in and of itself to have both the category and the clue. So we feel like this is kind of a perfect balance to allow people a little check in a reminder of where we're headed.

And what we're trying to think about in those clues.

Sam: I agree. It's an elegant solution to something that was a little bit of a problem. So I'm delighted to see that, uh, white square remind me of what the category is. I think it's the perfect answer.

Sarah: Now, one thing you cannot say you ever got to experience, I don't think Sam is an up close and personal interview with a Jeopardy host.

Is that correct?

Sam: That is correct. In all of my games, the host had to hang way back by that big monitor we were talking about last week. [00:06:00] And, uh, even though I was in the studio audience for these games, it surprised me a little bit at home to see Ken so close to the camera when he came over to interview the contestant at the third podium.

I think it's great. It takes me back to the Art Fleming and Alex Trebek days, and I think it adds a personal touch.

Sarah: Well, and one thing people might not know. Not realize a lot of people know, you know, initially, Alex did that for Cove it. But then we actually changed the floor and took away some of the real estate in front of the contestant podium.

So it really wasn't safe for her host to be wandering down toward the contestants for fear that they might fall off part of the stage. So the new floor was expanded to allow more space in front of the podiums so that the host can go and talk to the contestants. We're really excited about this. This is something Ken had never had the chance to do and was really excited about doing.

But even just the choreography, back when Alex did it, the podiums were connected. So when he would go contestant to contestant, it was just one little shuffle step. You know, Ken has to take three or four steps [00:07:00] in between. And it was a bit of a work in progress to decide. All right. Does he walk backwards?

Does he turn and cross? So if you're looking closely in the coming weeks, you're going to see how it kind of evolves. And what we figure out is the best way for Ken to get from contestant to contestant.

Sam: I think it worked very well this week as well.

Sarah: And the new final Jeopardy! monitor is up. It's a, I love the design.

I feel like it really goes. Well with the rest of the set, um, I'll tell you there's a little Easter egg about that. So when you watch this week's coming shows, I'm going to, I'm going to quiz you next week, Sam, you see if you can tell me if you noticed any continuing updates in the new set.

Sam: Well, thanks for the warning.

I watch all of the episodes a couple of times to prepare for the podcast. So now I'm going to have to go back and watch everything a third time just to make sure. And

Sarah: you who are listening, go ahead and say it. see in this coming week. If you notice any difference. Quick wrap up on my favorite comments.

New game board clue display. Overall, the presentation is very slick for [00:08:00] the players. Sam agrees. I was so excited to see Ken standing next to the contestant podiums. And finally, I love that they listened to the fans and inserted a category highlight marker after a contestant verbally says what it is they're interested in, because those of us at home can't always believe.

what we just heard and have to double check to make sure their selection matches up with what we think we just heard.

Sam: I will say as a player, one of your nightmares is when you forget what the category is and when it calls for something that, for example, begins and ends with T and you forget that.

Sarah: And at

Sam: home it's similarly frustrating.

So I think the reminder is just helpful for everybody.

Sarah: Well, last week, Sam, we talked about the post Jeopardy syndrome, just what it's like to have waited all this time to play Jeopardy and just kind of what it's like after that has happened and the letdown. Well, this week, now people are talking about the post season rejection syndrome, if you will.

And reading this thread and all these comments, it broke my [00:09:00] heart and I I have to feel a little bit guilty, because obviously postseason is something we've created to be able to bring back people who may not ever play again, like our second chance competitors and obviously Champions Wildcard. But a lot of disappointed folks out there once we announced on the pod that those calls had gone out.

Sam: I, uh, I share your feeling of sorrow for these people who in many cases I thought had well written and insightful comments about their feeling of rejection. And there are a number of complexities here, you know, we have not always had Tournament of Champions every year, for example. So it used to be, for instance, in Season 38, there was no Tournament of Champions.

Sarah: Yeah.

Sam: Um, so, the, uh, the fact that Jeopardy, now being a sport, Sarah, and I don't know if you knew that, Mm hmm. The fact that we have a serious postseason every year or plan to means that, you know, it's reasonable that we change the way that we construct that. And I do think that, you know, the people who are hoping to get a second chance invitation or maybe a champion's [00:10:00] wildcard after winning a couple, uh, are in this funny position where they just don't know what's going to happen.

And I'm sympathetic to that, but it's also true that it's very difficult to decide who belongs in a second chance, particularly in a second chance tournament. We're, uh, going off things beyond just scores. I understand why it's difficult for these people to sort of let go when they've been having this great experience that might or might not continue.

Uh, I encourage Jeopardy fans, by the way, to read the Reddit thread, which is fairly normal. I think there are a lot of Reddit threads out there that maybe aren't, but this is mostly interesting people, people we've heard of making intelligent comments on about America's favorite quiz show. Trademark.

Sarah: Nice.

You're learning, Sam. Yes, I agree. I feel like that Reddit community is very supportive, and it's a place to go among fellow contestants, but also just fellow fans of the show who are so excited to see contestants who they've seen on the show commenting on things, and they want to be as supportive as possible.

I know a lot of people [00:11:00] mentioned that I chancers over the season, and there were so many. Potential second chancers. At the end of the day, this was also listening to people and knowing that they wanted a shorter postseason and they wanted more regular season games. So to make that happen, you have to do less second chance, you have to do a smaller field of champions wildcard, and you really have to kind of accelerate the postseason so that we can get back into those regular games that people so strongly believe in.

Spoke about when there was a longer postseason. So this really was a reaction to hearing people's comments and wanting to heed the call, if you will. But with only 18 spots in second chance, it was complicated. And I guess I just really want people to know that it's a long process and it really is. It is about your score.

It is about your correct responses. It is about your choreographed. It is about who you [00:12:00] faced. What kind of competition did you go up against? You know, getting a very high amount of correct responses against a very strong champion or two strong challengers. That proves to be even more difficult than maybe getting higher correct responses against two challengers who didn't fare as well.

So it's really, I just want to assure everyone that it isn't something we just go, Oh, producer's choice. I really liked this person. They're getting the call. A lot of work goes into it to make sure that as best we can, we're putting forth the contestants who have the best chance to make the most of that second chance.

Go onto the champion's wildcard, maybe even onto TOC, be the next Javeria Zaheer. That's what we're hoping for in second chance. And when it comes to champions wild card, it's really just a numbers game. We have 13 spots because of course two of the 15 are coming from second chance. So we have 13 spots.

And essentially, after we take our TOC qualifiers, We just go to the next 13 players who had the most wins and [00:13:00] had the highest scores and it's really nothing subjective about it and it is a numbers game and we love you all and we can't wait to see those of you who are coming for the postseason and we support all of you who are going through this postseason disappointment syndrome.

as well.

Sam: No, we appreciate what you're doing. And I, I, for one, I'm looking forward to the postseason.

Sarah: You'll be here, Sam. Unless, unless Uncle Sam needs you in the jury room. Is it Uncle Sam? Would you say it's Uncle Sam? No, it's not federal. I was going to make a point

Sam: about that. It's actually the, uh,

Sarah: correct me, Sam.

Come on now. Correct me. It's okay. It's the good people of

Sam: the state of California have called my service and I, uh, had a fun conversation with you, Sarah, months ago. And I said, well, let's just pick a random date and set my, put my jury service off until that date. And of course, like an idiot, I selected second chance day.

So

Sarah: yes, you know, this is life, but I have a feeling the state of California and even uncle Sam, he's going to chime in and it's all going to work out. And we're going to have you down here. But if not, [00:14:00] we will miss you terribly. To be continued on that one. To

Sam: be continued.

Sarah: And now, a quick word from our sponsor.

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Sign up for your 1 per month trial period at [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy). All lowercase. Go to [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy) to upgrade your selling today. [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy). Now back to Inside Jeopardy. All right, well, let's get into some game highlights. We kicked off the week with Eamon Campbell earning his second win after a hard fought battle with Jack Swanzy.

After multiple lead changes throughout the game, Eamon secured a narrow lead heading into final where he was [00:15:00] correct.

Sam: Jack played a strong game, and it came down to the last few clues, which I enjoyed. Also, the third player, Karen, was pretty strong. But Eamon was able to come away with the win after getting Final Jeopardy!

correct. A funny Final Jeopardy!, Sarah. I think we all enjoyed it.

Sarah: We sure did. A 2014 tweet said that this mascot was the embodiment of a milkshake or Or Tastebud. And the correct response, of course, who is Grimace? But a lot of comments about this final Jeopardy.

Sam: Well, I think it helped that just as Jeopardy is going into its postseason, Major League Baseball is also in its postseason.

And Grimace was sort of an unofficial mascot for the New York Mets this year, who were in the postseason even as we were broadcasting these shows. Interestingly, the Mets have another official mascot, uh, Mr. Met, who is a man with an enormous baseball head. And I wonder if he and Grimace are pals or rivals?

They didn't address that.

Sarah: I know. I wonder. Uh, Dodgers fans, not as [00:16:00] excited about this Final Jeopardy. Uh, one viewer commented, My Dodgers lost to the Mets today, so that Grimace Final Jeopardy felt very targeted. We can assure you, Dodgers fans, As one myself, it was not. And Will Wallace, who was our alternate this week, said, The Grimace discourse may be my favorite Green Room moment from the tape day.

I learned more about him than I ever wanted to know, and I will never forget him. Not associate him with a milkshake now. You know, you never know what you're gonna talk about in that contestant green room, right, Sam?

Sam: I guess. I, I, I don't, uh, I like milkshakes, uh, and I, I have taste buds, but I do not want a milkshake that looks like a taste bud.

I, I don't, that does not appeal to me.

Sarah: No, I don't want to drink Grimace. Thank you. Well, on Tuesday, all three players came to play. A gutsy, true daily double wager from newcomer Rishabh Wupalapati and a strong finish to the game earned him the lead going into final [00:17:00] where he was correct to secure the win.

Sam: Another great game by all three players with the defending champ just under 10, 000 and Zoe coming in at 11, 100 to challenge Rishabh, but he pulled it away.

Sarah: I liked the NFL Connections category, that was a little fun. Zoe's from Philly, so she got the 200 clue. Bald, legal, Sam from the Muppets. Of course, she got to say what is the eagles go birds and then during the host pick, Ken said, look, you got to shout out your eagles.

So you just never know when you're going to get to a little personal shout out

Sam: in these games. Fans who are watching closely watch Zoe recoil and unhappiness when they were unable to get the Philly cheesesteak question, which Eamon got correct.

Sarah: Yeah, you can't get all your Philly clues, I guess, but Zoe certainly prevailed in the talking heads category, going straight to that category first and saying, I love them and I love the movie, nearly ran the category and fans were so excited about this category.

We were obviously [00:18:00] so excited too. We heard from A24, which is the company that is re-releasing Stop Making Sense right now, 40 years after the original release. And the band was so excited to get together and do these Clues. We shot with them in New York and you know, Ken's a huge fan. Mateo Roach is a huge fan.

Our staff and crew, huge fans of Talking Heads. So really fun to be able to feature them on the show. We also learned backstage that Rishabh and Zoe. Went to the same high school, they were there 12 years apart, but you just never know. You know, you're gonna show up and who knew that a fellow high school graduate from your school is right there on the Alex Trebek stage with you.

Sam: And talk about coincidence, they actually went to high school not in Philadelphia, but in suburban Chicago. But now they both live nearby one another in Philadelphia, it's a small world.

Sarah: But Rashab, he didn't get the, uh, the Philly cheesesteak or the go birds clue. So I don't know if he can never go back to Philly again.

Sam: He is a [00:19:00] proud Pennsylvania Quaker.

Sarah: There you go. Well, moving on to Wednesday where Rashab faced another tough challenger in Rachel Cassidy. After taking a small 300 lead on the last clue of the game, he was correct to get that second win in a row.

Sam: Exactly right. It was the very final clue that put him slightly ahead of Rachel, and they both got Final Jeopardy right, and they both wagered enough to win.

Sarah: Yeah, and of course, you'll remember Rashab wrote Fayetteville at first, crossed it out, and then in the final seconds realized it was Columbia, wrote his response as quickly as possible. I know some people said it should not have been accepted, it wasn't, you couldn't read it, it was chicken scratch, but I've been here for a lot of these.

And there are times when we feel like either the word wasn't completed, or the letters that were chosen changed the pronunciation of the word. In this case, I felt, as Ken did, as did our co headwriters, Billy and [00:20:00] Michelle, we all reviewed this before the ruling was made, that we could make out a word.

Every one of the letters in Columbia and as a result Rishabh goes on to win.

Sam: I agree. I think it was the right call, but I do encourage Rishabh to write his dissertation or thesis or whatever they're doing at Penn using a computer rather than the light pen that we have at the podium.

Sarah: Yes, although that's another thing I want to comment on because people were saying Jeopardy, when are you going to get with the times and stop having people write this with the stylus?

You should have them typing it in. But what people don't realize is if we were to do that, how easily, I mean, We all have phones and mobile devices. How often does autocorrect come in for you? Because you accidentally, your fingers think they're typing one thing, and because of placement, you might actually type a different letter, and you have 30 seconds, and you're not necessarily checking your work.

Can you imagine that? Losing a game of Jeopardy because of a typing error, I would much rather [00:21:00] depend on the stylus and my mind and actually see what I am writing, and so, for those of you whose comments I read, I just want to say, I kindly disagree.

Sam: I like the stylus, but I will say it's placed precisely where a right handed person would want it.

So we lefties have to deal with the stylus and the long cord. The cord is long enough. Sam!

Sarah: It's cordless now! You don't know! You haven't been playing! I'm a lefty too, Sam. We are all equal opportunity players now. It's a cordless stylus. You can go wherever you want with that left hand of yours.

Sam: I might try to snag one off just as a souvenir.

Don't tell anyone.

Sarah: I won't. You know, we should let you come in for a rehearsal game or something. You know, we always have to have stand ins when we need to do rehearsals. We should let Sam come back and stand behind the podium. It won't be for any money or anything, but just for bragging rights and a chance to hold that wireless stylus.

Sam: When I visited the stage, I was lucky enough to be able to stand behind Ken's podium. I got Laura from Digital to take a picture.

Sarah: That's the lectern. We call that [00:22:00] the lectern.

Sam: When I visited the stage, I was lucky enough to No, you don't

Sarah: have to correct yourself. I'm just letting you know it's the lectern.

Isn't that cool? I guess. You know, we give, we give the host a little more oomph. We give them lectern. The contestants, they just have the podiums. I don't know. It's a Jeopardy thing. I like it. But you got a picture behind said podium lectern?

Sam: I did, yes. I was excited to pretend to be Ken briefly. It's kind of an old, wrinkled, not as funny Ken.

But if, for any reason, Ken is unable to discharge the rights and responsibilities, the privileges of being the host, I, Sam Butchery, throw my hat into the ring, except I need the hat to hide the bald spot.

Sarah: We will know that you're available and at the ready. Well, on Thursday, Rishabh returned to face off with Aaron, trivia Daddy Brown.

Aaron was keeping pace until he found the last Daily Double. He declared quite bravely, Let's get this money, honey. All of it. [00:23:00] But he was incorrect, dropping him out of contention and giving Rashabh a runaway win.

Sam: A tough day for Aaron, who was slightly ahead when he got the first daily double in the double jeopardy round, and also slightly ahead when he found that second big one.

I thought it was a bold move. Rashabh is obviously a strong player, and it makes sense to bet big in that case. It just didn't work out for him.

Sarah: Well, he certainly had a lot of personality. If you didn't hear this interview, we're going to play it for you now. Trivia Daddy, take it away.

Ken: Aaron Brown from London, Ontario is an entrepreneur and a trivia host.

Are those two things connected, Aaron?

They are. Well, at first it wasn't. I started being a trivia host just for fun. And the next thing you knew, I'm just like you. I'm a trivia host working two days a week. I started because I love it, not because I thought I was going to make money or make a big business out of it.

But the next thing you know. Two nights, three nights, four nights a week. And now I have Trivia Minions back home doing my bidding, the other trivia hosts. And I want to give a shout out to all my [00:24:00] trivia babies. Trivia Daddy made it to the big stage, and you can too. You have to take the anytime test, you guys.

If you don't take it, you'll never be here, so.

Ken: I don't have, I don't have any Canadian trivia minions there, and I'm very jealous. Congratulations on, uh, on your success. Ha ha!

Sarah: I love this. Uh, you know, we are going to be launching Jeopardy Bar League soon. And I think Canadian Trivia Daddy, he's got to be a host.

I mean, it's got to happen.

Sam: I think he could do it. And I bet his minions are good too, if they work for Aaron. Good stuff.

Sarah: And always great advice. Take the any time test. Well, Ken did speak to Aaron after the game about that big daily double shift. Let's take a listen.

Ken: Aaron, you're talking about this moment, but I have to say, I've rarely been more surprised than you going from the small wager on the first daily double.

I figured

if I missed the first one, the trivia gods would smile on me for the second one. We came this close, and, uh, he's an incredible player, so I knew only a big gutsy move would do it. [00:25:00] And, you know, I came for the king and I missed it, so that's how you gotta play. I really

Ken: admired the wager. Like, you were just one word away.

The maze.

I was familiar with the work, but I was never gonna get there. I'm not that familiar with it. And I knew they were hinting the maze, but I just didn't know that last word. And, uh Never forget that one. We all have one of those.

Ken: Well, the scores are belied by the fact that that was an extremely close game.

Angel, I loved the comeback late. Like you were knocking on the door. Well,

I, I started off with a few wrong answers to start with and like everything just froze in me until the end. I was like, well, I'm good. Let me try now at the end. And so it just, you know, these things happen. Not a big deal.

Ken: Yeah.

Sometimes you try to keep digging and it's, it's tricky, but you played very well. You were so close to coming back into it. And. Same for you, Aaron. Very strong game. But, uh, in the end, Rishabh escapes with win number three, and, uh, we'll see you tomorrow. Thank you.

Sarah: Sam, what's the one for you? I know that Aaron will never forget the maze runner.

Do you have one that [00:26:00] you will never forget?

Sam: I've, I've been wrong so often on Jeopardy, Sarah. They're starting to run together. I think I discussed in an earlier podcast missing a final Jeopardy that had to do with the guy who wrote Jeopardy. The girl with the dragon tattoo and that one still haunts me a bit because I knew it.

And uh, Stieg Larsson, that's the guy who is Stieg Larsson.

Sarah: Yeah,

Sam: that guy follows me around a little bit.

Sarah: Well, on Friday, we wrapped up the week with another great game between Rashab and Kelly Gates. They were neck and neck the entire time, but then Kelly managed to protect the lead heading into final.

All three players were correct, and it earns her the win against a three game champ.

Sam: Good for Kelly, who led much of the way. We love to see librarians doing well on Jeopardy, partly because my wife works at the public library, and partly because libraries are just inherently good.

Sarah: And they make inherently great Jeopardy champions.

In fact, Kelly told us a story about her pub trivia team, All Librarians, And they had played in a [00:27:00] competition at Cambridge against Jeopardy alum Maureen O'Neill. You remember, she was a four game champ, went into the TOC, was a semi finalist. But then after Kelly's team won, Maureen came over to their table and said, Congratulations!

Never come back.

Sam: Maureen is a delight, and I actually got to catch up with her in Boston this spring when I happened to be in town. So, I'm certain that was offered in a friendly way and not a threatening way, I hope.

Sarah: No, not at all. And I'm sure you also didn't play any part. Bar trivia with her. It might have been a different story.

Sam: No, then, then she would have come after me with a knife. So, yeah.

Sarah: We, we thought so. Ken caught up with Kelly after her big win. Let's take a listen.

Ken: You had a strong game, Rishabh. You leave us a three game champion with 52, 000. Very impressive week for you. But Kelly, you kept your cool. What was it like coming in knowing you had to play this guy?

I think it actually took some of the pressure off because I thought for sure I would lose. So I just came out to have fun. And then when I saw Final [00:28:00] Jeopardy, I was like, Okay, I think I might have this.

Ken: Now, as a librarian, it got you some kitty lit. You got Where the Sidewalk Ends. You got the Lorax. Yeah, well, I started in youth services, so And a lot of kids reading The Great Gatsby still, I assume.

Today's a day when Rishabh is hoping for a tougher Final Jeopardy and Did not get his wish, but you had to get that right Kelly and you win by one dollar. Congratulations. Well done Thank you.

Sarah: All right. It's that time. You all know what time it is, but wait with two tees. There's more Sam what did you find for us in this week's?

I

Sam: just want to emphasize that it's the butt that has two tees not the weight the weight only has just the one tee

Sarah: It's true. It's true. I really, I should have led with that. Yes.

Sam: Today's clue comes from Wednesday's game, the 1200 clue in the astronomy category. Bring it!

Ken: Astronomy for 12. In the 18th century, the recording of the transit of Venus across the sun helped establish the value of 1 AU, short for this.

Rachel?

Sarah: What is Astronomical Unit? [00:29:00]

Sam: Correct.

Sarah: The

Sam: AU, or Astronomical Unit, measures the average distance from the Earth to the Sun, which we all learn to be about 93 million miles. Of course, people have been trying to measure this for centuries. A transit of Venus is when Venus passes between the Sun and the Earth, sort of like an eclipse, except Venus is just a little dot on the Sun.

Astronomers realized that if two people at different spots on the Earth measured the same transit, they could triangulate to find the distance to Venus. And use that to deduce the distance to the sun. And those transits were a big deal, because they're very rare. So people like, for example, Captain Cook were sent out to make this measurement from distant lands.

He was sent to Tahiti to take his measurements, and there's still a Point Venus there today.

Sarah: But Sam, doesn't our value for the AU change? As our measurements get better?

Sam: It does indeed, because now we have better equipment, better clocks, and we also have other ways to measure that distance. But the coolest correction, I think, arises not so much from Venus, but from Mercury.

Newton's gravity explains almost everything about planetary motion and [00:30:00] gravity on Earth, but after Newton's death, astronomers realized that Mercury's orbit didn't quite match what Newton's model predicted. So what was needed was another brilliant physicist, maybe a 20th century one, to set us straight.

Any guesses as to who that might be?

Sarah: All right, I'm gonna, I'm gonna go with Einstein.

Sam: Yes, the correct response is, who is Einstein? Unless you're Oh yes, who

Sarah: is Einstein?

Sam: Unless you're Matt Amodio, in which case it's What's Einstein?

Sarah: Haha! Wow! Sam! Pretty good emotio rodeo voice there. You guys must be friends.

I practice that.

Sam: Well, Einstein's theory of general relativity describes how mass bends spacetime, and sure enough, Einstein's theory correctly predicted Mercury's orbit, and then we use that to refine the AU as well. I will say in 2012, the AU was redefined as just a specific number of meters, so it's not going to change in the future.

The average distance from the earth to the sun is very well known.

Sarah: Aha. The mystery is solved. Thanks, Sam. Love it. And [00:31:00] I love that you were able to bring it to us. I love that you can bring it to us every week.

Sam: I see what you did there, Sarah.

Sarah: Yep. I'm going to keep doing it. Uh, now it's time for this week's host chat.

An audience member asked Ken, Had you attended a taping of the show before you were a contestant?

Ken: No, I had never been here before. And, uh, we were taping here 20 years ago, but it was a little bit overwhelming because, you know, you see it on TV and then it's. But I do recommend people who are trying out for the show, you should come watch.

Often we'll have an alternate contestant who doesn't play, because we always have a spare, and they come back the next day and they do get to play then, and I think they do like better than you statistically expect, because they've been able to watch a day's worth of filming and get acclimated.

Sarah: Had you ever come before, Sam, before you competed in the Professor's Tournament?

Sam: I had not. It all came on pretty abruptly. And I agree with Ken that it feels as if, if I had done that, I might have had a, an easier acclimation, although it turned out to work well for me. I know Andrew He had come when he was in high school. You know, he's from the [00:32:00] Los Angeles area originally. I don't know if it helped him, but boy, he was good at Jeopardy.

Sarah: Yeah. Not sure if that's what did it. But as you said, he certainly, uh, did well on the Alex Trebek stage. Well, Sam, believe it or not, that is it for today's show. We've got to go get ready. Well, I've got to go get ready for Celebrity Jeopardy. You've got to go explore Monaco, but we're going to be back next week, as always, for more game highlights and all that's happening in the world of Jeopardy.

Sam: Thanks and farewell.

Sarah: See you next [00:33:00] [00:34:00] [00:35:00] week.