

10.7.24 Inside J! _FINAL

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

Sarah: is

Sam: 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 today by Sam Buttrey. Sam! Where are we finding you today?

Not here with me in the pod studio.

Sam: Sadly, no, but in the Inside Jeopardy! remote studio, currently operating from an unmarked fishing vessel, safely in international waters.

Sarah: Ha ha! As long as it's safely, we are happy. I have to say, though, you will be back soon enough, because we can't do Second Chance without you, Sammy!

Sam: I'm very excited about coming down to Culver City and helping out in Second Chance, both in the podcast and in the studio, where I will sit quietly and say nothing.

Sarah: And take copious notes,

Sam: as always,

Sarah: as always. Well, we actually finalized the second chance [00:01:00] competitors at the end of last week. Those notifications are going out.

And all I have to say is, I mean, everyone heard me here on the pod every week saying, Oh gosh, another contender for second chance, got to think we're considering them for second chance. And it was true. Tough. Of course, we're just having two weeks of second chance this year, so that's just 18 spots. Not nearly enough for all of the deserving players who came so close to getting a win.

And, you know, a variety of stats go into deciding it, a variety of factors. We're looking at Correct responses. We're looking at Coriat. We're looking at total final score. We're looking at score heading into final. We're also looking at who did these players go up against? Were they going up against two champions?

Were they going up against a super champion? So much went into it. And, uh, I'm very excited for you to see Sam, [00:02:00] those 18 who were. Selected.

Sam: And Sarah, will you be revealing the names of the selected candidates or do we have to wait and see it in real time?

Sarah: You know, we like to reveal them ahead of when those shows are going to air, but not ahead of when they're going to tape.

So we're going to announce them in JPT. But not J A T, but you will get to hear the names soon enough. I will be very curious to hear your thoughts. Obviously, you've been watching these games with a whole different level of inquiry at this point, so I'm sure you'll have some thoughts yourself. But I'm happy, at least for those who've been just waiting to see if they were going to get the call to know now.

Whether or not the call's coming, if that makes sense.

Sam: It does indeed. You know, there's a lot of sitting and waiting. I had a similar thing, uh, with the Jeopardy! Invitational Tournament. It wasn't clear to me whether I'd be invited, and you just sort of wait for the call to come.

Sarah: Yeah. I don't know if it was better before the Michael Davies post season era, or Or worse, [00:03:00] because, you know, it used to be if you didn't win at least three games, you know, that was like kind of a cusp of thinking you may have a chance to get into the TOC, uh, an off chance.

But if not that, you know, you probably weren't coming back to the Alex Trebek stage. And now we, we dangle that post season carrot for so many.

Sam: It's true. Everybody knows it's out there, but I do think that, uh, a number of the contestants we've seen Uh, deserve another shot. There are good Jeopardy players who happen to run into a super champion, something like that.

So it's going to be a good competition with good players and good games.

Sarah: It's been interesting. We've heard from other fellow champions and actually the, the overwhelming input is that people like second chance better than champions wildcard. I'm talking about the field of TOC type level competitors that they actually I feel like Second Chance is more, I don't know, a more valid competition than Champions Wildcard.

Do you have any thoughts on that, or can you figure out why they might think that?

Sam: No, [00:04:00] you know, I haven't had that discussion with anybody, and offhand I would have said I like Champions Wildcard. There are often players out there who have two wins, three wins, players that I'd like to see again. Second Chance is fun too, but I think in a different way.

And I like that Second Chance is only a small component of the new Jeopardy! postseason.

Sarah: Yeah, well, certainly you look at Second Chance last year, you have to think of someone like Javeria Zahir, who just excelled through Second Chance, excelled through Champions Wildcard, made it to the TOC. So I'm hoping we end up with a similar story.

This competition was originally created based on Jessica Stevens, who had a tough go going up against You know, Matt Amodio and Jonathan Fisher. So I love the spirit in with which it was created. And I'm hoping that we'll have some great stories come out of it this year.

Sam: Yes. Jessica was a very strong player who got stuck between two super champions, very much held her own.

I was happy to see her make it into the tournament of champions, where unfortunately she ran into a buzzsaw named [00:05:00]

Sarah: It's not something we wish upon anyone. I'm happy to say that we will soon be announcing also our champions wildcard field and also TOC. So stay tuned to the pod. Those names are coming quickly. We gotta, gotta get all those second chance competitors. Confirmed. And then we'll be booking the following competitions as well.

Well, it is October and I don't know if you saw how our social team decided to ring in October and ring out September. They did one of those very viral September 30th versus October 1st photos. You had your jovial Ken, you know,

waving on the stage on September 30th. And then October 1st, he's got his Dracula cape, and it's a very red Final Jeopardy lighting, really setting the scene for October.

And Ken is always up for this sort of thing, Sam.

Sam: Our social media team can't be stopped, but I will say, is there anybody less frightening in our day to day lives than Ken Jennings? Try as he might, it just doesn't, he doesn't pull it [00:06:00] off.

Sarah: I know, but he does pull off enthusiasm. I went backstage, I said, Hey, Ken, you've seen this whole September 30th versus October 1st.

This was on October 1st. I was like, do you still have the cape from last year? And Steven, who does his wardrobe was like, Oh yeah, I have the cape. I said, great. Can we get the cape? Can we get the final Jeopardy! lighting before lunch? Can we make it happen? Because you need to be a part of this trend and he was up for it.

Sam: They know the memes our social media team does. And Ken did his part with the, uh, slightly scary eyes, I admit, but, uh, he's just a too nice a guy to be, uh, to, to have you worry about him sucking your blood, I guess.

Sarah: Yeah, and they like to get you involved in those as well. I'm not sure if the latest one they had you do when you were here last has, has gone up yet.

But I have no doubt it's going to go viral.

Sam: I think with me, part of it is the incongruity of the old gray haired guy doing the young people thing. But I'm all for it. Those guys are great. They know what they're doing. I'm happy to play along.

Sarah: I love that you are. We also got a first [00:07:00] look at the Pop Culture Jeopardy set.

I don't know if you saw it. I know you didn't see it in person, Sam, but did you see it online?

Sam: I did. I took a look. One thing that struck me was the absence of the big Final Jeopardy monitor that usually stands between the host and podium number one. It's gone, Sarah. It disappeared.

Sarah: It disappeared into thin air because that's what happens when you have to make podiums for teams of three people.

There's a lot of real estate taken up by those podiums, and really, that final Jeopardy! monitor, it didn't have much room left to live, but we made up for it with some giant letters right above the header of the set, pop culture, Jeopardy! And I don't know if that Jeopardy! brought back some memories of the old set with the giant Jeopardy!,

but it felt a bit nostalgic to me.

Sam: A bit of a throwback, but with brighter lighting. And I don't know if the folks know that one of the exciting things about the Pop Culture set is the debut of the new [00:08:00] electronic board.

Sarah: Yes, this was where you first got to get a look at that game board. There are no longer 36 monitors, a single giant game board.

It will debut in Syndicated Jeopardy! next week on October 14th. I will tell you though, Final Jeopardy! Monitor does come back in Syndication, but it's a new and improved Final Jeopardy! Monitor, so you'll see something new, but that does come back once we go back to our regular sized podiums. We had a little bit more room for the Final Jeopardy!

Monitor.

Sam: Very exciting. I was at the taping of the shows where we'll see the new stage debut, and sure enough, the final Jeopardy! monitor is there. But all in all, a beautiful look, an exciting new take on a classic Jeopardy! theme.

Sarah: Yeah. Coming your way on Prime Video, December 4th. Winning Wednesdays. Can't wait for that to begin.

Had to get your input on a Reddit thread. I was reading Sam and it was talking about post [00:09:00] Jeopardy syndrome and just the way people can't help but just relive their games. But it's not a positive. It's all the things they missed and just the regrets. Did you have any of this? Can you relate to this?

Sam: I can relate to it a bit. I've certainly made my share of it. Mistakes on the Jeopardy stage. Although I was lucky enough to have that come farther along in my career, a lot of, uh, Jeopardy players, of course, only ever get to play one time and they come away from the game kicking themselves a little bit.

And that's unfair because the game is very variable, a lot going on. A lot of these players have been up against strong competitors who have already played a few games. One of this week's competitors chimed in on that. Scott Chang, whom we'll talk about, uh, describe the feeling as almost freeing, that once you are, uh, out of jeopardy for life, you don't have to look at everything in your life and decide whether it might be on the show.

And I've certainly felt that, so I've been in the position of, uh, trying to register every fact [00:10:00] about life. In anticipation of future Jeopardy appearances. But I'm also one of the very few people who has retired from Jeopardy voluntarily. Almost everybody who stops playing Jeopardy does it because they lose.

And of course I lost plenty of times, but I was able to retire. Uh, and there comes a time when you, uh, Learn a fact just for the joy of learning the fact, and not because it'll ever show up on America's favorite show. So I understand the post Jeopardy syndrome, but I just hope anybody who appears on the show looks back on it fondly and remembers the fun they had with the fellow competitors and with playing the game.

Sarah: I like that, Sam. But we are America's favorite quiz show, don't you forget.

Sam: Damn it. Can I re record that? I forgot what I said. What did I say? Game show? That was so

Sarah: good. Yeah, you did.

Sam: Learning facts just for learning them and not because they're going to appear on America's favorite quiz show. And I know Jeopardy is America's favorite quiz show because we have trademarked that phrase.

Sarah: Haha, we sure have. You wouldn't want to call it America's favorite game show or [00:11:00] anything.

Sam: No, no, that would be a terrible thing to say and they wouldn't dub that out.

Sarah: No, we wouldn't have just edited that thirty seconds ago because Sam would never make that mistake. Whatever.

Okay.

Sarah: Well, Sam, another great week of games.

You are here to discuss with me and it was our first four game champion of the season. So let's dive right in to Monday where Kate Resh returned, hoping for a second victory, but it was new champion Ryan Manton who secured the win in a runaway after a dominant performance. Wow. Take a look at those stats, Sam.

Sam: 29 correct responses. One of the best showings we've seen all year. Found all three Daily Doubles. And even though he missed two of them for a 10,000 loss, finished well ahead of both Kate and Allison in what can only be described as a dominating game.

Sarah: Yes, and I think Jeopardy! skills, they're part of their family because Ryan's wife, [00:12:00] Lauren Mendke, was a season 37 player who actually competed on Ken's last game as a guest host.

She was of course in the audience to support and cheer on Ryan and Ken caught up with him after the game. Let's take a listen.

I love this. This is great. I know in your family, Sam, your wife in the pool, at least until this new position that you acquired, but obviously you have a love of the show and a competitive, fun, supportive nature at home.

Sam: That's right. Uh, and what's fun about that, and I don't know if it's true with Ryan and Lauren, is that we are strong in different areas.

So, as a couple, we're particularly good at Jeopardy. My wife made it into the pool. Uh, three times, and was invited to come on the fourth time, but I'm pretty sure she's not eligible right now.

Sarah: Yeah. You know, is she bitter about that, Sam? She's

Sam: No. Let me answer that one again. My You know, Sarah, my wife is bitter about so much that I do, but I don't think this is one of those causes.

And I am [00:13:00] just getting My wife is a lovely person. You've met her. And she says hi. I have met her.

Sarah: She is lovely. I say hi right back and I thank her for sacrificing her potential Jeopardy! success so that you could be a part of our podcast. And

Sam: in all sincerity, I thank her too. We had this discussion.

Sarah: I didn't think that you accepted this position without having that talk.

I may not be talking Jeopardy with my husband, but I know that would be the kind of talk you would want to have before accepting a new role, for sure. Ah. Ryan returned on Tuesday and managed to lock in another runaway win after a close game against challenger Mike McComb.

Sam: Yeah, Mike unfortunately missed two of the Daily Doubles, or this could have been a more competitive game.

He was only 800 away from avoiding the runaway, but a runaway it was.

Sarah: Yeah, another big payday for Ryan, 21, 600, and of course, he had to give us a bring it on the last clue of the Jeopardy round, so I know you just became a Ryan Manton fan.

Sam: You know, honestly, I'm still a pretty big fan of [00:14:00] bring it, and I'm trying to get an honest answer from Ken as to whether he's okay with it, but whatever he says, I don't really care.

I love bring it. I want people to do it every time.

Sarah: I love it too. I love it. Well, a lot of discussion online because obviously Ryan so far having two runaways. Didn't have to really play Final Jeopardy. Certainly didn't need to try to go for a correct response. So, he's just wanting to shout out the love of his wife, Lauren.

But some people are saying, No! I want you to just try anyway. What's your thought on the special messages, Sam?

Sam: Well, our listeners may not know that the contestant coordinators specifically ask us not to write funny little messages at the bottom. They don't insist on it, but they say just write the dollar amount and then you're a response.

Um, and I have never written a funny little thing there because I'm always focused on trying to get the response right.

Sarah: You're so funny out loud. You don't need to write funny things, Sam. You're just a walking There are

Sam: places I will not go, Sarah. Um, but I can't say they bother me. You know, these are people who are having a once in [00:15:00] a lifetime experience, or in Ryan's case now, we're up to a couple of times in a lifetime.

I think I'll allow it, Sarah.

Sarah: Okay, you heard it here first. Sam Buttry will allow it. And now a quick word from our sponsor. When you think about the success of businesses like Heinz or Mattel, it's often overlooked that it's actually the businesses behind the business making selling simple and nobody does selling simple better than Shopify.

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Now back to Inside Jeopardy. Well, on Wednesday, Ryan went up against another strong competitor. This was Scott Chang, the two of them neck and neck, but [00:16:00] Brian able to take a small lead heading into final with the help of the last daily double there, both Ryan and Scott were correct and Ryan secures his third win by just 1.

Sam: Yeah, this was the first time our champ Ryan really was tested and Scott Chang really did it.

Sarah: And Scott went to Reddit to share some of his thoughts and I want to share this because I think it really sums up what so many people don't necessarily understand about this game but I want people to hear it.

He said, I'll be honest, up until a few years ago I was a lapsed Jeopardy Watcher. I only got back into it during the pandemic after my then girlfriend, now wife, and I moved in together. We talked about watching it growing up so we started watching it during dinner. With me shouting out answers at the TV.

I took the anytime test just for kicks and never expected to make it to the show. So for anybody on the fence about trying out, just do it. You've got nothing to lose and an amazing experience [00:17:00] to possibly gain. These are the people I hope are listening. Those people who. Maybe haven't watched the show in a while.

Maybe are watching the show, enjoying it, but don't think they could actually come and do well on the show. And all it takes is that anytime test. It's less than 15 minutes in the comfort of your living room. I saw Sam's attire when he was trying to do these tests. You know, he was comfortable. He was cozy.

He wasn't having to put on any, you know, professional airs. He was just having a good time. And look at him now. So I just, I want people to hear that and I want you to give it a try because I feel like we have so many uncut gems out there that could come on this show and do well and they're letting a fear or just, you know, a concern of not being able to do it stand in their way.

From potentially taking that anytime test and getting on the show.

Sam: Very well put. First of all, I'd like to say that it was pandemic. Things were different, but no, [00:18:00] uh, the, it back in the day, taking the test was a minor hassle. A long time ago, it was a big hassle. You had to go to a place and then it was a minor hassle because you had to wait for the time of year when it was offered and log in at just the right time.

And now today with the anytime test, I will tell you just taking the test. Is itself a fun thing to do. I encourage everybody to take the test. And if it doesn't work, take it next time. Have a good time, and maybe you'll be lucky enough to be able to get onto the Alex Trebek stage.

Sarah: Well, Ken spoke with our players after that great game.

Let's take a listen.

Well, as it happened, that one came down to who was in the lead going into Final Jeopardy! And boy, it was neck and neck. Were you aware of the scores shifting, Scott? Uh, not until the very end. If you take too long to look at the score, then somebody calls it out and you're like, not ready for the next one, so.

I think nobody at home really understands how fast it moves. It's way easier when you're yelling at the TV. A three day champion now. You had to attempt your first Final Jeopardy. Yep. Would you like to now tell Lauren that you love her since you weren't able to write it? Yes, I [00:19:00] still love you, Lauren. I don't think you were worried, right?

It's nice to see you again. You got a three day Jeopardy champion in the family. The honeymoon can get more and more elaborate, I guess. It was suggested I

should go to New Zealand, and I actually really like that idea. That is a good idea. I do like Lord of the Rings, so. Go to Hobbiton. It's so cool.

Hobbiton's still set up. You've been there, right? That's where I went on my honeymoon. To Hobbiton? Yeah, uh, to New Zealand. Oh, okay. But to Hobbiton, too. Well, congratulations on the win, Ryan. That was a great game, everybody. And, uh, we'll see you try to make it four tomorrow.

Sarah: I love this. New Zealand, Hobbiton, Honeymoon.

I mean, it just, it all goes together. Well, you know, I'm going to say it, Sam, with those kinds of stats and that kind of game, I got to be considering Scott for second chance. And maybe I already know who qualified for second chance, but if I didn't say that Scott's stats certainly look like they could be second chance material, I wouldn't be Sarah Foss.

Sam: Sarah, [00:20:00] second chance Foss, we call her.

Sarah: I love this. Well, Ryan showed no signs of slowing down on Thursday. With 21 correct responses, he cruised into another runaway win. But I think one of the points of this game I want to bring up is beastly rhyme time for 200, the clue, a ceasefire, between Ganders. Now, Emily responded, What is Geese Peace?

And we were actually going for Goose Truce, but this is one of those instances we talk about where it's not that the writers didn't think of the correct response, it's just that sometimes you can't anticipate another acceptable response. So of course we were expecting goose truce, but geese, peace works.

And sometimes there is more than one correct response.

Sam: I love this kind of thing. And of course I've played a lot of Jeopardy and my wife has watched a lot of Jeopardy. So we're always excited about the situation where we're asking ourselves, Oh, just can't have to ask for more information. In this case, I had [00:21:00] goose truce in mind.

And when Emily said, Geese, peace, I said to myself, Oh, they have to accept it. And I was wondering if there was going to be one of those things. People at home don't know that they'll stop the game and do some research if there's any doubt about whether an answer ought to be accepted. But apparently in this case, Ken just looked at it and said, yeah, sure.

Sarah: Yeah. You know, can make some of those judgments sometimes and. Most times, we trust him on it.

Sam: I wanted to talk about Ryan's Final Jeopardy strategy. He's had, uh, three runaways at this point and a grand total of 22 wagered in the Final Jeopardies for those games. Now it's nice that he writes down his things about Lauren, that's cool.

But in his game against Mike, He was just barely double Mike's score, so there's no reason to wager anything there. But in the other two runaway games, he could have bet, for instance, in this game as much as 10, 000 and still be assured of the win. So there's an argument to be made for trusting yourself and just going after that money.

Mo money, mo money, mo money. That's, that's my middle name.

Sarah: Yes, [00:22:00] Sam Mo Money Buttry, I knew that.

Sam: When I go to the ATM, I say, bring it, and I get Mo Money.

Sarah: Wow, that's what I needed on Monday, Sam. Thank you for that. Thank you for that. Well, we closed out the week with a well played game by all three contestants, but it was Mark Fitzpatrick who caught fire in Double Jeopardy, and with the help of back to back correct Daily Doubles, took a strong lead into final, but all three players with five digit scores at this point in the game.

We love to see it. Mark was the only player who was able to come up with the correct response. He heads into the weekend as our new Jeopardy champion.

Sam: Yes, this was a very entertaining game. You love to see the third place player be in it all the way. And in fact, with a slightly bigger wager, Ann could have set it up so that she would have won if she was the only one to get in.

Final Jeopardy! Right? Assuming that Mark bet to cover Ryan and Ryan bet to cover Ann. It's a complicated computation. I'm not saying she did anything wrong. I just love that she was in it to [00:23:00] win it all the way. Great game.

Sarah: Let's just talk about Ryan's stats, because in four games, pretty darn good. Total winnings 83, 179.

Three runaways, 110 correct responses, only seven incorrect. So that's about a 94 percent correct average. Averaging 22 correct responses a game, found 8 of

15 daily doubles, was correct on 5 of them, only 2 for 5 in final, but, you know, 3 of those were runaways, and he did want to call out his wife, so hard to tell if he actually had a correct response in those others.

Let's see how Mark was feeling after the big upset.

You looked like you were feeling a lot of feelings in that game. Mark, is that correct? A lot of emotions, Ken. That's right. Tell me, tell me what they were and why. Well, I have a degree in international relations, and I missed the Hillary Clinton one.

Going down early. And I thought, I just gotta go for it. Maybe I'll go into negative. And it worked out. I don't know how. So [00:24:00] you felt like you were playing aggressively? You were swinging away when maybe even At the beginning of the round. Like some of those kings were Is that right? Because I wanted to ask you, you went there very early, and then, you were not, like, Theodore Roosevelt, you said Edward VII, and I was like, does he know that?

That's crazy. I knew, I knew them a little, but the, uh, the clues were so fast. They were one name. No time to like, just bring in and go. No time to think. I remember that was how you could beat IBM Watson. If the clue was very short, it wouldn't have time to, like, Processing did you feel like you were getting fatigued at all?

I noticed in your favorite category. You got Ulysses S Grant and you couldn't come up with who was the British Monarch in the late 19th century. Is the game starting to wear on you a bit? Yes, I can tell you were experiencing a lot over there. I just really admired. I mean all three of you know this right?

Like it's nothing like watching from your couch. No, it's not. It's very intense. Well, congratulations on the win, Mark. Well played, all three of you.

[00:25:00]

Sarah: That has to feel good. I also had the chance to catch up with Ryan after his four game streak. I just want to preface this interview by saying I had some trouble with my voice this week.

We were taping three days. I had to power through. We had to, you know, Get through the season, but, um, anyone in the studio, as I would announce the poor contestants, I might've thrown everyone's game off by my voice, but let's listen to Ryan and not so much me in this interview. Ryan, congratulations, four game champion.

How does it feel?

It feels great. It's still surreal. I still don't really know what's happening. I don't even know what to say.

Sarah: Well, Ken mentioned it at the end of your fifth game saying, you know, as a four game champion, Pretty likely chance we will see you back in the tournament of champions. What would it mean to you to compete in that high level of competition?

Oh,

to get to play with those kind of competitors would be amazing. I don't think I'm quite on their level, but to [00:26:00] even be able to show up would be quite a treat.

Sarah: You know what I find interesting? When I talk to those great champions, they say the same thing about themselves. I think humble is a great word to describe a lot of Jeopardy greats.

So you first talked about the fact that your now wife competed on the show when Ken Jennings was first guest hosting. And now here you are with Ken Jennings as our official host. What's that connection like for the two of you?

It's great. I mean, Jeopardy! has always been a huge part of our lives. And when she got to go on, I mean, it was amazing.

And now that I've been on too, I mean, it's a dream come true.

Sarah: What was it like in the months when you got the call, you know, preparing the two of you for this return to the Alex Trebek stage for your family?

She helped me so much, uh, just in preparing. Uh, she was my, my quiz master the whole time. So I would not have won a single game without her.

Sarah: What's been the best part of this experience for you?

That's a very good question. Just getting to be up here with her. All these other great competitors and getting to play these awesome games [00:27:00] with

them. I mean, I just wanted to come here and not embarrass myself and I feel like I accomplished that. So

Sarah: three runaway wins three times where you got to head into final and just enjoy it.

That had to be pretty great.

Yeah, it felt good going into those ones. No one. We're good. I'm on to the next game.

Sarah: Now, of course, in Jeopardy! production time, which we can now reveal now that your shows have aired, it's only June. And now you have to keep a secret for so many months. What's that going to be like for you?

Oh, that's, that's probably the hardest part, is having to go see my friends and just not being able to say anything, going to trivia with all my friends, and having to stay mum on everything for multiple months. Once we're able to watch it, we're gonna have a big party.

Sarah: Anything that surprised you about this experience, Ryan?

Just how quickly it went by. I mean, it was gone in a flash. I can't remember anything about any of the games. I'll just say that. I just blacked out during it.

Sarah: Well, good thing Lauren was in the audience. She can tell you what happened. And then I'm sure I'll need the

recap.

Sarah: A [00:28:00] lot of fun watching your success on the show.

Congratulations on a great run.

Thank you so much.

Sam: And again, you know, we at home are looking at Ryan as a guy who got to play all week. But Ryan, in fact, played all those games on one day, it's got to be exhausting.

Sarah: And this was the end of the day on day two of a tape week that was going to be a three day tape week that eventually would end the season, but really would end week five of season forty one.

So, there was a lot going on. I appreciate that all you wanted to talk about was Ryan and not that voice of mine.

Sam: If it makes you feel better, I was very much laughing when I heard it.

Sarah: Ah, it does, it does. And poor Ryan, you know, taping these back in early June. and then having to hold a secret for so long knowing that you're the first four game champion of season 41, and you have to just kind of keep that to yourself for months.

Sam: When I was on for the first time, my friends tried to trick me by asking questions about, uh, how many outfits did you change into? The, uh, the [00:29:00] point being that if you changed outfits, you must have won. And I hope Ryan's friends are nicer than my friends.

Sarah: Yeah, I have a feeling they are. Well, Sam, it is time for this week's But Wait, There's More.

You took a look at all the clues from last week. Which one caught your interest?

Sam: Well, I'm very excited about a clue from Wednesday's show, the 2, 000 clue in the It's a Theory category. It's a Theory 2000.

The usual example of this, the classic game theory problem, is you and a pal are both accused of a crime.

Do you confess? In game theory, that's the Prisoner's Dilemma.

Sam: Ah yes, the Prisoner's Dilemma, which is also called the Prisoner's Paradox because it leads to an unexpected result. I learned about this from a Scientific American article years ago. And it's a classic thought experiment in the branch of mathematics called Game Theory, which was the field studied by John Nash, the Russell Crowe character in the movie A Beautiful Mind, if you saw that one.

So let's set it up. Imagine [00:30:00] two lines. Hypothetical people called, I don't know, let's just call them Sarah Whitcomb Foss and Jimmy McGuire from the Jeopardy clue crew.

Sarah: I like these people.

Sam: They're supposed to take a boat to Hudson Bay or whatever they do, but in fact, they hijack the boat and take it to the Bahamas because their friends are having a party.

That sounds like Sarah and Jimmy. And of course they get busted, but the evidence is weak. So if they just stay quiet, each of them will do six months in a Bahamian prison. And I don't know about Jimmy, but Sarah can do that kind of time with her hands tied behind her back. No problem. But the cops come to her with an offer.

If you rat on Jimmy, you, Sarah, will go free. But he'll do two years in the big house. They make the same offer to Jimmy. If you rat on Sarah, Jimmy goes free and Sarah does two years. But here's the twist. If they both rat, they both get one year in the slammer. And of course, that's worse than the six months they get if they both clam up.

It's also important to note that they each know the other has been offered the deal and they cannot communicate with one [00:31:00] another. That's my setup.

Sarah: Wow. Okay. So I know what Jimmy is. And I would do, because we've worked together for 23 years. But, what do you think is the best plan of action for us?

Sam: So the best move for the two of them collectively is to both clam up.

That way they each get six months. But the best move for Sarah individually is to rat. If Jimmy rats, Sarah gets the one year, instead of the two she'd get if she stayed silent. And if Jimmy doesn't rat, Sarah goes free if she rats, instead of the six months she'd get if she stayed silent. So whatever Jimmy does, Sarah's move is to rat.

But that's also true for Jimmy. Whatever Sarah does, Jimmy's best move is to rat. And if they both rat They do worse than if they both stay silent. And that is why it's a paradox.

Sarah: Sounds like quite a conundrum, Sam.

Sam: It is quite a conundrum, Sarah. I was hoping you'd say that. And this problem has been the subject of intensive study with over a thousand scholarly articles published in the [00:32:00] 60s and 70s.

And it's got real life applications in things like economic cooperation and nuclear deterrence. And there are lots of variations that include, for example, asymmetric penalties, penalties that are different for Sarah and for Jimmy. And also the interesting case where the two players are playing the game repeatedly, receiving rewards each time.

So there's a strategy where you try to get to mutual cooperation every time, but you can get a quick short term gain by doing the equivalent of ratting, by defecting, if you will. This even has implications in real life, for example, playing a boombox at a beach. If only one person plays the boombox, they somehow win.

But if two people next to one another both play boomboxes, they both lose. So that's the prisoner's dilemma or the prisoner's paradox.

Sarah: Well, if this was a true story, I already picture myself spending six months in the Bahamas because Jimmy and I would never rat each other out. That's

Sam: not what Jimmy said.

Sarah: All right, Sam, now it is [00:33:00] time for this week's host chat. An audience member asked, can What's your favorite band?

Ooh, I don't know. Like, nobody's as into music at 50 as they were when they were 20, so my favorite band is whatever Teenage Ken's favorite band was, so probably R. E. M. or the Pixies. Kind of a toss up.

Sarah: How about you, Sam? Yes,

Sam: Ken and I are the same age, so I'm definitely going with R. E. M. No, you know, um, I, I used to be a big Grateful Dead guy.

Sarah: Okay.

Sam: Um, but, uh, today I think my musical tastes have broadened. I'm listening to more jazz. I'm listening to reggae. I'm listening to ska. I do like ska. Wow. So, it's just, uh, a good time to be alive and listen to music.

Sarah: I love that. Yeah, I was a big Dave Matthews band fan. That was definitely like, you know, if you're talking younger, Sarah, but now I'm a little bit more singer songwriter, a little less band. So I don't know.

Sam: A lot of good opportunities out there. And [00:34:00] if you're in the Los Angeles area, a lot of opportunities to see live music, if that's your thing.

Sarah: Yeah. I want the opportunity to hear Sam Buttrey sing live. So I'm can't wait till you bring some of those mad beats to the pod, Sam.

Sam: You know, they're coming.

Sarah: I can't wait. That's it for this pod, but join us again next week because we are going to have so much more and more game highlights and more, but wait, there's

Sam: more.

And you're saying to yourself, well, what if I have questions that I want to send into the podcast to have answered? I know you're asking yourself that at home, so let me remind you, send in your questions to InsideJeopardyPodcast at gmail.com. And if we like them, we'll read them out. We'll see you all next week.

See

Sarah: you

[00:35:00] [00:36:00] [00:37:00] then!