



Politics as performance

An introduction: Politics as performance

Still of Ronald Reagan

BBC Archive material of Arnold Schwarzenegger/ Specially shot.

Quentin Letts:

We say we don't like actors in our politics and yet when the politicians don't act they don't get so many votes.

BBC Archive material of Prime Ministers leaving office.

Vox Pop:

If they're good at performing and they're good at doing their job then it's obviously going to make me want to vote for them.

Vox Pop:

If you want to achieve anything in this world then you have to appeal to the masses and the masses want to see a show.

Barrack Obama:

While we breath we hope and where we are met with cynicism and doubt, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people. Yes we can. Yes we can. Yes we can. (applause)

William Hague:

To some extent you do or you do not have an innate enjoyment of having an audience. It's a bit like...it must be the same gene as enjoying being an actor.

Simon Sebag Montefiore:

We can see into these people's eyes. We see every facial expression. We see sweat. We see fear. And it's about millions of people seeing these things at one moment and seeing things you can never take back.

Quentin Letts:

Bad acting in political is awful. It's embarrassing.

George Bush:

Our enemies are innovative and resourceful. And so are we. They never stop thinking of ways to harm our country and our people and neither do we.

Neil Kinnock:

We're alright.

Quentin Letts:

Politics is really about this strange cocktail of artefice and authenticity.

Glenda Jackson:

If you want authentic, I remember Neil Kinnock's speech after we lost the election in 1992. Don't be poor, don't be old. No one had written that for him. That came straight out of his heart and his stomach and perhaps it's an indictment of us as people that we prefer imagery to reality. For me, I mean Gordon who I've known for a very, very long time is being criticised because he is authentic because he isn't touchy feely because he's not all things to all men.

News Reporter: Finally Gordon Brown stepped out of the wings. (applause). His first proper turn in the spotlight was hidden by an unfortunately placed autocue screen. It's not likely

that'd have happened under Tony Blair's team but if Mr Brown meant this...then maybe it didn't matter.

Gordon Brown:

I've never believed presentation should be a substitute for policy. I do not believe politics is about celebrity.

Nick Robinson:

It's lucky in a way that Gordon Brown chose to highlight his lack of interest in presentation and celebrity because he made a bit of a hash of that launch. But the difference is one frankly much more important than that trivia. The difference is if he means what he says.

Glenda Jackson:

As Lincoln said, you can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. Because dishonesty, lies will always be found out.

Bill Clinton:

"I did not have sexual relations with that woman."

Glenda Jackson:

The implication is, correct me if I'm wrong, that acting is a form of lying. It's a way of cheating, of manipulating, of essentially deceiving people, and nothing could be further from the truth. Specially shot material Quentin Letts: The greatest example of acting in British politics in the last 100 years or so, Winston Churchill. Churchill presented this bulldog character which was very much at odds with his personal character and that was an example of how acting could really help the national cause. You know it's too glib just to say that acting is bad in politics. Acting can be essential.

Archive Churchill:

This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning.