

BELIEVE IN AMERICA

P.O.T.U.S.

*"In America anyone can become anything, and that dream is the foundation of our great nation.
It's a frikkin nightmare."*

Viola Merlin, Vice President



TITLE: P.O.T.U.S.

GENRE: POLITICAL THRILLER

EST. RT: 120

STATUS: SCRIPT

WRITERS: LOVISA INSERRA & EMMA K DIXGÅRD



“Thank you America for putting your faith in me.
Together we are invincible. Together we can change the world!!!”

Lloyd Heart, Winner of the game show “American President”



“He does understand that this is a game show right? ”

Heather Green, TV-Producer

CHARACTERS

THE WHISTLEBLOWERS

HEATHER GREEN

TV-Producer/Spin Doctor

CLIVE BOLTON

White House Correspondent

THE ELECTED

LLOYD HEART

P.O.T.U.S.

EMMA HEART

F.L.O.T.U.S.

THE ESTABLISHMENT

HENRY FORD

Secretary of State

BARBARA TAYLOR

The Director of the CIA

VIOLA MERLIN

Vice President

SYNOPSIS

HEATHER GREEN sits in a hotel room with hot-shot reporter, **CLIVE BOLTON**. She is about to blow the whistle on the government assassination of the President of the United States. Heather starts with an unimaginable tale of insurmountable odds, victory and human strife. A glorious story proving that the American dream is still possible.

A story too good to be true.

And that's just it. It's not. Heather Green was hired to produce it.

Below the surface lies a much juicier tale. A Shakespearean fable filled with ambition, deception, violence and greed.

Heather reaches fame and fortune as the TV producer behind the game show "*American President*", a contest much like "*American Idol*".

In a country where only 60% of the population votes Heather manages to get a 90% voter turnout... - only for the equivalent of a presidential beauty pageant.



LLOYD HEART, square-jawed heartthrob becomes America's game show president elect and a national legend. Heather loathes him but insane viewer ratings pushed her to build a winner out of Lloyd Heart - a two-timing, deceitful, cunning, vain, pompous, son of a bitch.

The effects are not what she envisioned. Suddenly the political landscape has changed. Embodying the American Dream, Lloyd Heart, by popular demand, runs for office and true to that dream he wins and becomes the leader of the free world.

Before his dreaded inauguration Heather gets a call from a group within his administration who fear that he will ruin the presidency. They want Heather back in the producer seat. This time not to lead a successful reality show, but to mold and spin reality itself. Heather agrees and is tasked with deceiving the nation in order to protect them from their democratically elected leader not thinking twice about what that makes her. A traitor.

As Lloyd gets comfortable in his role as a commander in chief, Heather starts to doubt herself. Did he grow to fit the shoes he had to fill? Before she can find out Lloyd is assassinated.

The world is in shock. Heather is devastated and creates a eulogy that solidifies the President's legacy as a true American hero.

The memory of Kennedy's untimely death sweeps over the nation like a dark cloud, but Heather senses a storm as she uncovers an outrageous conspiracy - creative, intriguing and difficult to verify. The very hawks who hired her, had long planned to continue the President's legacy by killing him and leaving an open wound that would unite the country around the death of its beloved leader.

Heather has found a confidant in White House correspondent Clive Bolton, who agrees to help her expose the truth about the assassination. Just as they are about to broadcast the true story behind the murder, the CIA storm the building and Heather is arrested in front of live-streaming cameras.



The person set up to take the fall for the murder of Lloyd Heart is none other than the traitor, Heather herself. The hawks have crafted a convincing timeline based on her every move, leaving no doubt about her guilt.

Heather created a beautiful American story but she forgot to keep track of her own narrative. Sadly her role became that of the perpetrator's. While professing her innocence Heather is shot by a crazy patriot, (mimicking the fate of Lee Harvey Oswald).

Heather doesn't die from her wounds though. She wakes up in a hospital-bed with Clive Bolton and a camera by her side. He still believes in her innocence and is ready to broadcast her version of the story. But Heather knows that she will never survive if she insists on the truth, so she accepts the false accusation as her inescapable legacy.

Her live broadcast confession of the murder of Lloyd Heart, becomes the highest rated TV show of the decade.

P.O.T.U.S. is a satire about the power of narratives in politics and the use and abuse of the country's defining story - the American dream.



“What’s the better story, corruption or murder? Easy right?
Governing is fairly straight forward.”

Henry Ford, Secretary of State



“Man might have created the nuclear bomb but who created Lloyd Heart? If God is responsible then who does he answer too?
Where is his independent oversight committee?” *Barbara Taylor, Director of the CIA*

- States with Most Top 10 Finalists



SCRIPT SAMPLE P.O.T.U.S

INT. BLACKSMITH MOTEL/ROOM - DAY

HEATHER GREEN moves the thick drapes to the side and peeks out the window on to an empty parking lot.

CLIVE BOLTON, sits behind her.

CLIVE
Are you ready?

Heather sits down. Lights and cameras aimed at her face.

HEATHER
No.

Clive studies her. He makes her feel like she's lying even when she's not.

CLIVE
If you could start with telling me your name and occupation.

HEATHER
My name is Heather Green. I am a TV producer turned Chief of Staff, as of today turned whistle-blower.

CLIVE
How does a TV producer end up in the White House?

HEATHER

I created the President's narrative. Both before and after they killed him.

Clive chokes on his coffee and spills some on his light blue shirt. He recomposes himself.

CLIVE
Let's go back to the beginning. Back to the night he was elected.

HEATHER
The real or the fake election?

INT. "AMERICAN PRESIDENT" STUDIO STAGE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Five contenders stand on a stage in front of a massive audience. "American President", shines bright in glitzy letters on the wall behind the well-tailored candidates. A steady tic-toc builds suspense as graphics representing the audience ballot count shows one candidate getting all the votes.

LLOYD HEART's perfect smile broadens as his landslide conquest becomes clear. ANNA-BELL, the announcer, proclaims with awe and disbelief:

ANNA-BELL
90% of America has voted...

(CONTINUED)

The crowd cheers. Lloyd Heart beams. His square jaw, confident smile and thick hair makes him the perfect political homecoming king. He turns to his wife **EMMA HEART**, America's new fake F.L.O.T.U.S. and kisses her passionately. They are perfect.

The audience stands up and screams.

INT. CONTROLL ROOM - DAY

Heather stands in a control room, jaw dropped. Her crew looks at her equally aghast. Unconvinced, she makes light of it.

HEATHER

It's a reality show for Christ sake
- it's not like he can run for
office!?

EXT. ACAPULCO HOTEL - POOL SIDE - DAY

Heather lies by a pool in a reclined chair with a large sun hat and shades. Bundled up under her towel.

HEATHER (V.O.)

So I went to Acapulco. Lloyd was going to become President of the United States and it was my fault. No amount of Valium could solve this. I wanted to disappear. Pretend it wasn't happening...

People waving American flags come running and screaming out of the hotel and jump in to the pool fully dressed.

HEATHER (V.O.)

...but there was nowhere to hide from Lloyd. The world was in a political frenzy. When did Presidential speeches get higher ratings than the Superbowl? It was a nightmare.

She puts a towel over her head trying to block out the sound of the screaming masses.

HEATHER (V.O.)

And then I got the phone call.

A **WAITER** comes up with a tray with a phone on it.

WAITER

Excuse me. Heather Green?

She looks up from under the towel and the waiter hands her the phone.

WAITER

For you.

(CONTINUED)

INT. WHITE HOUSE/HENRY'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Heather sits on the edge of her chair looking like she's been called in to the principal's office for a proper scolding.

Secretary of Defense, **HENRY FORD**, wrinkled skin and a weary look on his face stands by his large wooden desk and looks at Heather. She shifts in her seat.

HENRY

Do you know why you are here?

HEATHER

I'm guessing it has something to do with Lloyd. Sorry. The President.

Henry nods but doesn't say anything. Heather feels compelled to explain.

HEATHER

The point of the show was to find an entertaining way to teach the public how the electoral system works...

HENRY

Yes and now they know. Maybe you should have focused on elementary school education, because apparently they are all idiots!

HENRY

He wants you to be his Chief of Staff.

HEATHER

Why? I don't know the first thing about politics.

HENRY

Well neither does he. He wants to rule the world "his way". Whatever the fuck that means.

HEATHER

Yeah... that doesn't sound good...

HENRY

Tell me. Who are we dealing with?

HEATHER

An ambitious, vain, flimsy populist.

HENRY

And you let him fool a nation?

Heather blushes.

HEATHER

The ratings were through the roof.

(CONTINUED)

Henry is pacing the room with clenched fists. The silence is uncomfortable.

He places a piece of paper in front of her. Heather looks at the document - 8 point print and several pages...

HENRY
Confidentiality agreement.

She puts on her reading glasses and squints.

HENRY
Do you think he's capable of
ruining our country?

There is no doubt in her mind. She quietly signs the unread paper in front of her.

The door opens and in comes: **VIOLA MERLIN** (47)- The Vice President and **BARBARA TAYLOR** (60) - Director of the CIA

Heather jumps up from her chair and stands at attention as if inspected by a drill sergeant.

HEATHER
Madame Vice President.

VIOLA
At ease Ms. Green.

Viola sits down leading the rest of them to follow.

HEATHER
It's an honor to meet you.

VIOLA
I feel something similar sitting in front of the woman who transformed our great nation in to a true democracy.

HEATHER
And I thought I was summoned to a firing squad.

BARBARA
That's what I voted for.

VIOLA
Meet Barbara Taylor - former Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force and current Director of the CIA.

Heather looks at Barbara who wears her impenetrable stone face with pride.

VIOLA
Welcome aboard as producer of the most high-profile reality show imaginable.

BENCHMARKS

There are a couple of films that come to mind when discussing **P.O.T.U.S.**

DR. STRANGELOVE strikes the right balance between great entertainment and smart social commentary.

THE TRUMAN SHOW, **WAG THE DOG**, **A FACE IN THE CROWD** and **IN THE LOOP** are also films that use reality to create entertaining as well as frightening perspectives of their times.

We have labeled **P.O.T.U.S.** a political satire thriller. **HOUSE of CARDS** is a testament to how a mix of satire and suspense can be done well. That is our goal with **P.O.T.U.S.**

The tone is sharp and cynical but the lead in **P.O.T.U.S.** embodies the individual's ability to influence and change the course of history and in that way the American dream lingers...



"The whole point of a Doomsday Machine is lost, if you *keep* it a *secret*!"



WRITERS STATEMENT

We're fascinated by America. We find it a nation that manages to be revolutionary and extremely conservative at the same time. We're continuously perplexed by the contradictions within. In a country that attracts people from all over the world because of the individual's ability to influence their future and pursue their dreams, only 60% vote?! Are 40% of the voters uninterested or is there a fear of the irrelevance of their vote?

The theme of the film is story and the film suggests that the President is partly elected based on the strength of his "story". The American Dream where anyone can become anything is crucial for many whose lives are built up around quite slim prospects of success. To a foreigner this belief in the American dream can seem naïve, but looked at more closely, it is one of the reasons why America is such an inspiring place to be. One feels less constrained by conventions and more inspired to take leaps of faith. Maybe because people here believe in the possibility to succeed so much they'll encourage you to fight the odds, raise the stakes and aim for the stars no matter how far fetched.

In **P.O.T.U.S.** right and wrong intertwine with the use and abuse of narratives. Information warfare in the age of Putin is both terrifying and interesting to study. It offers some inspiration for our exploration of story and the power of it. The well-crafted structure of desinformation and using the full force of propaganda to corrupt and deceive is our main character Heather's job.

With the American election on the horizon, it is impossible to not give democracy and the future of it center stage. We started to write this film before the primaries and never in our wildest dreams had we envisioned Donald Trump as the republican nominee. Mr. Trump has showed us something that maybe Sarah Palin's success in 2008 hinted at; voters aren't predictable. Anyone truly can rise within politics in America. Maybe by the time this film gets made reality will have upstaged us. The horror!

In **P.O.T.U.S.** we play out a scenario where we combine people's fascination with drama and the flare needed to be elected, with the problems that can cause in the political sphere. That is with the assumption that in politics you need to diffuse drama not create it. You don't want to quarrel with people who control nukes.

Thank you for your time and we hope you like our story.

Lovisa Inserra & Emma K Dixgård

"Let him focus on what he's good at."



"Like what? Shaking hands?"

THE SISTERS **EMMA K DIXGÅRD & LOVISA INSERRA**

Emma & Lovisa are a sister duo who have been working together since their first feature **BUSTER** (2008). Currently they are writing a 10 episode TV-series, **GAME**, about hybrid warfare, with support from the Swedish Film Institute. They have also been commissioned by **SVT** (The Swedish National Broadcaster) to write a seasons outline for a sitcom about a failed Mars mission. **P.O.T.U.S.** is their next deep dive in to a topic that fascinates them. The American Dream.

EMMA K DIXGÅRD | Producer/Writer

RED SISTER AB www.redsister.se

Red Sister AB is owned and operated by Producer Emma K. Dixgård.

Emma is a lawyer specialized in media law and a former music supervisor who used to head a talent agency, who now focuses on producing and developing unique international stories. She has a Master of Law from University of Stockholm, a Master in Audiovisual Management from Magica (MEDIA Program) in Rome, a year of human rights law and international law at Aristoteles University in Thessaloniki. She was selected amongst 11 others for a mentor/network program hosted by the regional fund, FRSM, called "The Producer as a Leader" 2013-14. EAVE graduate 2014. She is a creative producer who also writes together with her sister.



"I think he might have declared war with Canada."



"I bet you the fucker just wants to meet The Queen. Did you tell him he could just call her?"

LOVISA INSERRA | Writer

GOVERNESS FILMS, INC. www.governessfilms.com

Lovisa Inserra started her career as an assistant to directors and producers in New York. In 2001 she founded **GOVERNESS FILMS**, an international community of independent female film artists. www.governessfilms.com

Her first feature was **BUSTER**, a super 8 film shot in Brooklyn. In 2009 Lovisa moved to Bangkok to research **BETTY BANGKOK** a fictional tale about Veterans and street kids.

Since 2012 she's been researching hybrid war scenarios for the TV thriller **GAME** and undergone training ranging from military crisis communication to UN's cyber threat masterclass to producing TV during military exercises.

Aside from writing and researching she is engaged in issue based projects like www.hashtagreporter.com privacyasinnovation.wordpress.com & www.democraticdevelopmentfilm.com

She also does graphics: www.bunkerland.com



"You hired some of Putin's media communication staff?!"
Henry Ford, Secretary of State



"Only as consultants."
Heather Green, Chief of Staff



“90% of the population voted for a man who is the equivalent of a reality TV bachelor and you want me to be happy about voter turnout?”



“Who is behind it? Not sure. Usually you just have to look for whomever has something to gain. But the only thing I come up with here is anthropologists. They must be having a fucking field day.”



“I don’t want to be a Debbie Downer here, his victory is truly historical, but it does make democracy very unappealing.”



“The feeling I have today... is the opposite of what it felt like when Neil Armstrong planted our flag on the moon. I don’t know how to describe it. Profound disappointment comes to mind. Maybe fear.”



All these things come with a price
and are not to be taken for granted
but are to be used with wisdom and
prudence. For the sake of the
future, we must not lose sight of the
fact that the Government is not
to be taken for granted. It is the
responsibility of the Government
to see that it is not taken for granted
and to ensure that the Government
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