

# The Presidential Debates Are Nothing But Scripted Beauty Contests

Real Debate Is Censored

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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*The “spontaneous” questions from audience members are actually [pre-screened, and even the moderator is forbidden from asking follow-up questions](#):*

*Gawker’s John Cook succinctly [sums up](#) the rigged debates:*

Leaked Debate Agreement Shows Both Obama and Romney are Sniveling Cowards

Both campaigns are terrified at anything even remotely spontaneous happening.

They aren’t permitted to ask each other questions, propose pledges to each other, or walk outside a “predesignated area.” And for the town-hall-style debate tomorrow night, the audience members posing questions aren’t allowed to ask follow-ups (their mics will be cut off as soon as they get their questions out). Nor will moderator Candy Crowley.



*Painting by Anthony Freda: [www.AnthonyFreda.com](http://www.AnthonyFreda.com).*

Glenn Greenwald [notes](#):

The moderators were selected to ensure that nothing unexpected is asked and that only the most staid and establishment views are heard. As journalism professor Jay Rosen put it when the names of the moderators were unveiled, using terms to describe those views that are acceptable in Washington media circles and those which are “fringe”:

“In order to be considered as a candidate for moderator you have to be soaked in the sphere of consensus, likely to stay within the predictable inner rings of the sphere of legitimate controversy, and unlikely in the extreme to select any questions from the sphere of deviance.”

Here then, within this one process of structuring the presidential debates, we have every active ingredient that typically defines, and degrades, US democracy. The two parties collude in secret. They have the same interests and

goals. Everything is done to ensure that the political process is completely scripted and devoid of any spontaneity or reality.

All views that reside outside the narrow confines of the two parties are rigidly excluded. Anyone who might challenge or subvert the two-party duopoly is rendered invisible.

Lobbyists who enrich themselves by peddling their influence run everything behind the scenes. Corporations pay for the process, which they exploit and is then run to bolster rather than threaten their interests. The media's role is to keep the discourse as restrictive and unthreatening as possible while peddling the delusion that it's all vibrant and free and independent and unrestrained. And it all ends up distorting political realities far more than illuminating them while wildly exaggerating the choices available to citizens and concealing the similarities between the two parties.

To understand the US political process, one can just look to how these sham debates are organized and how they function. This is the same process that repeats itself endlessly in virtually every other political realm.

Indeed, the Republican and Democratic parties have long formed Gentlemen's agreements – through the “Presidential Debate Commission” – on what topics are “off-limits” (and which journalists can even ask questions) during presidential debates:

As this 4-minute video shows, – they both ignore the desires of their own bases:

The American people are sick of both the Republican and Democratic party, and yearn for something different. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

No wonder ... the mainstream Democratic and Republican parties agree on most matters which affect American lives the most directly. [Here](#), [here](#), [here here](#) and [here](#).

Obama and Romney are virtually indistinguishable on most core issues. For example: [jobs](#), [freedoms](#) and favoring [fatcats instead of the little guy](#).

The [Founding Fathers warned](#) – at the very birth of our nation – against a two-party system as being destructive to liberty.

If we opened the debates up

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