

# Older – Local politician

By John Stanton  
(about 7:30 min.)

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Cast

Older the Elder (sitting in chair)

Jim Thompson slick-looking character in a suit and tie.

JT: (Cheerful)

Hello sir! I'm Jim Thompson, candidate for State Representative district twenty-nine. Have you decided who you are going to send to the state capital this election?

O:

Well I appreciate you coming over here to visit, young fella. But I never vote. It only encourages them.

JT:

Well sir, it's important that every citizen gets involved in deciding who their leaders are going to be.

O:

We been doin' that since way back. Back then, the two biggest, meanest guys would beat each other with rocks. Everybody stood around to holler and bet. We had a great time.

Then one would run off. That one lost the election.

It's just like today. Only now, they use money.

JT:

But back in those days, nobody got to vote --

O:

Sure they did! That's where the rocks came in. You gave rocks to the guy you wanted to win.

And you would holler for your candidate. Jump up and down. Even throw rocks yourself.

Pretty much like it is now.

JT:

Well sir, coming back to the present election, there will be important issues on the ballot. One example is proposition nineteen to repeal the extension of subsection C in chapter 265 of the state election code. It would call for a second pre-election statement of political contributions and expenditures fifteen days before the election.

O: (Skeptical)

What? I can understand most English, but Polspeak is beyond me. Nobody can use that many words and not say anything!

JT:

But – but -- but these are important issues!

O:

You know if you want people to listen to you, you don't want to talk like a motorboat. Are you going to be in charge of those important issues?

JT:

Well... I'm going to be in the legislative body. I'm not trying to be in charge. Actually, the governor has a departmental staff with people run the various aspects of the government. There's the state department of transportation, the secretary of education, department of housing, commissioner of agriculture, department of commerce...

O:

My sanctified God! All those people in charge? Back in the old days, we didn't have flocks of people in charge. Didn't know what transportation was. We just walked.

Or ran if there was a bear coming. And when you saw a bear, you didn't need education to tell you what to do. Didn't need laxatives, either... come to think of it.

JT: (interrupting)

But today, sir, our state is facing extraordinary challenges. The budget is out of control, the infrastructure is crumbling, our resources are facing pressure from increasing development.

O:

You know -- things didn't seem so bad before you started telling me about them. I seem to remember there were problems like this at the last election. And the one before that. What are you going to do about them this time?

JT: (agitated)

Well, I would have to work from within the House of Representatives to help form a consensus that could pass in the Senate.

O:

The Senate? That's more hands in the stew!

JT:

Well, it takes a lot of people to make the laws.

O: (Interupts)

Young fella – seems like you're in the wrong line of work. Too much competition. Already enough people to mess up the government. They don't need your help

What is it you figure on doing in the government?

JT:

I serve the public with my leadership and my work in the state legislature.

You see, we need the kind of vision and insight that I can bring to office.

O:

You got visions? In the olden days the only people that had visions were prophets and crazy people. You a prophet?

JT:

Oh, no. Not that kind of vision. Just a vision of where I think we should be going  
--

O: (interrupts)

Where is that? And how are you planning to get us there?

JT:

Well, I can't do it by myself. But I'll work with my colleagues in the legislature to move us forward to the future.

O:

Humph! Don't take no work to get to the future. Comes whether you are ready or not. What are you gonna do about it tomorrow?

JT:

Umm. I'm going to be out campaigning tomorrow. I have to get my message out to the people.

O:

Lemme see. Your message was that things are in a terrible state and you were going to fix 'em. That right?

JT:

That's a gross oversimplification, of course. But yes.

O:

When you gonna get 'em fixed?

JT:

Well – these things take time. The spring session of the state legislature convenes in March.

O: (interrupts)

March! You ain't working until March! What are you doing till March?

JT:

This is when I reach the people. I take my message out on the campaign trail.

O:

But your message is that we're in a disaster! And all you're gonna do is talk about it!

If the plumber came to fix my toilet, I'd expect him to do more than talk.

JT:

But it's important that I reach the constituents. They need to know about the issues.

O:

Oh, I don't think we have any constituents round here. There's some Mennonites that live down the road a ways. And some Carmelites in the monastery on the hill. Oh, and the Ammonites down in the creek.

IT:

No, no, constituents are people who vote!

O:

Oh, I know we ain't got none of them around here. None that would own up to it, anyways.

JT:

Sir, we need strong action to establish a new direction for the state if we are to pull ourselves from the catastrophe that we are facing!

O:

But who got us in this mess?

JT:

Well... (Jim Thom fumbles.) ...

Actually, the current situation is the result of a combination of policy and economic environmental issues. We've find ourselves in an unprecedented set of nationwide influences affecting us on a state level.

O

...but who's responsible! Must be them fellas in charge! Who is it in charge?

JT:

Well... you can't really say that any individual is responsible for the complex issues that we are facing....

O:

What! All those people in charge and nobody responsible!?

JT: (backing away)

Well. it's been nice talking to you but I do have a lot of people to talk to

O:

Too many people in charge, not enough people responsible! That's how we got in this mess, I bet.

JT: ( backing farther)

uh.. Yeah. Ok sir, you have a nice day.

O:

And all of them having visions. When they need to be getting things done, they're sitting around having visions.

JT: (backing farther and shouting)

uh... They're not real visions.

O: (calling after Jim Thom as he walks away)

Didn't think so. You just made that vision story, didn't you?

(Jim Thom walks off.)

O (to himself):

'Course it might be better if they did sit around and have visions. Maybe they would do less damage that way.