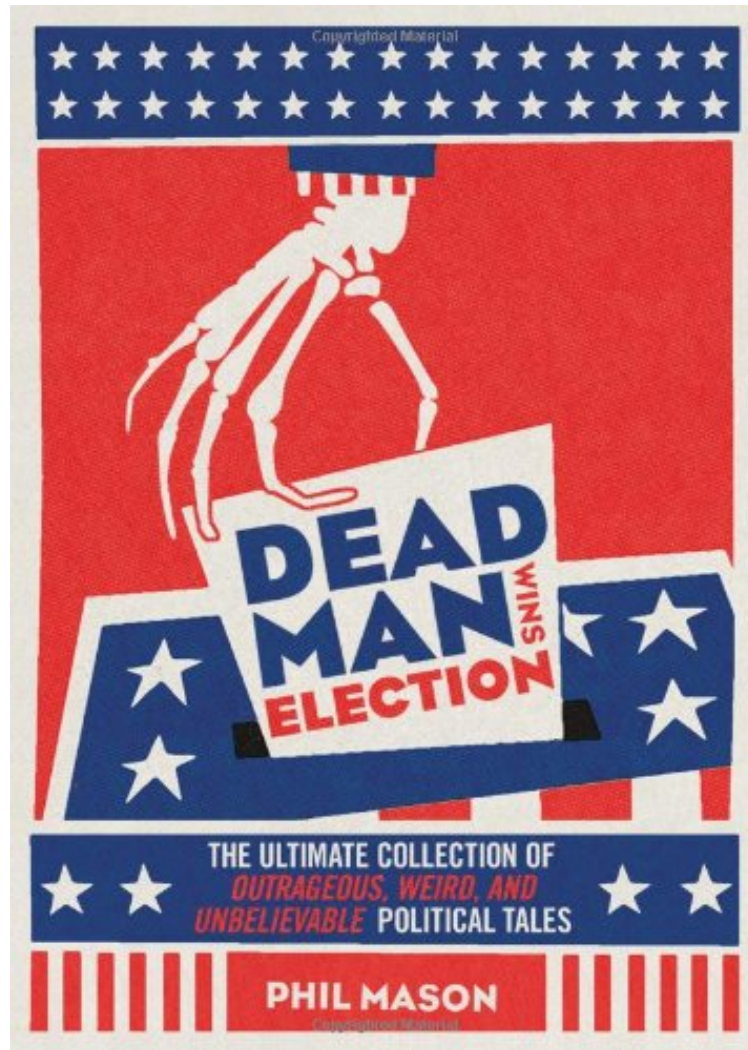


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Dead Man Wins Election: The Ultimate Collection of Outrageous, Weird, and Unbelievable Political Tales

Phil Mason

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Phil Mason : Dead Man Wins Election: The Ultimate Collection of Outrageous, Weird, and Unbelievable Political Tales before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dead Man Wins Election: The Ultimate Collection of Outrageous, Weird, and Unbelievable Political Tales:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Christopher LoganFunny things that have happened in political history. Unattributed stories, for the most part. Might be true.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amusing, frightening, and depressing...all at onceBy Buckeye John 1976I pray that this is indeed the

ULTIMATE collection. Because if there are worse anecdotes out there, I'm afraid there is no antidote. Seriously, both amusing AND frightening at the same time. Written in small bites, it lends itself to being read 5-10 minutes at a time. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very funny. Some of the stories By Harold Beyea Very funny. Some of the stories, gafs and faux pas are almost stranger than fiction. You can't make this stuff up.

Despite our differences, there's a common thread uniting all of us: absurd political screw-ups happen. Welcome to *Dead Man Wins Election*, the ultimate collection of bizarre and outright unbelievable tales from politics at home and around the world. Uncover the least competent politicians, the most outlandish government decisions, the strangest election results, and much more. Former president Bill Clinton, who touted his presidency as the watershed period for the modern Information Age. After his White House departure, it was disclosed that of the forty million emails his office produced, **CLINTON HIMSELF HAD SENT...TWO**. Harry Stonebreaker, who was reelected for mayor of Winfield, Missouri, despite having died a month before polling day. **HE WON BY A LANDSLIDE WITH 90 PERCENT OF THE VOTE**.

About the Author Phil Mason is the author of *In the Know...SAS Tips Techniques From Around the Globe*. He is an independent SAS consultant with extensive international experience, and has a broad background working with mainframe and PC environments as well as a detailed knowledge of numerous operating systems and local area networks. A sampling of Mason's many projects includes: application analysis and design, data warehouse design, data modeling, computer measurement, writing training materials, and conducting training classes. Benefit from Phil Mason's practical skills and experience in this updated edition of clever tips. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction In November 2000, voters from Missouri elected a dead man as their senator. Former governor Mel Carnahan had died in an air crash three weeks before election day. But he still won by a 2 percent margin. Unusual as Carnahan's achievement may sound, he is by no means unique. You will encounter seven others in these pages who have gained this ultimate accolade just in recent times, including one who won over 90 percent of the vote, and one who won on the toss of a coin. Another, although he lost, amassed over half a million votes. You will encounter many more strange episodes within these covers, from the candidate for mayor who got his twin brother to stand in for him at a city parade that clashed with his campaign rally to the environment minister who used a stretch limo to ride to a conference to make a speech on excessive car use; from the Canadian province that found all its laws passed in 95 years to be invalid to the Australian state that discovered in 2002 that it was still officially at war with Japan; and from the legislators of West Virginia who engaged in a protracted dispute as to whether the official state musical instrument should be the fiddle or the dulcimer to the local council in Wales that kept "temporary" traffic lights in place for 28 years. These, and hundreds more, are deeds that may redefine your view of politics, politicians, and the trade they ply on our behalf. *Dead Man Wins Election* collects the best of the worst of politicians' extraordinary antics over the past three decades (and a bit more besides). We will come across incompetence and audacity, egotism and brazenness, largesse and myopia, the mad and the bad, the feckless and the luckless: enough perhaps to make us truly wonder whether we are sane in holding on to the idea that we elect our politicians on the basis of some feeling of trust that our futures lie safe in their hands. The practice recounted here would suggest a very different story. Politics is a rich terrain for idiosyncrasy and the unexpected. By its nature, it is a risky business. Careers rest uneasily on the periodic judgment of voters. A glittering path can be snuffed out in a single adverse turn of electoral fortune. What certainties can they look to? "All political lives...end in failure, because that is the nature of politics and of human affairs." So, in 1977, wrote British politician Enoch Powell, who is generally regarded as having crashed his own career with a single ill-judged phrase in a single speech as he summed up another exploded reputation, that of Joseph Chamberlain. So if that is the prospect, how can we expect more from our entrusted leaders? They might be forgiven their shortcuts and their short-term outlooks. They might be forgiven their duplicities, for the chances of permanently avoiding calamity are virtually nonexistent. A frequently told Westminster story perhaps gives a clue to the essential powerlessness of a politician operating always at the mercy of "events." A cabinet minister, arriving at his new desk on the day of his appointment, finds three brown envelopes left by his predecessor, numbered one to three, with a note: "Open only when in trouble." Nine months into his job, the first crisis hits. The minister opens the first envelope. Inside is a slip that reads: "Blame your predecessor." He does, and the emergency is successfully overcome. A few months later, the next disaster hits. He opens the second envelope. The slip reads: "Reorganize your department." He does so, with a fanfare sufficient to distract attention, and he survives again. When the third calamity strikes, he turns to the third envelope, to be told: "Write out three envelopes..." This collection will give you a completely fresh perspective on politics and its propensity for the outrageous, the extreme, and the just plain unbelievable. We will explore parliaments, the task of government, elections, the responsibilities of office and diplomacy, as well as the often unfathomable world of local and parish council politics and the mad, modern world of health and safety. We'll also portray the best and funniest political wisdom. Most of our tales are from the last 30 years. Lest this should lend credence to any impression that political insanity is merely a modern phenomenon, we end each chapter with a selection of the choicest snippets from the pages of history to restore the balance. Politics has been

the magnet for the unhinged since the dawn of civilization. That much, if little else, is clear. What emerges from it all? Perhaps just that anything, literally anything, can be expected from our politicians. As characters they range from out-of-control egotists who excel in repelling those they come into contact with to fish-out-of-water ingenues who simply mystify us all in how or why they got involved in the first place. And there are shades at all points in between, examples of whom you are about to meet. Two illustrations of these extremes serve to set the scene. For brazenness there can be no better example than the driven, and some would say power-crazy, political machine that was Lyndon Johnson. As newly appointed vice president under John F. Kennedy after an already long career on Capitol Hill, he made his mark on senators in his usual ferocious way. One day he spotted a face in a Congress corridor, shouted, "You, I've been looking for you," and pulled the unfortunate senator into his room to begin an animated pep talk about how important the legislator was to the administration. As he barreled along, he scribbled something on a piece of paper and pressed a buzzer for his secretary, who came in and took it away. Johnson kept up an unremitting torrent of political puff. A few minutes later, the secretary returned and gave the paper back to him. He glanced at it without interrupting his flow, screwed it up and threw it in the bin, and hurtled on. A journalist afterward discovered what Johnson had written on the paper: "Who is this I'm talking to?" At the other end of the scale lie the likes of Ernest Bevin. We see in chapter 7 how this former trade union leader and genial embodiment of the working class, whom Attlee remarkably made foreign secretary in the postwar labor government of 1945–51, defused ambassadorial pomposity with his common touch. Shortly after taking up his post at the Foreign Office, Bevin returned to his office on a Friday afternoon to find that his private secretary had left on his desk a huge pile of papers, on top of which was a carefully penned note: "The Secretary of State may care to peruse these at his leisure before Monday." Without looking at his homework, Bevin penned an equally short and obliging note and left for the weekend: "A kindly thought, but erroneous." He perhaps also epitomizes the gap that oftentimes exists between politics as the personal endeavor and politics as "the system," the machine that controls. It is this gap, and a politician's success or failure (and desire) in bridging it, that makes politics such a rich territory for oddity, and the terrain that we explore here. Dead Man Wins Election ought to sow doubt in your minds about anyone standing for political office. When you reach the end, you too may conclude we Americans, who like to think of ourselves as the world's fullest exponents of the democratic creed, were perhaps saying more than we knew when we chose as our national motto, "In God we trust." For as sure as anything, we have been taking a risk with our earthly rulers ever since. Phil Mason