

9.9.24 Inside J!

[00:00:00] From the Alex Trebek stage at Sony Picture Studios. This

is

Inside Jeopardy.

Hello and welcome back to Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. I'm Sarah Foss, and I am joined today to kick off the new season by the one, the only Sam Bring It Butchery.

Sam, so good to have you here in the pod.

Sam: It's great to be here. Thanks for having me.

Sarah: And can we just say that You're going to be in the pod a lot more now.

Sam: I was hoping you would say that, Sarah. My, uh, my plan is to join you whenever you'll have me.

Sarah: Yes. Sam is going to be an official co host of Inside Jeopardy.

We are, we've been sitting on this for a long time. Very excited to share it. Uh, certainly we knew when we were in Detroit together. But now it's official. Now

Sam: it's official and I'm delighted to be here as part of the podcast and as part of the Jeopardy team.

Sarah: And Sam, you will also be hitting the road with us, whatever we do inside Jeopardy Live on Tour, when we [00:01:00] visit college campuses, when we're doing Jeopardy Bar League, you're gonna be there with us.

Sam: These are all the things that I'm very much looking forward to. I love being here in Culver City, but I'm very excited about representing Jeopardy on the road.

Sarah: We want more people to get to spend time with you like we do, Sam, because, you know, they love you on the show, but they don't even know you're actually pretty great in person, too.

Sam: I'm, uh, I am many things. I contain multitudes, Sarah.

Sarah: And we got to do this together in Detroit back in mid August. We were part of the SporkleCon kickoff event.

Sam: Spectacular Inside Jeopardy! event at the beautiful Fillmore Theatre in Detroit as part of SporkleCon. Very successful, I think. We had hundreds of people in the crowd.

Hundreds

Sarah: of people. We got to have Drew Basile there as the star. Special guest. Let's take a listen to, uh, part of that interview.

Sam: You know, this might be a good time to remind the audience that Drew was also very successful on The Survivor Show, right? Survivor fans! And, uh, and if you listen to his podcast, he gave some insightful commentary on the different frame of mind that's necessary between Jeopardy and Survivor, but I [00:02:00] guess from my perspective, the big difference between Jeopardy and Survivor is that people watch Jeopardy.

See, I, I can make that joke because I'm practically in the industry now. Ha! We're winning Wednesday nights, Sam. So, I don't know, but, but yeah, Survivor's a great time. It's not quite like Jeopardy. Jeopardy, I had to wear a suit. You know, Survivor, I was naked. So, you know, you, you, you, you're way out between the two.

Sarah: And you also hosted the interactive game of Jeopardy and did so very well, might I say. Well,

Sam: thank you. And it was, uh, uh, largely without error in a very big group of excited people who played along with well written clues. It was a delight to be, uh, to A spectator, but in fact, I got to read the clues out.

I was exactly like Ken in every way.

Sarah: Every way but a couple.

Sam: Right. No, yeah, I'm not really like Ken.

Sarah: Well, and one thing I forgot to do at the beginning was tell everyone to please enter your first name and your first initial. Somehow that escaped me. I think I was just excited you were there. Uh, do you remember what one of our [00:03:00] contestants, uh, decided to call themselves?

Yeah,

Sam: so we are very delighted to welcome contestant Deez N, uh, who was surprisingly good at Jeopardy, but I think next time we'll emphasize first name and first initial of last name, and that may do it.

Sarah: Yes, I've never, like, rooted against someone so much because then you or I had to continue to call on Deez N, and they delighted in it over

Sam: and over

Sarah: Again.

Sam: But it was a successful game.

Sarah: It was a successful game. D's did not win, which was kind of also a success. Also a happy day in our lives. There was dancing to the Think music. You started dancing and I thought, I'm going to dance with you. It's the

Sam: Think music. It's irresistible.

Sarah: It really is. You know, all these years later, it still, it still sinks in.

Well, Sam, long before Detroit, May 13th, 2020, deep in the pandemic, I was helping out in the contestant department. I logged on for my little Zoom audition and there, there you were.

Sam: There I was in my spare room of my home in Pacific Grove, California.

Sarah: Yes. And you said you had your pandemic [00:04:00] hair going on.

You were not quite as dapper as you are today. Can we say that?

Sam: Things were different in those days, Sarah. Standards of personal care had relaxed a small bit during the early days of the pandemic.

Sarah: Yeah. Let's just take a quick listen to part of that.

Hello there. Can you hear me? Hi, how are you doing? I'm doing well.

How are you doing today?

Sam: Good. It's a crazy world we're living in. I got my pandemic hairdo going on.

Is this not your normal hairdo? A little shorter normally?

Sam: Yeah, a little bit.

I like it. I like it. How's the pandemic treating you?

Sam: Cannot complain. I've got a job. I've got Toilet paper, everything. How about you?

Same?

Same thing, yeah. You know, I feel very, very grateful to get to do my job every day. So, I'm a, I'm one of the lucky ones for sure. Um, I also want to make sure all the information we have for you is correct so that we can reach you. So, first and last name please. Samuel, S A M U E L, I go by Sam, Butchry, B U T T R E Y.

Sarah: And from then on, who could [00:05:00] have known that not only would you make it through all the auditions, I gave you really rave reviews, first of all, but then you would compete at in the Professor's Tournament and

Sam: win. I did win the Professor's Tournament and, uh, this interview with you changed my life, or at least was the beginning of a life changing journey that I've taken through the Professor's Tournament, the Tournament of Champions, Jeopardy!

Masters, the Invitational, and now I'm here on the Inside Jeopardy! Podcast.

Sarah: We've come full circle, Sam. We've come full circle.

Sam: And yet there's more to do. Maybe we've only come 180 degrees.

Sarah: I like that. But to think that, you know, all those years ago, you and I were just sitting on Zoom talking, and here we are in the podcast studio.

It's

Sam: pretty cool. It is unbelievable. It literally, I do not believe it. That's weird. No, I, it is difficult to believe, but I'm, uh, uh, beyond delighted to be here.

Sarah: All right, Sam, well, in addition to having you as a special guest in the podcast, I did bring along a special lady as well.

Sam: Look at her. A beautiful, shiny Emmy award.

Congratulations to the entire Jeopardy group for bringing home yet [00:06:00] another Emmy.

Sarah: Yeah, believe it or not, this is Emmy number 45 for Jeopardy!, which is pretty incredible. If you've ever been to the Alex Trebek stage, to our studio, you see the large, impressive case of Emmys, and this is number 45. It's our 21st for Outstanding Game Show, and it's only our second in primetime, though.

We recently switched from the daytime Emmys to the primetime Emmys. And so we are no longer part of the televised evening, we're part of the Creative Arts Emmy. So that happened over the weekend, but doesn't take away from the really incredible feeling of winning an Emmy Award.

Sam: And you were there yourself giving a speech, is that right?

Sarah: Well yes, I was there with the writers. Michael Davies was actually in the audience. And is actually, which is why he's not with us today, he is in Scotland taking his daughter to college. She's going to his alma mater. And so he appointed me our official speaker if we were to win, which was a whole layer of nerves I've never had to deal with.

[00:07:00] Thankfully, our award was third. So, you know, they give out lots and lots of awards for hours, but we were the third one up. So I didn't have much time to get nervous. It just kind of happened.

Sam: And how big was the group that got up on stage with you?

Sarah: Uh, there was myself and six of our writers, so.

Sam: Delighted to see the writers getting the recognition they deserve.

The thing was, you guys were just too good in the last category. You'd win every year. That's why they had to push you up into the primetime division. I think that's

Sarah: I like that. It was the first win for Marcus Brown. His first nomination and his first win. He was there with his wife, who is pregnant with their twins.

So, that was a pretty cool thing. At least one of

Sam: those children will be named Emmy.

Sarah: Right? Well, there's a boy and a girl, so maybe Emmy and Ken. Marcus, we've done all the work for you. You don't have to worry. We've named the children. Between Sam and I, we came up with the perfect names.

Sam: Beautiful. So the Emmy Awards are quite a show.

I know I wasn't invited.

Sarah: Well, you weren't, Sam. I can't imagine. We should have had you as our social correspondent, because I [00:08:00] actually had to be the social correspondent. Well, Ken was the social correspondent, but I was recording Ken. He was my quote unquote date, because our families didn't have as much interest in going to the Emmys.

So we went together and, you know, he cleans up nice and it tucks. And it was really fun. So many people coming up to Ken throughout the evening just to say how much they love Jeopardy!, but also what a great job they think he's doing. He, uh, he ran into Ellie Kemper right away. She wanted a photo with him.

Well,

Sam: and you were talking about some of the great TV stars who did go to the show.

Sarah: Oh yeah. Dick Van Dyke was in the front row, 99 years old. He won an award for his special at the end of the evening. He got up and he started dancing and I'll tell you what, if anyone can be living with the vitality that Dick Van Dyke is at 99, you're onto something.

Johnny Gilbert, not too far behind him and still has the golden voice. So I don't know. They're all doing something right.

Sam: You and I will be here 30 years, 40 years, 50 years from now doing exactly the same.

Sarah: I love it. Let's do it. So one thing different about the podcast, for those of you [00:09:00] listening, we are actually recording it.

Sam and I are being recorded right now. You agreed to that, right, Sam?

Wait, did I?

Sarah: And we're going to offer video highlights from the podcast each week. You'll be able to find them on YouTube and you'll also be able to find them on our social channels. So if you want to see what this crazy podcast looks like behind the scenes, check it out.

You can check it out.

Sam: And realistically, you were going to go onto YouTube for videos anyway. So while you're there, look up the Jeopardy podcast and you can see the beautiful Emmy and the somewhat less beautiful Sam and Sarah.

Sarah: I agree. And Sam, now that you've joined the pod, we've decided we're going to move away from this week in Jeopardy history.

We've covered a lot of things that have happened each week in Jeopardy history, and not that there are more things to cover, but we thought now that we have a professor in the pod, we're going to just tease it. You know about it, but we have a new segment, and I think it is perfectly suited to you, my friend.

Sam: So that means that you at home need to stay tuned for what's coming up next when the professor works his magic.

Sarah: Can't wait for it. And it's hard to believe that today kicks [00:10:00] off a new season. Season 41.

Sam: Season 41. I've been looking forward to this for some time. I've very much enjoyed the reruns of the Tournament of Champions and the Invitational Tournament, but I am ready for regular Jeopardy.

Sarah: I think everyone knows that we did shoot five weeks. of this season at the end of last season. And that was because we wanted to make sure we had as much regular Jeopardy! happening as possible. There was some speculation that maybe there would be another strike. Um, and so we just wanted to take out any chance that we wouldn't be able to make new shows with all of our crew.

And so we did shoot the first five weeks already. So we know what's happened. But we haven't shot the next five weeks after that, which will happen next week. But today, season 41 debuts. And so normally, you know, the champion who wins at the end of a season, they have a whole summer to enjoy being a Jeopardy!

Champion. Rachel Bradley really only had one night because she came back the very next day and we started season 41. So, [00:11:00] you know, everyone's been talking about it all summer, but for her, she had to get right back in there and play again. Before we head into Season 41, Sam, we've got some games to highlight.

So let's take a look at the last week of Season 40. We're heading back to July 22nd, where Niles Vijnamuri returned for his second game. He got out to an early lead, never looked back, 28 correct responses, including all three daily doubles. Securing a dominant runaway win. This was Niles's game.

Sam: It really was.

He, from beginning to end, and uh, it's interesting to note that Monica actually had more attempts on the buzzer, but, uh, Niles was just dominant on the buzzer, and, uh, even ran a category, scientific discoveries, so I was happy about that, because I'm a science guy. Good for Niles, who, uh, made it look easy, even though it wasn't.

Sarah: Yeah, and he was the only one who was correct in final. After the game, Ken did point out that he thought Niles took a, uh, an educated guess. Yes, on both of his daily doubles in Double Jeopardy, let's hear what he was thinking in those [00:12:00] moments.

Ken: I noticed that those last two daily doubles in the Double Jeopardy round, there was kind of a long pause, and then you made what seemed like an educated guess, Marseille, Andrew Jackson.

Yeah, so the Marseille one was pretty big. I think that was what determined the game, um, but yeah, I really had to think about it before making my answer. So

it was a lot of pressure for that specific daily double. And then the other one, I just wanted to take my time and That one you

Ken: kind of had Andrew

Jackson already

Ken: locked and loaded?

Yeah,

for the most part. I just wanted to make sure I wasn't thinking of anybody else at the time.

Ken: That's smart. Yeah, take a second. Double check your work.

Sarah: It's good advice. Often contestants just respond so quickly without thinking, and if you take that extra second, you may avoid giving that, you know, first instinct that people have.

Often is correct, but sometimes isn't.

Sam: No, that's very well said. And I've discussed this with some other players. The game really rewards a quick response on the buzzer, but it penalizes a quick, uh, speaking movement. You want to [00:13:00] having buzzed in, uh, and this is true on the daily doubles as well. Having buzzed in, you need to take your time and make sure you're doing it right.

So a good job for Nilesch.

Sarah: Well, he returned the following day to go for his third win. But Lindsay Denninger put up a fight. She took a strong lead in double Jeopardy! with the help of a 4, 600 True Daily Double. But Nilesch caught fire, taking the lead back, heading into final. They were both incorrect, but Nilesch, with a minimal wager, got the win.

Have to wonder about Lindsay's wager

Sam: here. I never want to second guess people's wagering strategy, particularly when they bet big. Because I always think contestants should be encouraged to

bet on themselves. But the standard wager in this case would be for Lindsay to have bet nothing at all or maybe under a thousand.

And that way, realizing that Neal Ashe will win if he gets it right, she should be prepared for what happens when, as in this case, he got it wrong. And my recommendation to her would have been bet, say, under a thousand so that she would have finished ahead of where Neal Ashe did. Ended up landing with [00:14:00] his mistaken Final Jeopardy.

It was a difficult Final Jeopardy. Uh, and you know, there are different strategies for wagering, but I do think Lindsay's was, um, an unusual choice.

Sarah: I think it was an unusual choice. And as a result, Nilesch was back on Wednesday, but this is where his run came to an end. After he went up against Davey Morrison, this was a close game, lots of lead changes throughout, but it was Davey, the only player to come up with the correct response in final, who became our new Jeopardy!

champion. I think the most interesting thing about Davey is that he escaped quicksand.

Sam: He did, Ken was delighted by that story and so was I, and it's a metaphor maybe for his game against Nealey. Or maybe it isn't. Maybe I don't even know what a metaphor is, but he was in a difficult spot and, and pulled it out.

He was, uh, behind going into Final Jeopardy! and was the only one to get it correct. So, that's a quicksand like escape for new champion Davy Morrison.

Sarah: I like that. And, you know, now I know some tips on how to escape if I ever find myself in quicksand, which I've really had [00:15:00] nightmares about ever since the Princess Bride, like, years ago.

I just have always wondered, what happens?

Sam: So many things in the Princess Bride gave us nightmares, but Culver City, blessedly, is free of quicksand as far as I know. I checked with the parks people and they seemed sure.

Sarah: Thank goodness. I also was very nervous about the cassowary after Wendy talked about that bird.

The clue, of course, called the world's most dangerous bird, this emu relative has dagger like toes and can run 30 miles per hour.

Sam: That was, uh, information that I did not have to hand and, uh, it was a video clue. So we got a picture of this frightening dinosaur like beast moving at a nice pace. I am now officially scared of cassowaries.

Sarah: Yeah, the dinosaurs are not gone because that thing is terrifying. But nonetheless, we move on to Thursday. Davey back to try and get another win, which he did in a runaway. Now a two day Jeopardy! champion. I've got to admit though, this was a bit of a rough episode. If you were reading on Reddit, people were talking [00:16:00] about it.

20 triple stumpers, four clues left. Unplayed in Double Jeopardy. That's one of the highest numbers I can remember, Sam. And it's not a record we like to brag about, but sometimes it happens.

Sam: Sometimes it happens. 20 seems like a lot. Davey was doing his part with 19 correct responses. In fact, he only had 18 the day before in the game that he won against Nilesh.

So, uh, he was doing his part, and maybe the three of them just had similar knowledge bases. So when one couldn't answer a question, neither could the other two. I don't really have a strong rooting interest here, but I would point out that Phil uses the exact same buzzer gripping strategy that I did. So I was hoping he'd get a few more right for

Sarah: Phil.

Sam: Well, I, I love all contestants equally,

Sarah: but you like the ones that take after you maybe a wee bit more,

Sam: right? Sort of a young version of me,

Sarah: but you're right about the contestant knowledge base. I mean, anyone, um, You know, you say, how would you do on Jeopardy? Well, it depends on the categories. You know, if your categories show up, it could be a great night for these three, not their categories.

[00:17:00] No, they're

Sam: all good at Jeopardy. That's how they got on the show. And it just wasn't their day.

Sarah: Well, Ken spoke with Davey after the game about the runaway, but also a tough final Jeopardy. Let's take a listen.

Ken: Well, uh, you had a runaway this time. That must be nice. Do you prefer when the game is out of reach going into final?

Uh, no, I don't. Uh, matter of fact, I like it to

Ken: be tight. I thought Molly Brown was actually kind of tough, but what gave it to you guys? The, what, the nickname or how did you two get?

Yeah, I instantly thought unsinkable was the first thing that popped in my head. And then I was second guessing myself about her last name.

So I went with my gut. So

Ken: Molly Brown, how do you know Molly Brown?

Uh, the musical that I've never seen. Oh, I see. Not the, not the Cathy Bates performance. And also, uh, Cathy Bates in Titanic as well, yeah.

Ken: The ICB, you're not talking about the Titanic musical from the 90s, you're talking about the unsinkable Molly Brown.

Yeah, that's right, yeah. With Debbie Reynolds, that makes sense. Oh yeah, that would be a better point. Yeah, I've never seen it, I've never seen it either.

Sarah: And now a quick word from our sponsor. [00:18:00] When you think about the success of businesses like Heinz or Mattel, it's often overlooked that it's actually the businesses behind the business making selling simple and nobody does selling simple better than Shopify.

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Well, we closed out season 40 on Friday, July 26th with a great game between Davey and Rachel Bradley and Steve Babish. It was a close game throughout that all came down to Final Jeopardy. Rachel was the only player to come up with the correct response, spending the summer, or one night, as a Jeopardy champion.

And she will return to kick off season 41 tonight.

Sam: That was another exciting game and [00:19:00] it came down, of course, to the last couple of clues because, uh, Rachel and Steve were battling it out, but you have to remember that this is a three person game and in fact the final clue on the board went to Davey, whereas if Steve had, um, managed to grab that and gotten it right, he would have entered Final Jeopardy in the lead.

It turned out not to matter because Rachel was the only one who could come up with a pterodactyl. Having seen a cassowary earlier in the week, we now have pterodactyls flying about Culver City and it's all very scary.

Sarah: It might make you want to hop into some quicksand.

Sam: It's the only way to make yourself safe from cassowaries and pteronactyls, yeah.

Sarah: Alright, well, Rachel, we'll be back tonight, and this is something we do every week, Sam. We do our host chat. So, for this week's host chat, let's, uh, find out what Ken had to say when an audience member asked, Is there a question that still haunts you today?

Ken: I guess that one now. I think it's, for everybody, it's the one they lose on, you know, like the very last Final Jeopardy.

For me, it was H& R Block, so. I have the [00:20:00] bad luck of seeing mine every time I drive by a strip mall. I see that, I see that green square and I'm like, Uhhh, H& R Block.

Sarah: Alright Sam, we heard it from Ken, is there one that still haunts you?

Sam: On Jeopardy! Masters, I was uh, leading both Amy and Matea going into Final Jeopardy, which is already a memory I will treasure, and the question was essentially asking for the name of the man who wrote the book, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, and its follow ups.

I couldn't think of it. I knew they didn't give you the title of the book and the clue, so I had deduced that it was that guy, and all I could do was write down the most generic Scandinavian name I could think of. And what I really wanted to do was write down, You know, the guy with the girl with the dragon tattoo guy.

Yeah.

Sam: And then Ken, as he was discussing this said, you know, we wouldn't have allowed the girl with a dragon tattoo guy. So at least I didn't write that, but it was disappointing because it was early on in masters. And if I'd been able to get that, come up with that one, I've read the book, in fact, or half of it anyway, I would have been in a [00:21:00] better place or seen the movie or gotten the tattoo or something,

Sarah: something.

Yeah. And those, you know, those points, those match points, so important in Masters, so I can understand how that one is still haunting you. I'd go with

Sam: Festering, but yeah. Okay,

Sarah: Festering. If you had to say, right now, the correct response? Larsson,

Sam: Stieg Larsson. Now I know it.

Sarah: Well, what's about the phrasing?

What game do you think you're playing here? Who is?

Sam: Who is Stieg Larsson? That's my question. Mike, let me ask you a question. Who is Stieg Larsson? Who?

Sarah: Who is it? Who the

Sam: heck?

Sarah: Well, believe it or not, Sam, this is it for our first podcast together. Was it fun? It was.

Sam: It was a lot of fun. It was a little bit, uh, intimidating to be in this, uh, the people can't see the beautiful studio here, but it is well equipped with lots of equipment and nice people operating things, which I do not know what they are.

Sarah: Oh yeah. Podcast producers, Alexa and Carlos, they've got lots more machines now, but the good news is, Sam, you're going to fly back down next week. You will be with us. I

Sam: will be here.

Sarah: Michael Davies will be back in the country. So we're going to have all three of us here in the pod to discuss the first week of games in season 41.

[00:22:00] Again, those kick off today, so you won't want to miss it. And as always, I'm sure now that Sam's here, you've got questions for Sam, things you've always wanted to know. So don't forget to send your questions to inside jeopardy podcast at gmail. com. Who knows? We might be answering one next week and we will see you all [00:23:00] [00:24:00] soon.