

## 50 STATES IN 60 MINUTES

*excerpt – framing the Constitution*

MAN B: Y'know, this is getting' stupid. We're supposed to be one country, but it's almost like each of us is competing with the other.

WOMAN C: Preach it brother.

MAN B: There's gotta be a better way....

WOMAN B: So they all went back to the drawing board. *(they all start 'mulling')*

MAN A: Aha, I've got it!

OTHERS: What?! What?!

MAN A: I know how we should do it. Look, what's the thing we fear the most?

WOMAN B: Taxes!

MAN C: The English!

MAN B: *(raises hand)* Fish!

*(they all do a take)*

MAN A: What? No. We fear tyranny! *(ahhh, tyranny...)* So to protect ourselves, we'll split the government into three branches, and each each branch will keep the other two from getting too powerful. For example, we'll start with a President to enforce the laws!

OTHERS: *(doubtfully)* yes.....

MAN A: But we'll have a Congress to make the laws!

OTHERS: *(intrigued)* yes.....

MAN A: And we'll have a court system to have final say on whether the laws are fair and constitutional!

OTHERS: *(enthusiastically)* Yes!

WOMAN C: So far, so good. But when they started talking more about the Congress, there was one point in which they couldn't seem to agree.

WOMAN A: New York has more people, we should have more say!

MAN B: *(southern accent)* But Georgia a small state – if you get your way our voices will never be heard!

WOMAN C: And so it went

WOMAN A: More representation!

MAN B: Equal representation!

WOMAN C: Until they finally had the bright idea of a Great Compromise.

MAN A: There will be TWO houses in Congress (*general ‘ooooh’...*) – your house (*to Woman A*) will have a number of representatives proportionate to numbers of the people.

MAN B: What does ‘proportionate’ mean?

MAN A: It means that states with more people get more representatives. (*Man B starts to protest*) But there’ll also be a second house, and YOUR house (*to Man B*) will be made up of two Senators from each state, with each state being represented equally. No law can get made unless BOTH houses in Congress agree to it.

MAN B: *(thinking about how to game the system)* Now about that “proportionate” thing, what about our slaves? Don’t they deserve representation too? (*he pulls Man C close to him, buddy buddy – Man C mistakes this to mean that he’ll be liberated soon*)

WOMAN A: *(outraged at his chutzpah)* What?!!!

MAN C: No, don’t worry, it’s cool. (*he still thinks it means he’ll be “a person”*)

MAN A: Hm...well....yes. Yes, they do. Your slaves will each count as 3/5ths of a person.

MAN C: You’re kidding....

MAN B: There ya go, you’re represented. Now get back to work!

MAN C: But can’t I vote? Can’t I even get 3/5ths of a vote?

MAN A: No, unfortunately you’re a resident, not a citizen.

WOMAN B: How about women?

MAN A: What's that you say?

WOMAN B: I said, how about us women?

MAN A: Hmm...well let's ask these guys, what do you think? Should women be allowed to vote? (*work them...*) I think I heard you say "yeah....RIGHT!"  
Nope, no women voters either.

MAN C: Man, this is gonna have to change some day.

WOMAN B: You got that right.

WOMAN A: Anyway!....The Constitution was adopted, George Washington was elected the first president...

MAN B: I didn't vote for him!

WOMAN C: This again?

WOMAN A: ...and everyone lived happily ever after. (*they all make moves to leave the stage*)...or maybe not. (*they come back*) Ya'know, I'm looking at this Constitution, and realizing that it doesn't really say anything about protecting us from the government!

MAN B: You're right – we need to amend the constitution to protect our rights!

WOMAN C: So the first Congress added ten amendments to the Constitution. These new amendments guaranteed many individual rights, including.....

WOMAN A: Freedom of religion and freedom of the press!

MAN A: The right to keep and bear arms.

MAN C: How about the right to arm bears?

MAN A: Doesn't mention it.

MAN C: (*calls offstage*) Sorry Yogi!

WOMAN B: Protection from unreasonable search and seizure. (*To Man A*) Hey, what are you doing in my stuff?

MAN A: We're looking for something!

WOMAN B: What are you looking for?

MAN A: We don't know yet – but if we find something bad, boy will YOU be in trouble!

WOMAN B: I got an amendment that says you can't do that. If you think I've done something wrong, you better go get a warrant before you look through my stuff!

MAN B: ..and the right to be protected from cruel or unusual punishment!

MAN C: You've been so bad, we're going to lock you in a room with Justin Bieber - and Honey BooBoo! - and they're feeling real talkative today!

MAN B: NO, NO, NOT THAT!!!!

WOMAN C : Together, these first ten amendments were known as

ALL: The Bill of Rights!

WOMAN C: And FINALLY – the people were ready to start building their country in earnest.