

NOTES

What would you do with one million dollars? In the summer of 1999, author J.E. Matzer asked himself that very same question. The result is a humorous look at the adventures when he found himself on one of the most popular game shows in television history, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* This selection should be performed by a male and be entered in Prose Interpretation. This selection contains a lot of humor; therefore, play that humor. Think about how the “irritating contestant” should be portrayed within the Princess Diana passage. Should he be obnoxious, or should he be performed as a redneck with a slow drawl? Obviously, one of the most difficult tasks of performing this selection will be recreating the voice of Regis Philbin. Not only will a spot-on impersonation of Regis add to the overall fun of the selection, it will be an impressive technical aspect of the performance, too! The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages in his manuscript. This is a story about desire and personal triumph. Being a contestant on a televised game show was a dream come true for J.E. Matzer, so play this emotionally. Ultimately, it is a story about fifteen questions, one million dollars, and a man who met Regis.

During the summer of 1999 I was unemployed, and it was around this time I started to see commercials for a new game show. As far as I knew, no other game show had ever offered one million dollars as the grand prize. Prizes had always been cars, hot tubs, trips to Jamaica, and car wax. But one million dollars! I was reminded of Charlie Bucket in Roald Dahl’s classic children’s book, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Charlie, like me, was looking for a way to improve his life and the lives of his little family. He was hoping to find a “golden ticket”—a golden ticket that would make all his dreams come true. So when Regis Philbin asked the question, “Who wants to be a millionaire?” I answered, “Me, Regis! I want to be a millionaire!”



I walked through the tunnel so many contestants had walked through before, and before I knew it, I was on the set. This was it! I was inside the “Chocolate Factory” and was staring wide-eyed at all the marvels around me.

Now this might sound strange, but how would you wave to forty million people if you were on television? Would you smile and nod? Whip out two invisible six shooters and wink at the camera? Pull up your shirt, having shaved the words, “I MADE IT!” into your body hair? I saluted. It is what is referred to in the industry as a “Brain Fart.”



The last fastest-finger question of the night was a Geography question. In the words of Scooby-Doo’s pal Shaggy, “Zoinks!”

Regis read the question.

PUT THESE MID-WEST U.S. STATE CAPITALS IN GEOGRAPHICAL ORDER STARTING IN THE EAST:

- A. JEFFERSON CITY
- B. COLUMBUS
- C. TOPEKA
- D. INDIANAPOLIS

Honestly, to this day, I can’t remember hitting any of the buttons or the correct order of the answers, but at that exact moment when Regis said my name, about a million images ran through my mind. I saw Sylvester Stallone, as Rocky Balboa, raising his arms in victory and shouting, “Yo, Adrian!” The Mormon Tabernacle Choir gloriously singing, “Hallelujah!” Snoopy, head back with an ear-to-ear grin, dancing in A Charlie Brown Christmas.

Finally I pulled myself away from the terminal and sauntered over to “The Man Who Saved the ABC Television Network” and shook Regis’ hand. It was just me and Regis Philbin. Regis then said the words I had been waiting to hear: “Alright, Jody, you know about the rules. You know about the lifelines. Let’s play Who Wants to be A Millionaire?”



I took a deep breath as Regis read the first question.

ACCORDING TO THE PARENTAL SAYING, WHAT DOES NOT GROW ON TREES?

- A. CARS
- B. CANDY
- C. MONEY
- D. CLOTHES