

= What Is ... Cliff Clavin ? =

" What Is ... Cliff Clavin ? " is an eighth season episode of the American television series Cheers . It was directed by Andy Ackerman rather than James Burrows ? who directed 243 out of 273 episodes of the show ? and originally aired on January 18 , 1990 . In this episode , Cliff Clavin (John Ratzenberger) appears on the game show Jeopardy ! and game show host Alex Trebek guest stars as himself . Cliff racks up US \$ 22 @, @ 000 during the game but loses it all in the final round . The episode received praise from critics for its concept and its guest star .

= = Plot = =

Cliff Clavin (John Ratzenberger) competes on the television game show Jeopardy ! , which has temporarily moved taping to Boston for a special occasion , and amasses \$ 22 @, @ 000 by the end of the Double Jeopardy ! round , more than twice the score of the second place contestant , theoretically ensuring a win . For the Final Jeopardy ! clue of " Archibald Leach , Bernard Schwartz and Lucille LeSueur " in the category of " Movies " , Cliff responds incorrectly with " Who are 3 people who 've never been in my kitchen ? " Having wagered his entire score , Cliff loses all of his winnings . Cliff objects and argues , demanding that his answer be accepted . The show 's host , Alex Trebek , later arrives at Cheers , tells Cliff that his response should have been accepted earlier , and announces his resignation as the host of Jeopardy ! . However , Cliff convinces Trebek to remain as host by telling him how much the show and Trebek mean to him . After Cliff shares the news with others , Norm Peterson (George Wendt) praises Trebek for doing this just to make Cliff feel better . However , Trebek says that he did not realize that Cliff was at the bar and that meeting him had been a coincidence . Trebek says that Cliff scares him and that the story about quitting the show was a fabrication to placate him .

Meanwhile , Sam Malone (Ted Danson) receives telephone calls from women whom he previously dated ; they are angry with him for making dates and not arriving . He eventually discovers that his " little black book " has been stolen and enrolls the help of bar patrons to find it . Through their detective work , Sam discovers that the thief has called Sam 's women alphabetically and that Rebecca Howe (Kirstie Alley) is the next recipient on the list . The thief turns out to be a teenage boy named Timmy (Greg E. Davis) , who wants to become a " babe hound " like Sam . To let Timmy go , Sam tells him to start as a " babe pup " and to call girls who are around his age , and gives him \$ 25 for a haircut and a tip for a shampoo girl .

= = Reception = =

General Norman Schwarzkopf said this was the funniest episode of Cheers . Don Leighton from Superior Telegram called this episode the greatest and said the Final Jeopardy ! moment was hilarious . Jeffrey Robinson from DVD Talk said the category topics ? specifically " Civil Servants " , " Stamps from Around the World " , " Mothers and Sons " , " Beer " , " Bar Trivia " , and " Celibacy " from the first round of Jeopardy ! ? and the concept of the episode were a riot . Hot Springs Village Voice called Cliff 's Final Jeopardy ! moment a classic example of his mishaps caused by his own " know @-@ it @-@ all nature " . Andrew Razeghi , in his book Hope , called this episode " one of the most memorable episodes " of Cheers , found Cliff 's response to the Final Jeopardy ! clue neither right nor wrong and an example of divergent thinking , and called Cliff a poster child of Joy Paul Guilford . Former Jeopardy ! contestant Ken Jennings , in his book Brainiac , considered this episode of all Jeopardy ! -related episodes essential as other episodes that focus on characters who either are trapped in an elevator or have two dates on the same night .

= = Legacy = =

An early Jeopardy ! reference to the Cheers episode happened during the airing of the final round of the Jeopardy ! College Championship on May 18 , 1990 . Soon @-@ to @-@ be champion

Michael Thayer of Rutgers College bet \$ 0 and wrote " Who was someone I never met ? " as his response in the Final Jeopardy ! round . When the contestants ' wagers and responses were revealed , Trebek commented , " Michael , looks like you were watching that episode of Cheers . " In 1999 , another Jeopardy ! contestant responded to the Final Jeopardy ! clue with this question , inspired by Cliff Clavin 's incorrect response in the Final Jeopardy ! round : " What is a book that has never been in my kitchen ? " According to Michael Gordeuk from Westfield , New Jersey , Alex Trebek later recalled Cliff 's losing moment and then " broke into a huge laugh " .

Peter Wayner from InfoWorld defined " pulling a Clavin " as a reference to Cliff Clavin 's wagering all his leading score and then losing all to a zero in the Final Jeopardy ! round and as a tactic to avoid in Jeopardy ! In the Jeopardy ! fan community , the episode gave rise to what is known as " Clavin 's Rule " (or " pulling a Cliff Clavin ") , a rule of thumb that states that a player should not wager enough to endanger a " lock " or " runaway " game (one where the first @-@ place player has more than twice the score of the second @-@ place player) , no matter how tempting the category .

In the Double Jeopardy ! round of the Jeopardy ! episode from May 10 , 2005 , the categories were the same as those shown in Cliff Clavin 's game : CIVIL SERVANTS , STAMPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD , MOTHERS & SONS , BEER , " BAR " TRIVIA , and CELIBACY .

On the first episode of Jeopardy ! season 31 , which aired on September 15 , 2014 , Jeopardy ! champion Elizabeth Williams echoed Cliff Clavin 's answer in her response to the Final Jeopardy clue . Williams ' \$ 600 wager combined with her opponents ' incorrect responses allowed Williams to triumph that day , nonetheless .