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001. note	re: SSN and DOB [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	00/00/0000	b(6)

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Speechwriting
Josh Gottheimer
OA/Box Number: 18991

FOLDER TITLE:

The American President 4/7/00: Communications

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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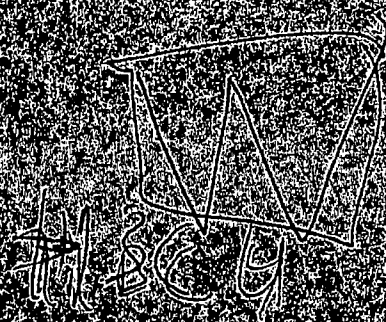
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THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

FACT SHEET

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, the first documentary series ever to profile all 41 of America's chief executives, is a co-production of Kunhardt Productions, Inc., and Thirteen/WNET New York, and is presented on PBS by Thirteen/WNET. The ten-hour series will air over five consecutive nights, from *Sunday, April 9, through Thursday, April 13, 9-11 PM* (check local listings). The series sole underwriter is New York Life Insurance Company. **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** features interviews with President Clinton and former Presidents Ford, Carter and Bush. A remarkable group of public figures has provided the voices for the presidents who served before the advent of audio recording. It includes Generals Colin Powell and H. Norman Schwarzkopf; Senators Bob Dole, Howard Baker, Lloyd Bentsen, John Glenn and Paul Simon; Governors Mario Cuomo and Bill Weld; journalists Walter Cronkite, Tom Wicker and Ben Bradlee; political consultant James Carville; the Reverend Billy Graham; and radio personality Don Imus.

Credits:

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Based on the Book

"The American President"

By

Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr.

Philip B. Kunhardt III

Peter W. Kunhardt

With Commentary By

Richard E. Neustadt

Narrated By

Hugh Sidey

Music By

Michael Starobin



Made possible by



Series Editor
Kathryn Barnier

Written, Produced and Directed By
Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr.
Philip B. Kunhardt III
Peter W. Kunhardt

Executive Producers
Peter B. Kunhardt Jr. and William R. Grant

Co-Director
Jamie Edgar

Coordinating Producer
Dyllan McGee

Senior Associate Producers
Kathleen Toner
Caroline Waterlow

Chief Academic Consultant
Stephen Skowronek

Senior Historical Consultant
David Herbert Donald

Historical Consultants
Stephen Ambrose, *University of New Orleans*
Harry Ammon, *University of Southern Illinois* Donald Cole, *Philips Exeter Academy*
Jean Harvey Baker, *Goucher College*
Lou Cannon
Donald Cole, *Philips Exeter Academy*
Paolo Coletta, *U.S. Naval Academy*
John Milton Cooper, *University of Wisconsin at Madison*
William Cooper, *Louisiana State University*
Robert Dallek, *Boston University*
David Donald, *Harvard University*
Joseph Ellis, *Mt. Holyoke College*
Robert Ferrell, *Indiana University*
Larry Gara, *Wilmington College*
William Gienapp, *Harvard University*
Lewis Gould, *University of Texas at Austin*
Robert Gunderson, *Indiana University*
Alonzo Hamby, *Ohio University*

Joan Hoff, *Ohio University*
Michael Holt, *University of Virginia*
Ari Hoogenboom, *Brooklyn College*
Robert Johannsen, *University of Illinois*
William McFeely, *University of Georgia*
Paul Nagel, *University of Minnesota*
Allan Peskin, *Cleveland State University*
Thomas Reeves, *University of Wisconsin at Parkside*
Robert Remini, *University of Illinois at Chicago*
Robert Rutland, *University of Virginia*
Allan Spetter, *University of Dayton*
Ken Stevens, *Texas Christian University*
Hans Trefousse, *Brooklyn College*
Gordon Wood, *Brown University*

Promotion

Stone/Hallinan Associates

Educational Outreach

Hallinan Consulting

Location Filming

Greg Andracke
Allen Moore
Allan Palmer
Buddy Squires
For Thirteen/WNET New York:

Post Production Producer

Jared Lipworth

Production Manager

Julie Schapiro Thorman

A co-production of Kunhardt Productions and Thirteen/WNET New York ©2000
Kunhardt Productions, Inc.

The series' sole underwriter is New York Life Insurance Company.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

THE FAMILY BEHIND "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT"

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT is the product of a unique family in documentary television which has been chronicling American history for decades.

The Kunhardts, a father and two sons, are the grandson and great-grandsons of Frederick Hill Meserve, America's earliest and foremost collector and authority on Civil War era photographs. Meserve's collection, which focused on many of the early presidents, was passed down to the Kunhardts through his daughter, Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt. For years she continued the family tradition of intergenerational collaboration, co-authoring two books with her son, Philip Kunhardt, Jr. While thousands of Mathew Brady glass negatives in the collection were transferred in the 1980s to the National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Meserve collection is still in the Kunhardts' hands and forms the basis of **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT**.

Working with a team of researchers, the family has also combed through literally hundreds of photographic archives across the country to amass a definitive collection of images and film footage spanning the entire history of the presidency. In addition, they have done extensive research into presidential writings, both published and unpublished, in order to bring alive the presidents "in their own words."

The Kunhardts - Philip, Philip, and Peter - work out of a two-story brick building in Mt. Kisco, New York which has been described as looking like "the American Studies department at an Ivy League college." Working



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with a staff of twelve, they create television series and books from start to finish. **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** took nearly five years to complete.

Contacts:

Timothy Hallinan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (L.A.)
310-822-4481

Roz Kay
Thirteen/WNET
212-560-3016

Kathleen Kaan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (N.Y.)
212-489-5590

Bill Werfelman
New York Life Insurance Company
212-576-5385



THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

**BILL CLINTON DISCUSSES HIS IMPEACHMENT
IN "THE BALANCE OF POWER,"
AN EPISODE OF "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT"
AIRING ON PBS, THURSDAY APRIL 13, 2000, 9-11 PM (ET)
General Colin Powell, William F. Buckley, James Carville,
and Senator Howard Baker Provide Presidential Voices**

An exclusive and far-ranging interview with President Bill Clinton forms the finale of **"The Balance of Power,"** the tenth and final episode of the epic PBS series **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT**, airing as part of a two-hour program *Thursday, April 13, 9-11 PM (ET)*. (Check local listings.) The ten-hour series, the first documentary to profile all forty-one of America's chief executives, also features exclusive interviews with all the living former presidents except Ronald Reagan.

"The Balance of Power" will air as the second episode on the evening of April 13, presented as part of the program block **"An Office and its Powers."** The first episode, airing at 9 PM, is **"Expanding Power."**

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT is a co-production of Kunhardt Productions, Inc. and Thirteen/WNET New York and is presented on PBS by Thirteen/WNET. The series was written, produced and directed by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III, and Peter W. Kunhardt. The executive producers are Peter W. Kunhardt and William R. Grant. The series' sole underwriter is New York Life Insurance Company.

Suspicion of executive power goes back to the American Revolution, fought in part as an assault on the executive power of the king. **"The Balance of Power"** looks at presidential leadership as it is constrained, for better or worse, by the balanced powers of our constitutional system. James Madison was the "Father of the Constitution," and all his life he supported balanced government. But his system of

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separated, yet overlapping powers presumed a basic level of courtesy, or at least cooperation in government—what Madison called "comity." This comity broke down in the 1820s and '30s, and was replaced with an intense new era of partisanship. James K. Polk was a tough and thoroughgoing Democrat, who strove for balance but only within his own party. And the divisiveness left in his wake would grow unabated until the complete breakdown of American politics that immediately preceded the Civil War.

In his own day, William Howard Taft seemed like a new James Madison, determined to recapture a proper balance in government. That meant, among other things, rejecting an overly strong presidency, and standing up, in particular for the independence of the judiciary. The momentum of history was against Taft, though, and the 20th century would be dominated by a series of strong presidents. But in the wake of what Arthur Schlesinger called "the imperial presidency," Congress seized back much of its authority, ushering in an era of divided government and increasing partisanship.

Bill Clinton's presidency has contributed to and suffered greatly under the strain of this partisanship, which at times has seemed to threaten the Madisonian system itself. "Only once before have our national parties fractured," says commentator Richard Neustadt. "When they did, we had a civil war. We're not at such a point, but you have dangerous potentials in the country."

In an exclusive interview, Clinton speaks openly of his personal scandal and the intense partisanship that nearly wrecked his presidency. And he emotionally thanks the American people for standing by him in his time of trial.

Providing the voices for the presidents in this hour are Senator Dale Bumpers (Madison), Senator Howard Baker (Polk), and General Colin Powell (Taft). Powell, who possesses the same quiet strength as did Taft, served in a similar capacity to President George Bush as Taft served to President Theodore Roosevelt.

The first program of the evening, "**Expanding Power**," looks at four dynamic presidents who deliberately stretched the power of the office: the immensely popular, hugely aggressive Andrew Jackson; the iron-willed Grover Cleveland (the only chief executive to serve two non-consecutive terms); the expansive reign of Theodore Roosevelt; and the far-reaching, finally self-destructing presidency of Richard Nixon.

The voices for "**Expanding Power**" are James Carville (Jackson), Governor Lowell Weicker (Cleveland), and William F. Buckley (Theodore Roosevelt).

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT is narrated by Hugh Sidey, *Time* magazine's White House reporter for four decades. Scholarly commentary is provided by Harvard's Richard E. Neustadt, whom Arthur Schlesinger has called "our most brilliant commentator on the presidency."

A companion volume to the series, also called **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT**, has been published by Riverhead Books. The volume has been singled out for praise by many historians and was a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

The centerpiece of the accompanying educational outreach effort, also funded by New York Life Insurance, is a Web site to which more than 1,400 American school teachers have contributed, www.americanpresident.org.

CONTACTS:

Timothy Hallinan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (L.A.)
310-822-4481

Kathleen Kaan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (N.Y.)
212-489-5590

Roz Kay
Thirteen/WNET
212-560-3016

Bill Werfelman
New York Life Insurance Company
212-576-5385

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST PROVIDE VOICES FOR "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT"

What do General Colin Powell, Senator Bob Dole, the Reverend Billy Graham, Morley Safer of "60 Minutes," and irascible radio personality Don Imus have in common?

They — and more than twenty-five other prominent political, military, and media figures — have all provided voices for America's presidents in the epic ten-part series **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT**, premiering *Sunday, April 9, 9-11 PM (ET)* (check local listings) on PBS.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, a co-production of Kunhardt Productions, Inc. and Thirteen/WNET New York, is the first documentary series ever to tell the story of all 41 of America's chief executives. Peter W. Kunhardt and William R. Grant are executive producers. The series, which airs two hours per night through *Thursday, April 13*, is underwritten solely by New York Life Insurance Company, which has also funded an ambitious educational outreach effort.

"We decided at the outset that we didn't want to use actors to voice the words of the presidents who served before the advent of sound," says producer-writer Philip B. Kunhardt III, who — with his brother Peter and their father, Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr. — produced, wrote, and directed the series. "The idea was to find public figures who shared a kind of kinship with the president they would voice." Some of the match-ups are evident. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf speaks the words of Ulysses S. Grant. Tennessee firebrand James Carville voices Tennessee firebrand Andrew Jackson. The magisterial Walter Cronkite supplies the voice for America's most magisterial president,

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George Washington. Ohio's Senator John Glenn is Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes. James Roosevelt, Jr. voices Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and New York aristocrat William F. Buckley speaks for New York aristocrat Theodore Roosevelt.

"The recording sessions with these people were fascinating," Kunhardt says. "Andrew Young, the dignified voice of Thomas Jefferson, wondered if an audience would be able to distinguish between a white voice and that of an African-American, and whether it mattered if they did. Retired *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee hesitated when first asked to read the words of Warren G. Harding, then decided, 'If Harding was a newspaperman, he couldn't be *all* bad.'"

"Nobody wanted to be associated with Andrew Johnson, the white supremacist successor of Lincoln who was the first president to be impeached," says Kunhardt. "Only Don Imus would agree to read Johnson's harsh words, telling us he was delighted to move into territory rejected by so many others. The Reverend Billy Graham, who provided the voice for the only ordained minister to serve as president, James Garfield, told us he'd served as a counselor to every president since Eisenhower, but wasn't sure who had ministered more to whom, he or they. And General Alexander Haig, while recording the words of Benjamin Harrison, joked with us that he'd been president three times — once when Nixon resigned, once when Reagan was shot, and now for PBS."

Kunhardt Productions and Thirteen/WNET also arranged exclusive interviews with all the living former presidents except Ronald Reagan, and with President Clinton. President Clinton's interview concludes the series as the final segment of the program called **"The Balance of Power."**

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, which is presented on PBS by Thirteen/WNET New York, is narrated by Hugh Sidey, *Time* magazine's White House reporter for four decades. Scholarly commentary is provided by Harvard's Richard E. Neustadt, whom Arthur Schlesinger has called "our most brilliant commentator on the presidency." The series is written, produced, and directed by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III, and Peter W. Kunhardt.

A companion volume to the series, also called *THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT*, has been published by Riverhead Books. The volume has been singled out for praise by many historians and was a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

The centerpiece of the educational outreach effort is a Web site to which more than 1,400 American school teachers have contributed, www.americanpresident.org.

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Roz Kay
Thirteen/WNET
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Bill Werfelman
New York Life Insurance Company
212-576-5385

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

**"THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT":
FIVE NIGHTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WHITE HOUSE**

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, the first documentary series ever to tell the stories of all 41 of America's chief executives, will present ten hours of presidential history over five consecutive nights on PBS beginning *Sunday, April 9, 2000, 9-11 PM (ET)*. (Check local listings.) A co-production of Kunhardt Productions, Inc. and Thirteen/WNET New York, **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** is presented on PBS by Thirteen/WNET. The sole underwriter is New York Life Insurance Company.

The series is thematically organized. Each hour presents profiles of four presidents who shared an important attribute. Two hours will air each evening, and each evening has its own over-arching theme. Here is a breakdown of the air schedule.

Sunday, April 9: A MATTER OF DESTINY

Program One: "Family Ties"

The Republican front-runner in the current presidential campaign is George W. Bush, the son of former President George Bush and the Democratic leader is Al Gore, scion of an old political family. Even in a democracy, power inevitably passes from generation to generation, and several families have returned to the White House as though born to it. The stories of the four men profiled in this hour — **John Quincy Adams, Benjamin Harrison, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy** — reveal both the blessings and the curses of inherited power.

Program Two: "Happenstance"

Nearly one in five American presidents died in office. The vice presidents who succeeded them were often chosen for the ticket less because they were equal to the



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the most powerful office in the land than because they provided some electoral advantage, such as geographical balance. What happens when such a man takes office — frequently facing widespread conviction that he is unworthy of the powers he inherits? The answer can be surprising, as is made clear by this hour's profiles of **John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Chester Alan Arthur** and **Harry Truman**. (This is the only program to focus on five presidents.)

Monday, April 10: POLITICS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Program One: "An Independent Cast of Mind"

From time to time the American electorate tires of political partisanship and elects a president who promises to stand above party ties. But is an independent cast of mind the best approach to the presidency? All four of the men who are the subjects of this hour — **John Adams, Zachary Taylor, Rutherford B. Hayes**, and **Jimmy Carter** — had difficult presidencies, and neither of the two who sought a second term was granted one.

Program Two: "The Professional Politician"

"In our nation's early years, taking part in political affairs was considered a duty and an honor," says series narrator Hugh Sidey, "but not a way of life." It was not long, however, before professional politicians began to find their way to the White House. While a politician's skills can be helpful to a president, they are not in themselves sufficient to guarantee success in the office. This hour traces the presidencies of four political professionals — **Martin Van Buren, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln**, and **Lyndon B. Johnson** — at least one of whom was also a great statesman.

Tuesday, April 11: EXECUTIVE VISION

Program One: "The American Way"

Like the framers of the Constitution, many American voters are suspicious of "big government." A smaller, less intrusive government has remained an appealing ideal throughout the country's history. The four men profiled in this program — **Thomas Jefferson, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover**, and **Ronald Reagan** — believed, or professed to believe, that the government that governed best governed least. Their policies, however, did not always square with their philosophies.

Program Two: "The World Stage"

"Foreign affairs activate the strongest elements in the president's powers under the Constitution," says Harvard presidential scholar Richard Neustadt in this hour. Almost from the beginning, a president's accomplishments in foreign policy have helped to determine his historical impact. Each of the four men whose stories are told in this program — **James Monroe, William McKinley, Woodrow Wilson, and George Bush** — pursued foreign policies that defined or expanded America's role on the world stage.

Wednesday, April 12: THE CANDIDATE

Program One: "The Heroic Posture"

The president of the United States is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Understandably, seventeen generals have been elected to the highest office in the land. Are the habits of military command good preparation for the presidency? Of the four presidents profiled in this hour, **George Washington** was the model for all presidents that followed; **William Henry Harrison** served only a month; **Ulysses S. Grant** proved unequal to the office; and **Dwight D. Eisenhower** made an exemplary transformation from a man of war to a man of peace.

Program Two: "Compromise Choices"

From time to time political parties select nominees not so much because they are the best or most obvious candidates for the presidency, but because they are the least likely to lose votes. Their primary qualification for the office seems not to be their positive qualities but their relative lack of negative ones. **Franklin Pierce** and **Warren G. Harding** found the presidency beyond their powers, while **James A. Garfield** and **Gerald R. Ford** proved themselves worthy of having been called to the highest office in the land.

Thursday, April 13: EXPANDING POWERS

Program One: "An Office and Its Powers"

People perceive the American president as having more power than any other ruler on earth but — according to *Time* magazine's Hugh Sidey — "None of the presidents in my time has thought he had enough." This hour explores the growth of the presidency from its relatively weak

position in the 19th century to its modern, near-imperial state. This segment traces the careers of four men, **Andrew Jackson, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Richard Nixon**, who expanded and — in one case, overstepped — the powers of the office.

Program Two: "The Balance of Power"

The presidency, for all its visibility and trappings, is only one component of an elaborate Constitutional balance of powers. As narrator Hugh Sidey points out, however, "It is a balance that has sometimes shifted during the course of our history, bringing at times unexpected results." This hour focuses on four presidencies during which those balances were challenged and defined — those of **James Madison, James Knox Polk, William Howard Taft, and Bill Clinton**. The program concludes with an exclusive interview with President Clinton.

CONTACTS:

Timothy Hallinan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (L.A.)
310-822-4481

Kathleen Kaan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (N.Y.)
212-489-5590

Roz Kay
Thirteen/WNET
212-560-3016

Bill Werfelman
New York Life Insurance Company
212-576-5385

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

Press Information

**"THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT," A TEN-PART SERIES
THAT TELLS THE EPIC TALE OF THE PRESIDENCY
PREMIERES ON PBS SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2000, 9-11 PM (ET)**

Series is Presented by Thirteen/WNET, New York

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, the first documentary series ever to profile all 41 of America's chief executives, will premiere *Sunday, April 9, 2000, 9-11 PM (ET)* (check local listings) on PBS, with **"A Matter of Destiny,"** featuring the programs entitled **"Family Ties"** and **"Happenstance."** The epic series, ten hours in length, tells the story of the nation from the perspective of the highest office in the land, and features exclusive interviews with President Clinton and all the living former presidents except Ronald Reagan. The programs will air in nightly two-hour blocks, concluding on *Thursday, April 13.*

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT is a co-production of Kunhardt Productions, Inc. and Thirteen/WNET New York and is presented on PBS by Thirteen/WNET. The series was written, produced and directed by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III and Peter W. Kunhardt. The executive producers are Peter W. Kunhardt and William R. Grant. The series' sole underwriter is New York Life Insurance Company.

In a unique casting coup, the series' producers have persuaded an extraordinary group of political, military and media figures to provide voices for the presidents who held office before the development of sound recording. The list includes General Colin Powell, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Senator Robert Dole, Walter Cronkite, radio personality Don Imus, former *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee, Senator John Glenn, James Carville, Andrew Young, and the Reverend Billy Graham.



THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT is narrated by *Time* magazine's White House correspondent for four decades, Hugh Sidey. The series benefitted from an illustrious group of presidential scholars but only one is seen on the screen: Richard E. Neustadt of Harvard University, whom Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has called "our most brilliant commentator on the presidency."

"The story of the presidency is history on a scale that is both heroic and personal," says producer Philip B. Kunhardt III. "These men achieved the highest office in the land — whether through personal ambition, the turn of events, or sheer happenstance — and imprinted their images on a chapter of the American story. Many of them were men of extraordinary character and many of them were flawed. One of the most interesting things that emerges when you look at them as individuals is that personal flaws are not necessarily a barrier to greatness, and rigorous personal virtue does not necessarily protect against failure."

Each of the series' one-hour programs presents the stories of several presidents, linked by a common theme. The first evening's programs, "**Family Ties**" and "**Happenstance**" for example, are presented under the umbrella title "**A Matter of Destiny**." "**Family Ties**" investigates the fact that power and influence, even in a democracy, are handed down from generation to generation in a few privileged families. Profiled are John Quincy Adams, Benjamin Harrison, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. "**Happenstance**" explores the careers of five presidents — John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Chester Alan Arthur, and Harry Truman — who moved from the vice presidency to the White House upon the death of the president.

The series' underwriter, New York Life Insurance Company, has funded an extensive educational outreach effort aimed at the nation's secondary schools. The centerpiece of the outreach is a Web site, www.americanpresident.org, which is one of the most ambitious education sites ever mounted in support of a television series. More than 1,400 teachers all over America will have contributed to the site, and New York Life Insurance Company will continue to support the site's growth through the 2000 election to help teachers place the electoral process into the broader context of American history.

A companion volume to the series, also called *THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT*, has been published by Riverhead Books. The volume, authored by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III, and Peter W. Kunhardt, has been designated a main selection by the Book-of-the-Month Club and singled out for praise by many historians.

Following the premiere on Sunday, April 9, **"Politics and the Presidency,"** featuring **"An Independent Cast of Mind"** and **"The Professional Politician"** airs April 10. **"Executive Vision,"** combining **"The American Way"** and **"The World Stage"** airs April 11. **"The Candidate,"** presenting **"The Heroic Posture"** and **"Compromise Choices"** airs April 12. The series concludes with **"An Office and Its Powers,"** featuring **"Expanding Power"** and **"The Balance of Power"** on April 13. **"The Balance of Power"** includes an exclusive interview with President Clinton.

CONTACTS:

Timothy Hallinan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (L.A.)
310-822-4481

Roz Kay
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212-560-3016

Kathleen Kaan
Stone/Hallinan Associates (N.Y.)
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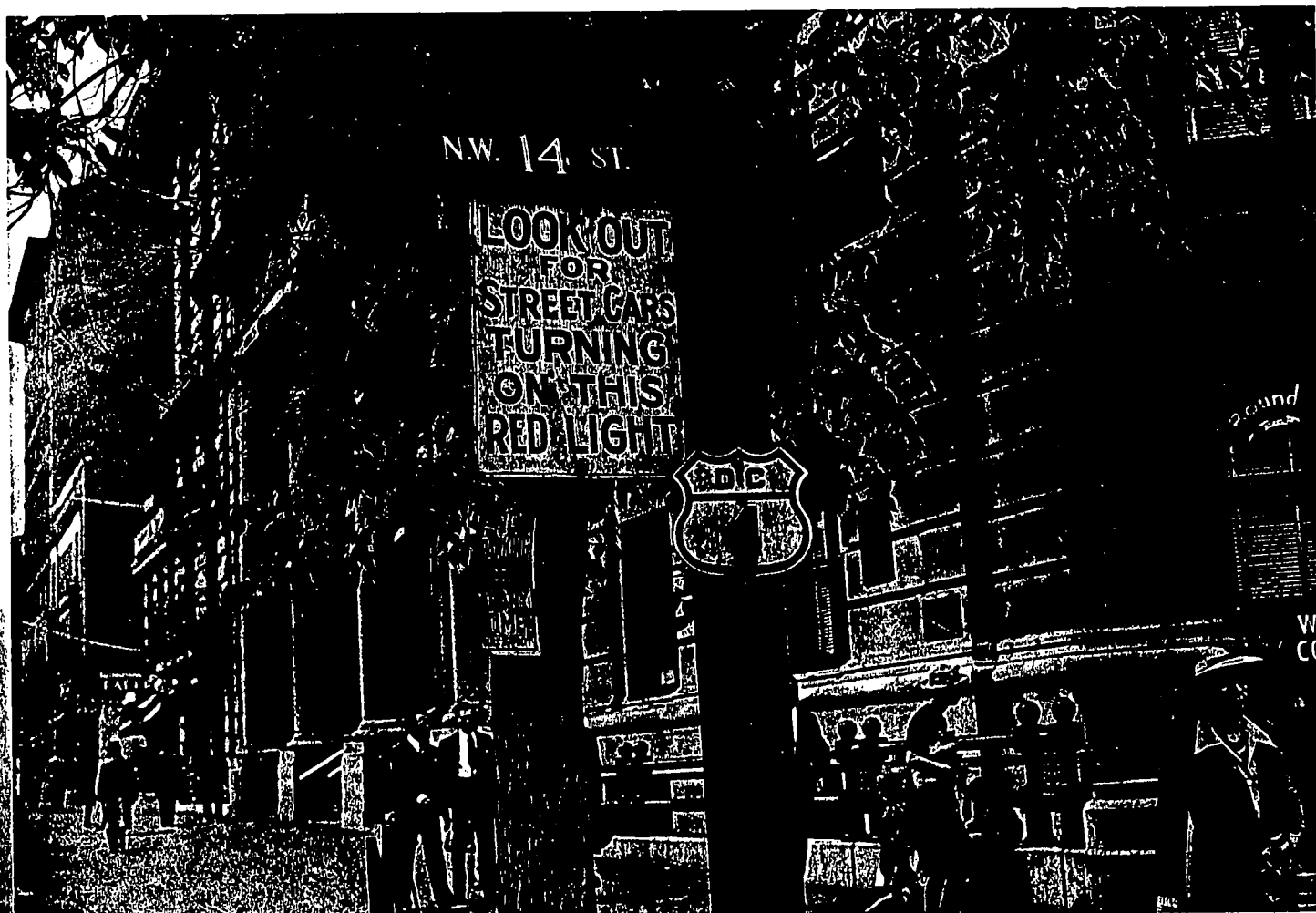
Bill Werfelman
New York Life Insurance Company
212-576-5385

PREFACE

With its clutter of signs and ordinary lampposts, it looks like streets all across the country, but just down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., is the most important address in the world. In a monumental house conceived and built by George Washington, who almost lived to see it finished, every president since has carried his own burden through its halls, has stood in awe of the gigantic East Room, has thrilled to its great pillars and stately façades, has spent sleepless nights tossing in its beds. The grand house, like the presidency itself, has both remained very much a constant and changed tremendously over the two centuries since John Adams made the mansion his own on November 1, 1800, with the very first night's sleep of a chief executive.

Thirteen years earlier, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the idea for the presidency was born. On June 1, 1787, James Wilson of Pennsylvania moved that

the executive of the United States consist of a single individual. James Madison, taking notes, recorded the impact of the proposal, which thrust the roomful of buzzing delegates into a sudden and total silence. All knew it was a moment of fateful significance. Wilson believed that a single president could give energy and dispatch to the office, allowing for decisiveness during critical moments in history. But for others the idea seemed fraught with danger, though no one wanted to insult the man sitting in their midst who would almost certainly be named to the job should such an office be created—General George Washington. After “a considerable pause,” in Madison’s words, Edmund Randolph of Virginia spoke out on behalf of those opposed, calling a solitary executive “the foetus of monarchy,” and urging that the office be shared by an executive committee. And so Wilson’s proposal was debated on that first Friday in June, and after



days of heated argument and changing opinions, the fateful motion carried. Ever since, the presidency, as one commentator has put it, has been "at the mercy of the accident of personality."

It is the extraordinary procession of these "accidents of personality" that inspired this family team to undertake an exhilarating study of the presidency, which includes not only this book but also a ten-hour PBS documentary series.

In some ways, the presidency is the most exclusive of clubs—by the turn of the twentieth century, just forty-one members, all men, all white, and all Christian. Closer inspection, however, reveals a less static society, one moving inexorably toward greater inclusion. Andrew Jackson was the first to break open the genteel, highly educated ranks represented by the first six presidents. A self-made man hailing from the frontier in western Tennessee, Jackson opened up whole new possibilities in what kind of American could reach the White House. He was followed by a host of figures from equally unlikely backgrounds—a longtime tailor (Andrew Johnson), a fitful tanner (Ulysses S. Grant), a one-time canal boy (James Garfield), and a former rail-splitter (Abraham Lincoln). And though lawyers and career politicians have predominated in the high office, twentieth-century Americans elected a professor (Wilson), a newspaperman (Harding), an engineer (Hoover), and a movie star (Reagan). John F. Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic to reach the White House. Inevitably, the country will elect a woman as president.

As anyone who has toured the White House knows—and 1.2 million Americans do so each year—the mansion's walls prominently display important portraits of past presidents. It was not always so. Though the famous full-length painting of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart has been a feature of the executive mansion since 1800, there was little appetite for any others until the middle of the nineteenth century. It was Andrew Johnson's daughter, Martha, who discovered, while rummaging in the White House attic, a set of six presidential portraits commissioned in the 1850s but then forgotten. Hanging them in the great transverse hall of the state floor of the White House, she opened what was in essence the first presidential portrait gallery in the White House. It was immensely popular and soon was moved into the East Room. Under President Hayes, the gallery was brought up to date by the acquisition of eleven

new paintings, and the collection keeps growing. Each president since has been surrounded by these portraits. They look down upon his comings and goings as a vivid remainder of the relatively few others who have shared his unique station. Their power is symbolic as well as historical. Ronald Reagan, at the opening of his administration in 1980, ordered the portrait of his hero Calvin Coolidge moved onto a prominent wall in the Cabinet Room. George Bush said he did his best thinking during the Gulf War while sitting in the presence of the portrait of Abraham Lincoln. And Richard Nixon, during the depths of the Watergate crisis, used to wander through the White House halls at night talking to the portraits as if to living presences. This book, too, is a presidential portrait gallery, made up not only of oil paintings and of hundreds of rare photographs, but also of words—both ours and of each of the presidents—that open up vistas onto those living presences.

A significant portion of our research time went into searching out the original words of the presidents, not only those existing in widely available published sources, but also those only to be found in manuscript form. And not only the distinguished public utterances, but the little-known, the intensely private, and the humanly revealing, as well as those words that shed light on our own thematic approaches. Chosen out of thousands upon thousands of examples, these words are sprinkled liberally throughout our text, as well as being gathered inside special boxes in each chapter labeled "In His Own Words."

The story of the presidency is, at least in part, a story of human personality under pressure. The administration of George Washington is not fully intelligible without reference to his consuming desire for integrity and to be above politics. John Adams is best illumined by an inspection of his own unique makeup—his learnedness, his irascibility, and most of all his stubborn independence. Again and again a president's personality ends up helping shape his executive performance. Jefferson's expansiveness, Madison's caution, Jackson's ferociousness, Buchanan's timidity, FDR's self-confidence all deeply affected the evolution of the high office. And so questions of character are not only relevant, they are essential. Was a president decisive or indecisive? Rash or thoughtful? Tough-skinned or too sensitive to criticism? Kindly or coldhearted? Did he have a vision for the country he wanted to pursue, or did he become lost in the



A turn-of-the-century view of the White House's north entrance

minutiae of the everyday tasks of the office? Was he proficient in working with others and in enlisting political allies, or was he a loner who withdrew and tried to do everything himself? Was he expansive or petty? Was he honest or dishonest? Did he have a basic trust in the American people or a basic distrust? These questions and others help bring focus to the ways in which presidents have affected the history of the nation.

Our most essential early decision as this project took shape was to treat the presidents thematically, rather than chronologically. Our senior historical consultant, David Herbert Donald, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for biography,

early on put us in touch with Stephen Skowronek, a political scientist at Yale University who specializes in the history of the presidency. His groundbreaking book *The Politics Presidents Make* compares presidents from different eras who shared common dilemmas and who inhabited what he has called similar "political time." Especially qualified to analyze our thematic approach, Skowronek helped us arrange our groupings, following our mandate that each chapter include an early president, two from the middle years, and a modern one who was still alive and could be interviewed today, or at least had lived in the era of moving pictures and recorded sound. With some slight tinkering

over the next four years, these categories became the intellectual framework for this book. Skowronek has served as our chief academic consultant, and his Foreword, which explains the importance of looking at the presidents trans-historically, appears on pages *xii* and *xiii*.

Another important alliance that was formed as the project unfolded was with the Harvard scholar Richard E. Neustadt, who has been called by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "our most brilliant commentator on the presidency." Neustadt's specialty is analyzing what makes effective presidential leadership; his book *Presidential Power* has been dubbed "an operational Bible for presidents." Our decision to make Dick the sole on-camera commentator for the PBS television series that accompanies this book ended up deeply shaping not only the series but the book as well. He has contributed his own introduction that begins on page *xiv*.

For narrator of the television series, we brought on Hugh Sidey, who has been *Time* magazine's special correspondent on the presidency for four decades. Sidey conducted exclusive interviews for this project with Presidents Carter, Ford, Bush, and Clinton, and these interviews serve as the basis for the chapters on these four presidents. Practically a member of the White House himself, as well as a student of it, Sidey brings a unique perspective to the workings of the Oval Office and the eight presidents he has intimately known (see page *xi*).

The New York Life Insurance Company, whose board of trustees has included two presidents—Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover—has been the sole sponsor of the television project. Without their enormous support, this venture would not have been undertaken. For five years, as the project has been developed and a nationwide school involvement has materialized around the enterprise, we have worked together as true partners. New York Life is a company ideally suited to present this subject to the nation.

The ten chapters in this book are presented as five pairs of opposites. Those presidents grouped in Chapter 1, "The Heroic Posture," were all national heroes before they ever were candidates. In contrast are the five men in Chapter 2 we have labeled "Compromise Choices"—politicians chosen in many cases for who they were not, rather than for who they were. The "Professional Politicians" grouped in Chapter 3 are contrasted with those political loners of "Independent Cast of Mind" in Chapter 4. Those profiled

in "Family Ties" all seemed born for the high office, while those in "Happenstance" reached the presidency only because of accident and national tragedy. Those grouped in "The American Way" each possessed a burning vision for their country, while those juxtaposed in "The World Stage" made their contributions principally in foreign affairs. And finally, those presidents brought together in Chapter 9—all of whom deliberately stretched the power of the office—are in contrast to the presidents grouped in Chapter 10, who were constrained, for better or worse, by the balanced powers of our overall government.

As we crisscross the boundaries between presidential successes and failures, between greatness and mediocrity, these categories define our focus and shape our text. By taking stock of all the presidents, both those familiar and unfamiliar, and by juxtaposing modern presidents with earlier incumbents, we hope to have given coherence to the sprawling presidential experience. Indeed, the president we treat first within each of these ten chapters represents an archetype that reemerges later in presidents eerily reminiscent of the original. Theodore Roosevelt appears almost like a new Andrew Jackson; William Howard Taft seems in some ways like a resurgence of James Madison; Jimmy Carter closely resembles John Adams and also Rutherford B. Hayes; LBJ echoes Van Buren and also Abraham Lincoln.

It is our hope that our efforts will be of assistance to the American voter. Since our goal has been to see the presidency afresh and to think about its incumbents in new ways, so, too, the process of selection, we believe, can be invigorated by many of these same insights. The search for personal excellence has many pitfalls and blind alleys; for a voter to be able to spot some of them and hold them up to the light of history is citizenship of a high order.

Over the past thirty years, historians have rightly turned away from the old bias of studying history primarily through the stories of its "great white men." And yet the American presidents continue to fascinate. The president is the only elected officer representing the entire nation, and thus has a special obligation to the American people. As has been made clear in the closing years of the twentieth century, the American people still care about the presidency. They believe in it, and rightly insist that it belongs to them.



Hugh Sidey records the narration for the companion PBS documentary series "The American President." Below, he reflects on more than four decades covering the White House for *Time* magazine, including the presidencies of Truman, Eisenhower and the eight chief executives pictured with him to the right.

A Personal Journey by Hugh Sidey

John Kennedy sat forward to listen closely to his space experts. They told him it would cost \$40 billion (a huge sum then) and take ten years, and they could not guarantee that the United States would beat the Soviet Union to the moon. Kennedy grimaced, ran his fingers through his hair, then leaned back in his chair in the Cabinet Room. He wanted Americans on the moon—and first. "I want some answers," he told the small group of aides. "Ask the janitor over there if you have to. But I want to know how and when we can get to the moon."

I thought to myself, as I watched and listened to this restless young man of privilege and daring on that April evening in 1961, that with a few words he had launched the nation on a great adventure. And it must have been the same with the visionary Thomas Jefferson, who doubled the size of the United States with the Louisiana Purchase; and the prairie lawyer Abraham Lincoln, who marshaled the most powerful army the world had known to abolish slavery; and Theodore Roosevelt, who sent his engineers to build the Panama Canal. With vision and a free people behind them, these presidents—and the others—profoundly transformed civilization. In our time there is no more effective and powerful political office on the face of the earth.

Every one of the forty-one men who have been president has left his mark, some more positive than others. "No president wants to fail," Lyndon Johnson once protested when he was criticized about the Vietnam War. "You do the best you know how." In the midst of that tragic conflict he had won battles for better education and health care. And Richard Nixon, who would be driven from office by the Watergate scandal, had journeyed triumphantly through China, offering American friendship for the first time after twenty-five years of Chinese isolation.

The presidency, like democracy, is not an easy journey. "I'm going to give the job to Nixon," JFK once grumped when things were going badly. He knew better. He gloried in "the great chess game," as he called it. That is why so many people now fight for the right to be president. I've ridden along on this historic caravan for more than forty years now. There is no more fascinating and thrilling—and often entertaining—drama that we can witness.

It is my great hope that this book and the public television series it accompanies will allow every reader and viewer to hear the voices and the bugle calls and the church bells, and then feel the excitement of these men calling their nation to the most magnificent efforts in war and peace that humankind has ever known.



With Kennedy



With Johnson



With Nixon



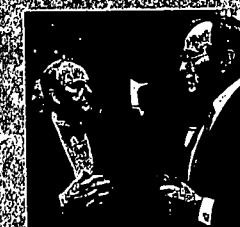
With Ford



With Carter



With Reagan



With Bush



With Clinton

FOREWORD

by Stephen Skowronek
Yale University

The *American President* invites readers to rethink presidential history and reconsider the men who have held America's top leadership position. The book draws us into the history with an extraordinary collection of photographic and pictorial images, the most comprehensive visual accounting of the principal characters and their environs ever assembled in a single volume. But I would like to draw particular attention to the narrative supported by this artwork. These stunning images are arrayed in the service of an innovative approach to the subject matter. The arrangement and presentation of the material allow us to see familiar figures afresh and to gain new insight into this most enigmatic of institutions.

Familiar as it is, the American presidency has never been easy to understand. The institution has a protean character that defies fixed descriptions and settled explanations. At one moment, it disappoints; at the next, it astonishes. Its history is riddled with eminence and embarrassment, proficiency and paralysis. As each incumbent brings something different to the job, each administration reveals some feature of the position scarcely intimated in the experience of his immediate predecessors.

Writing about an office so mutable and unpredictable is one of the great challenges of political analysis, and no single response has proved entirely satisfactory. But if the presidency does not admit of a definitive history, it does encourage experimentation with different perspectives that might capture one or another of its many aspects. Consider the two most prominently displayed in the literature.

The first approach, "the men and their times," has long been the perspective of choice among biographers and historians. Studies of this sort show us the unique ways in which personality and circumstance interact within the presidential office to determine the fate of particular administrations. Chronological histories of the presidents written from this point of view indicate as well how rare it is for the critical elements to combine in just the right way. The great success stories—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt—are few and far between, and they stand out starkly against the long progression of lesser lights.

For those attuned to the frustrations and shortfalls of recent incumbents, these chronological histories are especially instructive. They suggest that our contemporary experience is very much the normal state of affairs in American

government. The natural inclination to identify the travails of the sitting president with problems in the governmental system itself is tempered by this perspective on the past, as is the yearning for a leader who will "make the system work." And yet, important as it is to understand the frustration of presidents as part and parcel of the way our system works, this insight will take us only so far. Indeed, for anyone interested in general attributes of the presidential office, a chronological analysis of the struggles of individual characters in particular contexts will prove quite limited. Even those paragons who reached the commanding heights of authority and accomplishment appear fixed in place by this perspective, limited in what they can teach others by the idiosyncrasies of personality and circumstance.

In recent years, an alternative perspective has taken hold that directs our attention more specifically to the institutional development of the presidential office. Studies written from this point of view remind us that though each of our presidents has held the same constitutional position, the governing norms and practical operations of that office have changed over time in rather dramatic ways. Instead of discussing presidential history administration by administration, works on the development of the office typically consider several administrations together in broadly defined eras: the early national period of the founding generation of presidents, the "party period" of the nineteenth-century presidency, and the period of the "modern presidency," ushered in by the New Deal and World War II. Within each of these periods we see a group of presidents who shared similar political resources, technological capacities, and institutional supports, and the coherence of the office can be discerned in reference to common assumptions and expectations about the exercise of power. From this perspective, the key distinctions to be drawn among presidents are not between the "greats" and the lesser lights but between those of one period and the next, as each group is seen to inhabit a very different institution.

This more schematic rendering of presidential history facilitates generalizations about the office, but note that these are generalizations of a particular kind. While similarities among presidents within each period are fairly easy to spot, similarities among presidents in different periods tend to get filtered out. Indeed, when the "modern presidency" is understood as an institution different in kind from all prior

forms, and the modern presidents are seen as a coherent group standing apart from the rest, most of presidential history simply loses its relevance. Nearly three-quarters of American presidents predate the modern period, but with the possible exception of the experiences of a handful of historic "greats," the early record would seem to be relegated by this perspective to mere historical interest. The outstanding question is, What can incumbents like Benjamin Harrison or Zachary Taylor possibly tell us about the presidential office as it appears in our own day?

The American President answers this question by establishing a third vantage point from which to view the history of the office. Though the book draws freely on insights made available through more conventional frames of reference, it experiments with a very different temporal arrangement of the material. It does not proceed chronologically though the succession of incumbents, nor does it take up the usual periods of institutional development each in its turn. Instead, the presentation reaches across the standard demarcations of the subject, joining together early and modern presidents around general themes that transcend the particulars of time and place. Each chapter ranges through the whole of presidential history, calling attention to a particular scattering of incumbents that captures something emblematic of the American experience with this office. In this way, the reader gains a sense of those aspects and attitudes of incumbency that constitute the presidency's most enduring qualities.

The thought that breaking up presidential history in this disjointed, out-of-phase fashion might better convey an overarching sense of the whole is but the first of many intriguing notions contained in *The American President*. In its ten thematic sweeps through time, the book is continually juxtaposing presidencies in unexpected ways and shaking up familiar images as it does so. Jimmy Carter's fiercely "independent cast of mind" has always appeared a bit peculiar among the modern presidents, and yet his apparent disdain for professional politicians and his inclination to go it alone politically have deep historical resonance. When Carter's example is joined to those of John Adams, Zachary Taylor, and Rutherford Hayes, the independent stance appears as one of the presidency's most persistent poses. Similarly, the fabled grouping of "greats" is fruitfully broken up here in the service of illuminating less well attended asso-

ciations. George Washington is placed alongside Ulysses S. Grant in a chapter examining the vicissitudes of "the heroic posture." Abraham Lincoln is considered in conjunction with Lyndon Johnson in an exploration of "professional politicians" whose long dedication to their peculiar vocation landed them in America's highest office. Franklin Roosevelt makes his appearance next to Benjamin Harrison to illustrate the influence of "family ties" on presidential history.

To make this organizing principle work, special care had to be taken in crafting the exposition. If, in elaborating these themes, the book had run roughshod over the forty-one different personalities who have held the office, or if it had failed to take into account institutional developments that have transformed that office over time, the end product would be more likely to confuse than enlighten. Several features of the presentation stand out as especially effective in meeting this challenge. The first is that each of the transhistorical themes is rendered through a set of individual presidential vignettes. This means that the office never loses its human face and that critical institutional developments within it are always kept in view. More striking still is the extent to which the presentation allows the presidents to speak for themselves, expressing the major themes in their own words. Breathing life into the framework of the book, this technique serves to make the history accessible even to those who might not have a detailed prior knowledge of it.

Finally, there is the pictorial and photographic support that instantly contextualizes each story and provides a visual accounting of the passage of time. This skillful integration of structure, narrative, and imagery provides a powerful synthesis and makes an important contribution to our understanding of the American presidency. But of course *The American President* is by no means an exhaustive account of the subject. Perhaps the most attractive feature of this book is that in opening up presidential history to an alternative way of thinking, it prompts readers to experiment with its method for themselves. Reshuffling the pieces on our own, we may discover other, as yet hidden connections among the old stories. I can think of no better way to keep this venerable history vital.

INTRODUCTION

by *Richard E. Neustadt*
Harvard University

As Edward Corwin wrote some sixty years ago, the presidency of the United States has been an office "of uncertain content." So it was in 1787, when the Constitution was drafted, and so it remains today.

This uncertainty is due in part to the spare yet general language of the drafting of the Constitution, which has been subject to reinterpretation in successive generations. For the first forty years, to take just one example, the presidential veto over legislation was thought to apply only to bills affecting presidential powers. Another source of uncertainty as to the office of our chief executive is the uncomfortable fact that most of the presidential powers are shared—Constitutionally and practically—with other institutions independent of a president's command. In that respect, the presidency is weaker than it first appears or than its numerous, importunate constituencies expect. And a third source of uncertainty is the office's relatively stronger role in foreign affairs than domestic affairs—a strength, however, that depends on events abroad, which a president, again, for the most part cannot control.

Because the content of the presidency is uncertain, the person of the president takes on added importance. The manner in which the individual brings his (someday her) mind and energies to bear on the events that frame his time is crucial to the way the office is conceived and executed in that time. The incumbent's own experience, enthusiasms, ideas, interests, prejudices, working style, and temperament will markedly affect what happens in the office and what comes out of it.

The times, of course, can limit or strengthen a president and often do, but he, in turn, makes use of them—or doesn't.

That is why what follows in this book and in the television series it accompanies is oriented to the human histories of the forty-one individuals who so far have occupied the office. Were the institution cut-and-dried, required to perform in the same fashion all the time, those histories would be both less important than they are and less revealing of the presidency in our political system. But the institution is what Corwin said it was.

The uncertainty that dogs the office, heightening the effect of individuals in it, derives most basically from the deliberate competition between president and Congress envisaged in the terms of the Constitution. For example, the

"executive power"—which is never defined—is vested in the president, whose duty also is to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." But it is Congress that creates executive departments, decides their jurisdictions, spells out their programmatic duties, adds the funds to perform those duties, and by hallowed practice investigates the performance. So it becomes clear that Congress has "executive" powers too.

Or consider this: The president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and since Thomas Jefferson's time has sometimes sent them into battle overseas on his own motion. But only Congress has the constitutional right to declare war, and Congress, every two years, sets the size and composition of those forces. Also, the president sends and receives ambassadors, a duty construed from the start to put him in charge of foreign relations. But those he sends must be confirmed by action of the Senate. Should they negotiate a treaty and he sign it, the Senate has to consent before it takes effect. Should he wish to send money abroad, Congress must first appropriate it; should he send troops, Congress must agree to pay, as it also must with weapons and munitions. Regarding troops, he has to state his reasons; according to the law (though never yet in practice), Congress can remove them after sixty days, rejecting his rationale. Only if he drops atomic bombs does Congress have no comeback—save impeachment. But every president since Truman has learned, in awe, from his experience that nuclear weapons are for show, not use.

Or consider this: While Congress is the legislature in our system, the president, in Dwight Eisenhower's phrase, is also "part of the legislative process," not only wielding his veto (which the House of Representatives and Senate both, by a two-thirds vote, can override), but also having the duty to recommend "such measures as he judge necessary and expedient."

These are what we conventionally call "checks and balances" in our government. There are others as well, including the sovereign rights of states within their constitutional limits, which the courts can amend, from time to time, by interpretation, but not abolish altogether. In a comparable category are the rights of citizens, and by extension those of the private sector in our economy, not least the press. And very specifically, in another example of checks and balances, senators and members of the House are forbidden to hold executive appointments simultaneously; there cannot be

A young Richard Neustadt working as an adviser to Harry Truman.



congressional cabinets at the president's end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Most of these checks and balances derive directly, though not avowedly, from British experience, our founding fathers having all been former British subjects. For example, the check that forbids members of Congress from simultaneously holding executive appointments keeps American presidents from doing what King George III was famous for, his so-called "corruption" of Parliament—building majorities with rewards in the form of appointments to administrative posts.

Moreover, president and Congress are competitive because both represent the American people, and so both can claim to represent the source of sovereignty in popular government. But they do so in different ways, for different terms, as they are nominated and elected by different constituencies. Only the president (and, of course, his running mate) is nominated in primary elections or state conventions all across the country and then chosen by popular vote in general elections held state by state on the same day. Just a third of the senators are chosen at the same time, and then for terms of six years rather than the presidential four. Representatives are chosen from geographic districts within states—usually smaller than states—not only when a president runs but also every second year. They are nominated in party primaries or conventions, as is he, but within their state or district, not throughout the country, and then elected by the voters in the same jurisdiction, a far smaller body than the president's fifty-state electorate.

As aggregates, both the Senate and the House represent the whole country. But so does the president, one person. The House can always claim to be most up-to-date in its representation, but every four years the president makes the superior claim of a nationwide vote. Individually no House member (or senator, for that matter) can match that.

Senators and members of Congress have limited influence, at best, in primaries for presidential nominations, or in the national conventions that confirm the results, now shades of their former selves. Presidents are usually at least as limited in influence upon the state or district bodies that nominate representatives and senators, even those nominally of their own party. For in fact the local and state parties are not the same as the quadrennial national party at presidential elections. Money for campaigns can be a binding tie (and has been, on occasion, almost from the start). But by and large, local party affairs remain local, and state affairs state, in the conduct of nominations. In modern times, primary elections for the presidential nomination do lessen the influence of statewide party organizations, once supreme at national conventions, but that influence was usually less congressional than gubernatorial, so Congress scarcely loses by the change.

In short, the constitutional separation of president from Congress is reinforced by the separateness of their respective nominating processes and their electoral constituencies. That is why the separation flourishes, and has flourished, for the most part, since George Washington took his oath of office in 1789. And since the separation rests securely on those different political bases, checks and balances assure perpetual competition, because the president and Congress, each speaking "for" the country, share so widely in each other's functions.

That competition can be muted by concern for dangers from abroad, as was the case when President Washington began, and in the two world wars, and from time to time during the Cold War. Or it can be muted by concern for truly national crises, as in the secession crisis of 1861 or the collapse of the U.S. banking system in 1933. And it always can be tempered by comity among those engaged in governing—but of that our party politics offers no guarantee.

Given these circumstances, individuals are bound to matter in and to the presidency. Underlining this book, therefore, is the thought that a review of the first forty-one may help us as we choose the next president.

Each individual president exists and works in a specific social, economic, technological, and environmental framework, dominated by certain prevailing ideas and trends. All these condition politics and thus what given presidents find they can do, or feel they must attempt. Each also exists in a

specific frame of time, defined by modes of communication. For James Monroe, six weeks was not too long to wait for diplomatic correspondence from across the Atlantic. By Lincoln's time the interval had shrunk, with the advent of steamships, to twelve days. After 1867, the laying of the transatlantic cable made communication almost instantaneous—but instant pictures did not come for more than another century.

From 1789 until the eve of World War II, there virtually was no "institutional environment" for the presidency. The president had a private secretary or two (Lincoln in the Civil War had just two!), paid out of his own pocket until the twentieth century, and otherwise depended for all things he wanted done on the federal departments, with their heads in his cabinet, or the military chiefs and their services, or friendly souls in Congress and out, not least in his hometown.

The entire executive establishment consisted only of some 600 civilians when George Washington took charge. By the 1840s the number had risen to some 40,000, and by 1900 to some 100,000. Only in Franklin Roosevelt's time did it rise to a million, just before World War II. After the war it never fell below 2 million until Bill Clinton's time, when it was reduced by perhaps an eighth.

The White House was slow to change. As late as the war, FDR had only eleven civilian assistants, along with a budget-office staff of career civil servants. JFK's assistants amounted to twenty-two, a doubling in sixteen years, mostly because of Truman and Eisenhower innovations. Then, very shortly, President Nixon increased the number by a factor of five, to well over 100. The Clinton staff is larger still. Most of the load that was delegated to departments, or the military, or congressional leaders, or friends (and relatives) by presidents from Washington through Herbert Hoover and the early Franklin Roosevelt is now done, supervised, critiqued, or redone by presidential staff, many at the White House, and more at associated agencies "across the street" in two executive office buildings. Today, 2,000 or so people work for the presidency in the Executive Office of the President; 500 or so work for the president in the White House (clerical help included); 100 or so serve as top staffers; and ten to twenty aides have daily personal access to the president.

This enormous growth of staff has actually been less

responsive to administrative needs than to those of politics and technology. It reflects fast-rising public expectations of the presidency, which now is supposed to win wars, resist terror, keep public order, end recessions, guard against depressions, keep prices down and jobs up, save the environment, preserve social security, fight crime and drugs, maintain personal honor, serve as an example to the young, and with it all show "fiscal responsibility." Such expectations are now fed by electronic media, as well as the print press, which have been engaged in massive bursts of instant communication from all quarters simultaneously. What is communicated has to have a basis in events, but with the world at the disposal of the media, thanks to satellites, events from somewhere, about something, are a dime a dozen.

This naturally complicates the substance of policy and its communication to Congress, to agencies, and to the public. Recent presidents have wished to have their own aides—not a department head's, not someone else's—to work and advise on all aspects of all policies. Furthermore, the burgeoning press corps, always pressing, consists not just of "working stiffs," as in pre-television times, but also of reporters, whom television has transformed into celebrities. They, like all such, want their service fast and hot. In President Truman's time, his press secretary had two professional-level assistants. The number nowadays is over forty.

The institutional presidency is not an unmixed blessing for a president. Staffs are too large to be intimate, which means they are too remote to serve reliably as interpreters of what "the boss" really wants. They are subject to becoming "more royalist than the king." They also may attract to themselves more business than is useful for him. Worse still, they may confuse their own interests with his. And since transition funds are now available to bridge the gap between election and inaugural, all too many staff assistants may be young campaigners on their first federal assignment, as ignorant of Washington as the president-elect might be himself, and unprepared to help him master what he needs to know.

Despite staffs and the problems that go with them, recent presidents appear to experience the office in much the way their predecessors did. For the heart of the job is unchanged. It is the making and communicating of decisions, most of which do not originate with the president himself: their long histories are best known to others; their

Richard E. Neustadt at work
on *The American President*.



deadlines are set by fixed dates or events substantially beyond his control; and they reach him late, at the end of the process, with advisers split on what to do. All presidents, even recent ones, have faced such choices with the help of a few trusted persons, perhaps three or four, rarely more, who constitute an ultimate inner circle. They may be aides, or cabinet members, or close friends, or family members, like Milton Eisenhower and Hillary Rodham Clinton. What is crucial is that they are each of the president's own selection—someone he turns to repeatedly and who trusts him in turn. Those few may be the only people that a modern president thinks of as his real "staff," the many others nominally in that category notwithstanding. In this regard, his subjective situation has a lot in common with that of every predecessor back to General Washington.

This book proceeds on that premise. It proceeds on the further premise that while history does not literally repeat itself, the situations of some presidents objectively resemble those of many others in certain characteristic ways.

In the final chapter of this book the authors turn to cardinal features of our constitutional design, its checks and balances. These separated institutions that share powers engage as they must in endless competition; they tend toward stalemate in the short run, and are slow to respond to slender majorities, though they are capable of registering national consensus with rapidity. But consensus is not easily reached, save for events so grim and clear-cut that time may not allow for proper remedies. And competition can easily get out of hand, leading toward legislative stasis and administrative chaos. For a country as extensive and diverse as ours, there must be something good about this separated system, since it has endured now for 211 years and plainly has a future. But its potential for failure in the eyes of most proponents of all policies much of the time, and its extraordinary messiness, not to say expense, both in delaying and

PHOTOCOPY PRESERVATION

in implementing what it does get done, engender critical and sometimes despairing pleas for reform of one kind or another from deeply concerned thinkers—and have done so ever since the eighteenth century.

A discussion of checks and balances seems a fitting way for this book to close. For complicated reasons bound up in history—not quite what Madison expected but more or less consistent with his basic views—the system he created manages to shake off every decade's effort to erase its fundamentals for the sake of theory. Nevertheless, it does continue to change incrementally at the margins, responding to the pulls and tugs of social, economic, and technological development. The responses can lag, some are perverse, and all have unintended consequences. Injustice often follows. To rational minds the process is a mess. No one can fail to fume at some of its results. Yet in this country, so far, we have had only one civil war. Of all our presidential thinkers, Madison, I dare say, would have been almost satisfied by that. Most of the time, I am prepared to join him.

But that is a perspective from inside the States. When I go overseas, as periodically I do, I cannot help but notice how our separated system reinforces tendencies toward continental self-absorption, disappointing what our friends abroad expect from the world's oldest democracy and only superpower. They forget that even our most generous phase of genuine concern for our allies—and for endeavors with them—got kick-started by the threat of Joseph Stalin. German submarines precipitated our engagement in World War I, Japanese bombers did the same for World War II, and Stalin played a crucial part in setting off the retrospective Golden Era of the Marshall Plan. Left to our own devices we incline toward isolation.

The complicated workings of our separated system, with president and Congress independent yet intertwined, are a contributory cause of this isolation. Actions are so fraught with emotion, and yet so far from final—almost every issue can be and usually is reopened for discussion—that the energy and interests of our leaders are consumed, with little left for the outside world save when it forcibly intrudes. From an eighteenth-century perspective, Madison, I think, would not have minded. From a twenty-first-century perspective—oh, how our allies do mind! Sympathy tempers my share in his satisfaction.

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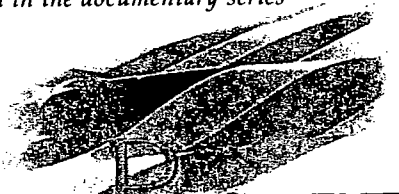
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two of forty-one profiles

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THE
AMERICAN RESIDENT

Friday, April 7, 2000

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT SERIES
THE WHITE HOUSE
April 7, 2000

Ack: Sens. Robb, Bumpers, Glenn, Simon; Rep. Rostenkowski; Govs. Weiker, Weld; William Ferris (Chair, NEH); Sy Sternberg (President, CEO New York Life Insurance Company); Philip Kunhardt (co-producer); Voices from the Series: Ben Bradlee, Walter Cronkite, James Roosevelt, Charlie Rose, Tim Russert, Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

Good evening. Welcome to the White House. Tonight I have the privilege of opening the first in a series of events celebrating the 200th anniversary of this, the people's house. Of course, it's befitting that our first event honors the lives of the individuals who have roamed its halls and carried the awesome burden within its walls.

This room – like the White House – has not only witnessed historical events – it has played a role in shaping them. It has ~~played host to forty-one~~^{hosted} ~~the~~^{the} administrations – and forty-one different personalities. The East Room began as a laundry room for Abigail Adams. Thomas Jefferson and his personal aide Meriwether Lewis laid maps upon the floor and charted the Lewis and Clark expedition. It later served as quarters for battle-worn Union troops during the Civil War. President Roosevelt's children even roller-skated on its floors. Over the years, it has survived a major fire, two wars, a plane crash -- even five weddings. And, of course, it has been a gallery for priceless artwork.

Each President in his own time has faced unique challenges in striving to fulfill the purpose of our Constitution "to form a more perfect Union." Tonight we will have the opportunity to view two selections from the American President series – the first documentary series ever to profile all of America's chief executives. The first viewing is on the life of one of our Founding Fathers, the author of the Declaration of Independence, and our third President, Thomas Jefferson. Every American President has been inspired by Jefferson's ideals – affected by his decisions, fascinated by his character. Jefferson spent a lifetime shaping a new and ever-evolving democracy, that would become, as he said, "more developed, more enlightened as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change."

One hundred and fifty years later, our thirty-fifth President, John F. Kennedy, brought that same spirit of innovation and progress to the White House. John Kennedy's fleeting time in this house remains a singular story in the history of our great nation. He was our President for only a thousand days, but he changed the way we think about our country, our world, and our own obligations to the future. With his New Frontier, he inspired million of Americans – including me – to take a personal responsibility for moving our country forward, and for advancing the cause of freedom throughout the world. As Kennedy said, "The new frontier ... is not a set of promises. It is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer the American people, but what I intend to ask of them."

*for this is a most
fine series
that we
will sit*

Many great men have called this house, "home." And in the not too distant future, a woman will and a person of color will, too. But the presidency, like this house, was not built by one person. It is the collective work of all who have led our great nation.

Now I'd like to introduce Sy Sternberg [Chairman of New York Life Insurance Program] who made this evening and this project possible.

