While scholars argue the merits of former presidents, recent or otherwise, there is scant effort to determine their ratings as subjects for anagrams. Although I haven’t made a survey of anagrams found for chief executives, I’ve spent some time trying to find computer-generated anagrams for some recent ones.

In May 1984, Word Ways printed a large number of anagrams for RONALD WILSON REAGAN (including NO, DARLINGS, NO ERA LAW and A SWOLLEN GOD RAN IRAN). In February 1989, Word Ways ran an “interview” with GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH in which he answered questions with anagrams of his name. While both of these subjects do well, presidents in the recent quarter-century do not. With one exception (RICHARD MILHOUS NIXON is LAX INCURSION HID MR. HO and HUSH! NIX CRIMINAL ODOR!), nothing worth reporting was found.

Had Richard Nixon left office before SPIRO AGNEW resigned, we would have been in for an unexpected treat. With a mere ten letters, Agnew is quite a surprise. In an issue of Whole Earth Review a year or two ago, Paul Krassner pointed out that his name anagrams to GROW A PENIS. Inspired by this, I turned my program on the hapless ex-veep, to turn up

A sewing pro  A wig person  Answer, O pig  Ape is wrong
Ape-sign row  Aspire gown  Gains power  Gape now, sir
Go rap swine  Go span wire  Gore is pawn  Grasp in woe
Grop swain  Grow a spine  I anger wops  I gnaw prose
I gnaw ropes  I grew a pons  I grope swan  I grow aspen
I own grapes  I spawn gore  I spew groan  I swap Negro
Ignore wasp  No wiser gap  One pig’s war  Pawing Eros
Pawn orgies  Persia gown  Planos grew  Pig near sow
Pig-nose war  Power in gas  Prison wage  Raping woes
Rasping woe  Raw pigeons  Regain wops  Region swap
Sepia wrong  Snip raw ego  Searing pew  Sear pig now
Sowing, reap  Spare no wig  Swing a rope  Sowing a rep
Swipe organ  Wag in prose  Warps in ego  Swing opera
We rip a song  Wig persona  Wrong as pie  We grasp ion

I’m sure there’s a body of anagram research on former presidents which I haven’t researched sufficiently.

Perhaps we should start examining candidates instead. Would MICHAEL STANLEY DUKAKIS have adopted the slogan KICK MY DULL ANAESTHESIA if he had been elected?