

# THE MOVIE STAR BEHIND THE PRESIDENTS

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Harrison Ford is a movie star of the first magnitude. Whether he knows it or not, he's also a wordplay star. His name, his movies, and his life connect him, in one or more ways, to all the American presidents but one. Perhaps more than any other person in the history of the Republic, he *is* presidential, so much so that several websites promoted him for president in 2000. If he had gotten elected, he would have been the 43rd president, and the sum of the alphabetic values (A=1 to Z=26) of the letters in FORD is 43. Some of his relationships to the other presidents are minor, some are major, and some are absolutely incredible. Two important, highly contrasting examples are (1) he played President James Marshall in *Air Force One*, but (2) he turned down the role of John Fitzgerald Kennedy in *JFK*. Undoubtedly, there are more presidential connections than the ones nominated below. Putting them together is like building a castle of coincidences from the sands of Harrison Ford's time. Let's look at the architecture of that castle (the White House).

## His Name

Harrison Ford is not one but two actors. When the HF of this article began acting, he discovered that there was another actor, a silent movie star named Harrison Ford. The Screen Actors Guild told him he couldn't use his own name, so he adopted a middle initial of J. When the other HF died, HJF asked the Guild for permission to drop the middle initial. This duplication is another example of the twinning effect present in HF's name: two HARRISON FORDs, two President HARRISONs (William Henry and his grandson Benjamin), and two President FORDs (counting RutherFORD B. Hayes), President Harry S Truman likewise had a middle initial instead of a middle name, and Harrison means "son of Harry." Harry S Truman (with that initial) and Harrison Ford (without that initial) both contain 12 letters.

His initials, HF, shift 13 letters along the alphabet in either direction to US. The number 13 has long been associated with the United States, beginning with the 13 original states. HF was born on the 13th (of July, 1942), which makes him a Cancer, the same sign as our country. Only one president was born on the 13th, Thomas Jefferson. Only one president died on the 13th, Benjamin Harrison. HF shifts forward in the alphabet 4 steps to LJ (Lyndon Johnson), 12 steps to TR (Theodore Roosevelt), and 21 steps to CA (Chester Arthur, the 21st president). The first 4 letters of Harrison shift 20 alphabetic steps to BULL, and "BULL Moose" was the nickname of Teddy Roosevelt, who said the presidency was a "BULLy pulpit." In his second bid for the White House, Roosevelt ran under the banner of the BULL Moose Party, named in his honor.

HF's first name is 8 letters long, and his last name is 4 letters long. The first letter, H, is the 8th letter of the alphabet, and the last letter, D, is the 4th letter. Four presidents have first names that are 8 letters long—Franklin Pierce, Benjamin Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin Roosevelt. Four have last names that are 4 letters long—George Bush (father and son counted as one), Gerald Ford, William Taft, and James Polk.

HF ends with the commonest three-letter ending of a presidential last name, SON, shared by JefferSON, MadiSON, JackSON, William Henry HarriSON, Andrew JohnSON, Benjamin HarriSON, WilSON, and Lyndon JohnSON. FORD ends the first name of RutherFORD Hayes. HAYes begins the same two letters as HARRison. HaYES ends with YES; HarrisON ends with NO in reverse. FORd has OR in the middle. It's a YES-OR-NO relationship.

Dwight David Eisenhower has the letters (once each) of HARRISON in his last two names, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy has the letters FORD in his first two names. The Ford Motor Company makes Lincolns, and Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theater. The first four letters of Warren Gamaliel HARDing's last name begin with the first three letters and the last letter of HARRison ForD.

## His Movies

At the start of his career, HF had a few bit parts in the movies, nothing that even got his name into the credits. He got his big break when George Lucas (first name the same as three presidents—Washington and the two Bushes) cast him in *American Graffiti*, produced by Francis FORD Coppola. Apparently pleased with HF, Lucas gave him the lead male role in *Star Wars*. Ronald Reagan ("Ray Gun") is remembered for advocating the so-called Star Wars defense system. HF's career really boomed after his role in the first *Star Wars* movie, in which he starred as Han Solo. The letters spelling the name HAN are embedded in HARRison. In spite of his great successes, HF has never won an Academy Award. The name of President Andrew Johnson expresses it well in the anagram ANDREW JOHNSON = H. "NO JONES DRAWN?" On May 30 2003 the *Star Wars* star got his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In a gesture to wordplay, STEVEN Spielberg quipped "Like the car that bears his name, Ford has stood the test of time as a modern-day hero and an old-fashioned movie star with all the tools of our most gifted actors and the talent to use them." Grover Cleveland's first name was actually STEPHEN, although he never used it.

RICHARD ("DICK") Nixon's wife was named PATRICIA. HF played RICHARD Kimball in *The Fugitive*, and HF's manager is PATRICIA McQueeney. One of his first starring roles was in *Blade Runner*, adapted from a book by science fiction writer Philip K. DICK. HF starred in *K-19, The Widow Maker*. The 19th president was RutherFORD B. Hayes. The 11th letter of the alphabet is K, and James Garfield was born on November 19 (11/19). HF played MARTIN Stett in *The Conversation*, which accounts for MARTIN Van Buren. HF was nominated for an Academy Award for his role of JOHN Book in *Witness*, but, like JOHN Adams, JOHN Quincy Adams, JOHN Tyler, and JOHN Kennedy, he didn't receive it. HF played CIA agent JACK Ryan in *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger*, which covers JACK Kennedy again. As mentioned in the introduction, HF starred as JAMES MARSHALL, the cinematic president in *Air Force One*. The highly successful MARSHALL Plan was implemented under Harry S Truman. The vice president under Woodrow Wilson was Thomas MARSHALL. JAMES is the most frequently occurring presidential first name, belonging to Madison, Monroe, Polk, Buchanan, Garfield, and Carter. His wife in the movie was GRACE Marshall. GRACE was also the name of Calvin Coolidge's wife. In preparation for the movie, HF asked Bill Clinton if he could take a look inside Air Force One, and Clinton arranged for a tour. The last word of Air Force ONE is embedded in the last name of Indiana JONES, and that brings us to his classic movie trilogy.

The *Indiana Jones* series provides a lost ark of information. First, the big news. HF will film more (FILLMORE) Indiana Jones scenes: *Indiana Jones 4* is scheduled for production in 2004 and for release July 4 2005. Since it will almost certainly be HF's fourth and last term as Indy, it puts him in the same class as Franklin D. Roosevelt, who served four terms, too. FDR's initials are in FoRD. Presidentially speaking, Indiana has never had a chief executive, but it boasts a record 5 veeps. Indiana was once known as "the mother of vice presidents." Irving Cobb, the Kentucky

satirist, claimed that Indiana's overload of vice presidents comes from it being so normal, the average American state. He continues "The average Indianan makes suitable vice presidential material because he is absolutely that—just average. If he were sub-average, he couldn't get the nomination, and if he were above average, he wouldn't take it." Indiana Jones' movie name was HENRY Jones II. HF starred in the movie *Regarding Henry*. Lou HENRY Hoover was the wife of Herbert Hoover. HENRY Wilson was President Grant's vice president. HENRY is the middle name of William HENRY HARRISON, who was appointed by President John Adams as the first governor of the INDIANA Territory, and Fort HARRISON in INDIANA is named after him. His grandson, President Benjamin HARRISON, died in INDIANA. ANDREW JACKSON contains the letters spelling JONES AND ARK with CW left over. The first two letters of INdiana and JOnes are lettershifts of each other—IN shifts a single step to JO. CALvIN Coolidge's first name begins with CA and ends in IN, state name abbreviations for California (home of Hollywood) and Indiana (Jones). IN appears in more presidents' last names than any other bigram—WashINgton, LINcoln, McKINley, HardINg, and ClINton. IJ, the initials of Indiana Jones, shift forward in the alphabet one step to JK (John Kennedy), 19 to BC (Bill Clinton), and 21 to DE (Dwight Eisenhower).

### His Life

The August 1997 issue of *George Magazine* (named for George Washington and founded by John Kennedy, Jr.) had this to say of HF: "Harrison Ford is the most successful actor in film history, having starred in 7 of the 30 top-grossing films of all time. Yet Ford has no movie-star desire to be personally loved. He simply wants to be respected for doing his job and then be left alone. In his ideal vision of himself, the 57-year-old is not a hero but the highest-paid blue-collar worker in the world. Herein lies the peculiar reality of Harrison Ford—and also most of the reasons he is such a truly great figure in the eyes of the American public."

HF maintains a home in JACKSON Hole, Wyoming. Scratch off Andrew JACKSON. HF's first wife was named MARY, which was the name of Lincoln's wife, too. HF's youngest daughter is named GEORGIA, the feminine form of GEORGE, another connection to Washington and the Bushes. His oldest son is named BENJAMIN, the same name that Franklin Pierce gave his son. His second oldest son is named WILLARD, which, when the W is printed upside-down, becomes MILLARD Fillmore.

In a curious way HF's love life has come full circle with his current squeeze, Calista Flockhart. Her initials agree perfectly with Carrie Fisher's, who as Princess Leia was his love interest in his first big smash, *Star Wars*. CF shifts forward 7 letters to JM, the initials of James Marshall, the president HF played in *Air Force One*. These are also the initials of successive presidents James Madison and James Monroe. No other presidents have had these initials, and these are the only two successive presidents in US history to wear the same initials.

### The Zachary Challenge

Can you FILLMORE slots with links between HF and the presidents? Some that are listed in this article leave room for improvement. There is only one omission, but it is as glaring as the White House on a sunny day—Zachary Taylor. Can you find anything reasonable, or even slightly unreasonable, which ties him to HF? Ironically, Zachary begins with Z and ends with Y—Z is the last letter of the alphabet, Y is the next to last letter of the alphabet, and Zachary is the last president with an empty slot. Zack, we tried—God knows we tried!