

白宮趣聞 (上)

HUMOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE I

Compiled and Edited by
Father John Lee

李奠然 編著

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PREFACE

HUMOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE: THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF THE PRESIDENCY

There are many histories of America's Chief Executives, but none so refreshingly casual. These humorous anecdotes demonstrate that American presidents were real human beings, and used humor as a medicine to give them the refreshment they needed for the arduous and frustrating work of trying to direct a young, fresh, and often lawless nation not quite ready to grow up.

Fr. Lee has given "history" a sugar coating. Browse your way through these light-hearted pages and you will discover that history is not always pretentious and presidents are not always forbidding.

**Paul B. Denlinger
Professor Of Linguistics
Soochow University**

前 言

有關於美國總統的歷史故事多不勝數，但卻沒有比「白宮趣聞」更清新自然而怡人的了。這些趣聞軼事，告訴了您，美國總統亦祇不過是個平凡的人。及總統如何用幽默，來處理領導一個年輕，活力充沛而又綱紀不張的新國家時，所帶來的困難與艱辛。幽默倒也不失為一副提神劑。

幸神父把歷史甜化了，當你輕鬆的瀏覽這些小品時，將會發現歷史決不是虛飾的，而總統亦決不是那麼高不可攀的。

鄧 臨 爾
東吳大學教授

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The President of the United States holds the most important position in the world. He must be an exceptionally competent administrator, an outstanding statesman and a topnotch diplomat in order to conduct the domestic and foreign affairs efficiently and successfully.

A complicated job like the American presidency takes a great deal of time and energy. The holder of this office must take time out to relax, for "All work no play makes Jack a dull boy." Unfortunately, his time is very much limited because he must be on duty twenty-four hours a day. In order not to become a nervous wreck or wind up in the nut house, a great majority of the American Presidents, from George Washington to Ronald Reagan, possess a good sense of humor. As a matter of fact, many of them were the noted humorists of their time. The outstanding ones include Abe Lincoln, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, just to name a few.

I have written dozens of books and "Humor In The White House" is my favorite, with the exception of "The Road To Happiness." Before relating the humorous anecdotes, I usually give a brief sketch of the Presidents. Reading this book, you will not only be amused, but you can also learn something about American history.

Would you like to know which story in "Humor In The

White House" tickles my biggest funny bone? It's the remark made by Calvin Coolidge, known as "the Silent Cal." As his nickname indicates, President Coolidge was a man of few words. At a White House dinner, a loquacious woman guest said to him, "Mr. President, I betted fifty dollars with my friend that I can get more than two words out of you." As cool as a cucumber, Coolidge mumbled, "You lose."

I owe a debt of gratitude to the sophomores in the Mass Communication Department of Fu Jen Catholic University for translating this book into elegant Chinese. Thanks a million, boys and girls. God love you! Me 2.

作者的話

美國總統對世局來說是舉足輕重的。爲了要能有效地處理美國國內及國際間的事務，一個美國總統必需是個衆所公認的幹練的行政人才，卓越的政治家和一流的外交家。

要勝任美國總統錯縱複雜的行政工作，需耗費長久的時間及心力。「竟日工作而不休息會使傑克變成一個遲鈍的孩子。」所以，白宮的主人偶而也需鬆弛身心。很不幸地，總統時間有限，因爲他的工作是全天候的。爲了不讓自己心力衰竭，精神崩潰，美國歷來的總統從喬治·華盛頓到隆納·雷根都極具幽默感。事實上，許多美國總統還是他們當代著名的幽默大師呢！在此提及幾位較有名氣的，譬如亞伯·林肯，約翰甘迺迪和雷根都是。

我已經出了十幾本書，除了「幸福之路」外，「白宮趣聞」最爲我所喜愛。在提到軼聞趣事之前，我通常會簡介這些總統的生平。所以，讀完此書，你不僅會發笑，同時亦可學到美國歷史的點滴。

想不想知道「白宮趣聞」裏那篇文章最令我覺得有趣？那就是有關別人封其爲「沉默的喀爾」——柯立芝總統的笑話。人如其名，柯立芝總統是個寡言的人。有一回在白宮的晚宴上，有個多話的女人向柯立芝說：「總統先生，我和我的朋友打賭今天一定要讓你說出兩個字以上的話。」柯立芝總統很冷靜的吐出了二個字——「你輸。」

輔仁大學大傳系二年級學生在課餘之暇將本書譯成文雅流暢的中文，我由衷地感激。

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father John Lee, the author of "Humor In The White House" was born and raised in North China near Peking. As a college student, he went to the United States in 1947. In 1949, he was ordained in Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.. In the same year, he entered Loyola University graduate school in Chicago, studying Social Administration and Clinic Psychology.

In the Midwest, the Catholic priest has organized the first national convention for the overseas Chinese students who were aided by him psychologically, socially and financially. The energetic clergyman wore many hats. He was a zealous churchman, a sympathetic clinic psychologist, a popular lecturer and an articulate Radio and TV news analyst who produced and moderated "China Speaks Out," a semiweekly Radio program and "Press International," a weekly Television program on ABC.

Due to retinitis pigmentosa, an incurable eye disease, Father Lee has become legally blind since 1977. Because of the lack of reading ability, he listens to "talking books" and magazines. Instead of sitting on a rocking chair brooding, the resilient man buries himself in hard work. Beside his teaching duties in the Department of Mass Media Communication at Fu Jen Catholic University, he has turned out some twenty books. You can't keep a good man down. How true! Furthermore, Father Lee possesses a keen sense of humor and many of his books deal with the

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subject of witticism. "No sense crying over spilt milk. You may just as well make the best out of it," remarks the spunky priest, "Life is too short and we only live once. We must make a good use of the time allotted to us, making small contributions to others." He is certainly doing more than his share. In his spare time, if he has any, Father Lee writes a weekly column, entitled "East Meets West" in China News and regularly contributes articles to "Free China Journal", "Crown" and other publications in Taiwan and in United States. He is also a correspondent of "UCAN", a Hong Kong based English news agency.

To Father Lee, life is really worth living. In his world, sun shines brightly daily, fragrant flowers bloom everywhere and birds sing sweetly from morning to night. His optimistic spirit is contagious. It rubs off on every one who comes in contact with him. After each period, his students walk out of the classroom, wearing a broad smile and spreading sunshine and joy to their schoolmates. The world of ours would be a much more pleasant place to live and work, if there were more souls like Father Lee.

作者簡介

李奠然神父是「白宮趣聞」的作者，他出生，成長於北平附近的中國北方。一九四七年，以大學生身份赴美，二年後在密蘇里州聖路易城的肯立克大修院晉鐸任聖職。同年進入芝加哥羅耀拉大學的研究所，主修「社會行政」及「臨床心理學」。

李神父在美國中西部首創了海外中國同學會，在精神、物質及社交方面照顧同在異鄉的學子。他精力充沛，身兼數職；不僅是一個熱誠的聖職人員，一個能與你感同身受的臨床心理學家，還是一個受歡迎的講演者和口才極好的廣播和電視新聞評論家。他製作並主持一個每週兩次的廣播節目——「為中國說話」，此外，他也參與過ABC電視台每週播出的「國際新聞評論」。

李神父因罹患了一種無法痊癒的眼疾——色素性網膜炎，一九七七年後遂成目盲。由於無法閱讀，他只有聽「有聲讀物」。不屈不撓的李神父並不因此打擊就坐在搖椅上怨天尤人，反而更努力不懈地工作。他除了在天主教輔仁大學大眾傳播系任教職外，尚有二十本以上的著述。一個堅強的人是不會被擊倒的，李神父即是最好的明證。李神父極具幽默感，許多他的作品探討的都是妙語趣話。這位生氣蓬勃的神父常說：「覆水難收，人最好要隨遇而安。」或說：「人生苦短，況且我們只能活一次。我們需善用時間，對他人有所貢獻。」他的確是做得比他份內所當做的還多。閒暇之餘（如若他還有閒暇可言的話），李神父每週為英文中國日報撰寫「中西齊相逢」的專欄，並且定時為「自由中國」、「皇冠」和其他在台或在美的雜誌刊物撰稿

。此外，他也是香港「天主教英文通訊社」所指定的通訊員。

生命對李神父而言是極珍貴的。在他的世界裏，陽光普照，花香四處，鳥語不斷。他的樂觀是帶有傳染性的，會傳給每個跟他接觸的人。他的學生每次上完他的課步出教室時，總是面帶笑容，並把他們的陽光和喜樂散播給其他同學。這個世界若是有更多像李神父的人，將會是一個更令人願意生存和工作的樂園。

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The President People Find Difficult To Dislike	1
2. The President Who Could Ad Lib	3
3. Johnny Come Lately President?	5
4. The First Humorist To Occupy The White House	7
5. The President Who Was Thinking Funny	9
6. Emancipation Proclamation	11
7. Lincoln was Able To Joke ABOUT Himself?	13
8. A Joke Caused Contempt Of Court	15
9. Lincoln's Inexhaustible Stories	17
10. Too Big To Cry	19
11. Something For Everybody	21
12. Gracious Way Out	22
13. The President Who Is Not Swell Headed	24
14. Less Noise And More Light	26
15. The Handsomest Man	28
16. The Understanding President	30
17. Lincoln, A Resourceful Man	31
18. What's The Hurry	33
19. John F. Kennedy, The Quick Witted President	35
20. Kennedy Topped By Johnson	37
21. Telegram To The Post Master General	38
22. Presidential Nepotism?	39
23. Breakfast In Bed	40

24.	To Have Dad Work Harder	41
25.	Jackie's Companion	42
26.	Kennedy vs Nixon	43
27.	The Man Who Became President Against All Odds	44
28.	You Will Be Sleeping With The President Of The United States	46
29.	The Most Unpopular President	48
30.	Truman Put Something Over The Russians	50
31.	Old Fashioned Old Fashions	52
32.	No Mistaken Identity	53
33.	The Colorful President	54
34.	The Silent Cal	56
35.	The Sleepiest Occupant Of The White House	58
36.	Coolidge's Humor	59
37.	Vice President Of What?	61
38.	Coolidge, A Conversationalist?	63
39.	Incurable Pride	65
40.	Self-confidence	67
41.	Fish Worm	68
42.	Coolidge, A Good Mediator	70
43.	The Man Of Few Words	71
44.	The Stingy Coolidge	72
45.	More Stingy Coolidge	74
46.	Greetings	76
47.	The Retired President	77
48.	The Uncouth President	78
49.	The President Who Was A Workaholic And A Slave Driver	79
50.	Never Been Outtalked	81
51.	Johnson vs. Ford	83

52.	The Bragging Texan	85
53.	The Church Going President	86
54.	Come, Let us Reason Together	87
55.	Who Is The Man I Am Talking To?	88
56.	The Boss Is Not Always Right, But The Boss Is Always The Boss	89
57.	The Pot Calls The Kettle Black	91
58.	Arrogance Of Power	93
59.	You'd Better Go Back To School	94
60.	The Fourth Term President	95
61.	Can You Keep A Secret?	97
62.	When It Rains, It Pours	99
63.	Roosevelt And Madame Chiang	101
64.	Drop Your Pants	103
65.	Taking No Chances With Roosevelt	105
66.	The Whispering Mother	107
67.	Household Economy For Millionaires	109
68.	An Inside Joke	111
69.	The House Keeper Is The Boss	113

THE PRESIDENT PEOPLE FIND DIFFICULT TO DISLIKE

Ronald Reagan, the thirty-ninth President of the United States, is so charming and affable, "even his enemies find it difficult to dislike him," according to most of the newspaper reporters. Reagan's charm lies in his keen sense of humor, particularly his ability to laugh at himself. In February, 1981, he turned seventy. At the dinner held at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., Reagan joked freely about his age and brought the house down with every humorous remark he made.

"I know your organization was founded by six newspaper women in 1919," he paused. With a twinkle in his eyes, he added, "It seems like only yesterday." He went on to say, "Middle age is when you're faced with two temptations, you choose the one that will get you home by nine o'clock." The septuagenarian President said, "Thomas Jefferson told one of his friends not to worry about old age. I have felt much better ever since he told me that."

Even when he was faced with a life-and-death tragedy, Ronald Reagan did not lose his sense of humor. On March 30th, 1981, he was shot by John Hinckle, an unstable young man. With a bullet in his chest, Reagan was rushed to the hospital. When he saw the doctors in the operating room, he grinned, "I hope you are all Republicans." One of the doctors assured him, "Today, we are all good Republicans, Mr. President."

When the operation was over, a doctor asked how he felt.

Quoting the comedian, W.C. Field, "All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia." When he saw the presidential aides come to see him, he asked, "Who's minding the store?" "When they assured him that things in the White House were running smoothly, he pretended to be indignant and said, "What makes you think I would be happy about that? If I had that much attention in Hollywood," he added, "I'd have stayed there." When his wife, Nancy rushed to his beside, Reagan apologized, "I forgot to duck, Honey." The head nurse told Reagan that he was healing fast and then added, "Keep up the good work." He cried, "You mean this might happen several times more?" When told that three other men were also hurt in the attempted assassination, Reagan said, "That's great news. Get four bedpans and let's have a reunion." President Reagan's ad lib one liners were refreshing and comforting to the nation in crisis. The host of the "Tonight Show," Johnny Carson, who was the master of ceremonies for the Oscar motion picture academy award show held the day after the attempted assassination, remarked to the millions of television viewers, "I was going to call the White House and ask Ronnie Reagan for a few of his funny one liners."