

## **Mister Ed Reviews the Presidents**

**By Mark Cohen**

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A while back, while serving as an Air Force officer, the government sent me to a week-long course in Washington, D.C. If you've ever attended a government school, you know you don't spend your nights and weekends studying; you drink, chase members of the opposite sex, and maybe squeeze in some sight-seeing.

And of all the sights to see in our nation's capitol, the one I wanted to see most was the White House. I'd always been interested in American history, and this was my chance to tour the home of our Presidents.

I arose early Saturday morning, washed the vomit from my blue uniform, and spent the next two hours standing in line outside the White House. At last it was my group's turn to enter the executive mansion.

As we meandered through the building, I marvelled at each room, each painting, and each document on display. I imagined Lincoln preparing the Emancipation Proclamation and FDR monitoring the situation at Pearl Harbor. Then, to my horror, I noticed the group had left me behind. I was wondering through the White House unescorted!

Just then I heard a whisper. "Psssst." I didn't see anyone, but as I turned the corner I came face to face with two huge dutch doors -- the kind you usually find on a barn. Then the upper doors popped open and a big white horse stuck his head through. "Hello," he bellowed, "I'm Mister Ed."

You can imagine my surprise. The last thing I had expected was to find a horse living just outside the oval office. I couldn't believe it. "I'm Captain Cohen," I said, but the big animal remained silent. "Chief of Military Justice at Offutt Air Force Base," I added, trying to impress him with my title.

"I know who you are," bellowed the horse. It sure sounded like Mister Ed. "Why do you look so skeptical?"

"Horses can't talk," I said.

"Oh brother," he snorted. "A horse is a horse, is that it?"

"Of course," I said.

"Unless of course, you go right to the source, the famous Mister Ed."

"You're not Mister Ed," I said.

"Oh, I'm not Mister Ed, huh? Look who thinks he's an expert on Mister Ed."

"Nobody's seen Mister Ed in nearly thirty years," I pointed out.

"I've been busy, sonny."

"I don't have time to argue with you; I need to get back to my group so I don't miss the tour."

"Hold your horses! Sit a spell. I'll tell you the real story of what's happened in the White House during the past thirty years." Could this be happening? Could this be the long lost Mister Ed? Or had the CIA given me mind altering drugs? If I could pass the CIA test, the Air Force might finally transfer me from Nebraska. I sat down.

"Mister Ed," I asked, "how did you end up in the White House? Why did you leave television?"

"It all started with JFK," he snorted. "Ask not what your country can do for you and

all that."

"So you left TV to come to Washington?"

"He wanted me as an advisor. We used to discuss foreign policy while Caroline rode on my back."

"Was he a good President?"

"He was okay."

"Not great?"

"Sometimes he just wouldn't listen. I warned him about that Bay of Pigs..."

"He decided to put a man on the moon," I pointed out.

"Ha! That was my idea too. 'Put a horse on the moon,' I said, 'you'll be a hero.'"

"What were your last words to him?"

"Jack," I said, "don't go to Dallas; let Lyndon handle Texas."

"How come you didn't return to TV after that?"

"LBJ asked me to stay on."

"What was he like?"

"Stubborn as a mule."

"I suppose you told him to stay out of Vietnam?"

"You bet your spurs I did," said the horse as he shook his massive head from side to side, "but he just wouldn't listen."

"Why didn't you leave after LBJ left office?"

"Are you kidding? I still remember Lyndon's last words to me. 'Ed'," he said, 'I want you to watch Nixon like a hawk.'"

"A lot of people think Nixon was one of best Presidents when it comes to foreign

policy," I said.

"I taught him everything he knew," Ed snorted. "Who do you think told him to go to China? Who do you think got him to end the Vietnam war?"

"Henry Kissinger?"

"It was me," the horse insisted. "I knew I wouldn't get any sleep until that darn war ended."

"Did you have any role in Watergate?" I asked.

"Did I have any role in Watergate?" he laughed. "Who do think erased the tapes?"

"You could have left after Nixon resigned," I said.

"No, President Ford needed me too much."

"Was he a nice man?"

"Nice, but not real bright. Reminded me a lot of Wilbur."

"What about Jimmy Carter?"

"Who?"

"That southern President."

"Oh, yeah. I'd forgotten about him."

"Did you like him?"

"Hee, hee, hee," the horse snickered. "Yeah, I liked him. Knew how to care for a horse."

"Were you still here when President Reagan took office?"

"Now, there was a smart man -- let me make all the decisions."

"You lowered inflation?" I asked.

"Supply Side is my middle name," said the horse.

"What about the Iran/Contra scandal?"

"Never would've happened if he'd have put Ollie North in charge of the base laundry at Camp Pendleton like I'd suggested."

"What did you think of George Bush?"

"Nice man. Gave me all his broccoli."

"Were you here when he launched Operation Desert Storm?"

"Ha," snorted Ed, "he was playing tennis in Kennebunkport. I got Colin Powell on the phone and said, 'Colin, let's kick some ass.'"

"How do you feel about President Clinton?"

"Nice lady. Husband ain't a bad guy, either."

Well, I talked with the horse for more than an hour and he certainly seemed to possess a vast knowledge of both foreign and domestic issues. I still thought it might be a CIA test, but it occurred to me that just maybe I really was talking with the famous Mister Ed. And just maybe he had been advising Presidents for thirty years. I had to cover all the bases.

"Mister Ed?" I asked humbly.

"Yeah, what is it?"

"Do you think you could get the Air Force me to transfer me to someplace warmer than Nebraska?"

"I'll see what I can do."

Call it coincidence if you like; two weeks after this incident I was promoted to Major General and transferred to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii.