

# West Wing Follies

The Complete History of the  
United States Presidency  
in about 90 minutes

A comedy in two acts

*By*  
*Burton Bumgarner*

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## **DEDICATION**

*To Dr. John Reed Bumgarner, M.D.,  
Physician, Presidential Scholar, and Uncle*

## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

From newscasts, game shows, reality TV, talk shows, beach movies, the Grand Ol' Opry, and Shakespeare soliloquies, a cast of 12 actors presents all of the United States Presidents in twenty brief scenes. Former Presidents interview for jobs, advertise used cars, head to Fort Lauderdale for spring break, and play a game called "Gilded-Age Jeopardy." James Buchanan is interrogated by "Law and Order" type cops; Woodrow Wilson sings a ballad about his attempt to start the League of Nations; and Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft are elementary school students hauled into the principal's office for unruly behavior.

"West Wing Follies" is a hysterical, non-partisan look at our fearless (and not so fearless) leaders -- their achievements, their failures, and their idiosyncrasies. This play offers a flexible, kazoo-playing cast the opportunity to portray history as never before!

**Performance Time:** About 90 minutes.

## **SETTING**

This play is written to be performed by 12 actors on a mostly bare stage with moveable furniture and simple props. Six chairs form a single row SL and another six chairs form a row SR. A desk and chair are downstage left. A stack of files are on the desk. A café table and chairs are downstage right. An apron is lying across a chair. Four podiums are upstage between the chairs.

## **COSTUMES**

Actors should dress identically such as dark slacks and matching shirts. Personalized, full-color T-shirts are available from Eldridge Publishing. Go to [www.histage.com](http://www.histage.com) for complete details.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Flexible cast of 12. The actors portray all of the U.S. Presidents, plus other incidental characters, real and fictitious, throughout U.S. history. The script is written for twelve actors, but directors should feel free to use more or fewer, or when necessary recast the roles among the actors. The actors should be as varied as possible with regards to gender, race, physical characteristics, etc. No one should be "type cast."

#### **ACTOR ONE:**

Narrator  
Andrew Jackson  
Stephen Douglas  
School Principal  
Dwight Eisenhower

#### **ACTOR TWO:**

Narrator  
Martin Van Buren  
Newscaster  
Theodore Roosevelt  
Adlai Stephenson

#### **ACTOR THREE:**

Narrator  
Campaign Manager  
Abraham Lincoln  
William Howard Taft

#### **ACTOR FOUR:**

George Washington  
John Tyler  
John Breckinridge  
Game Show Host  
Woodrow Wilson  
John Kennedy

#### **ACTOR FIVE:**

Martha Washington  
William Henry Harrison  
Ulysses S. Grant  
Emcee  
Richard Nixon

#### **ACTOR SIX:**

Thomas Jefferson

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James K. Polk  
Policeman  
General Sherman  
Rutherford B. Hayes  
General MacArthur  
Lyndon B. Johnson

**ACTOR SEVEN:**

Narrator  
Alexander Hamilton  
Reporter  
Policeman  
James Garfield  
Harry S. Truman

**ACTOR EIGHT:**

John Adams  
James Buchanan  
Policeman  
Franklin Roosevelt

**ACTOR NINE:**

Interviewer  
Franklin Pierce  
Chester Arthur  
Herbert Hoover

**ACTOR TEN:**

James Madison  
Millard Fillmore  
Grover Cleveland  
Calvin Coolidge

**ACTOR ELEVEN:**

James Monroe  
Zachary Taylor  
Bagel Shop Owner  
Benjamin Harrison  
Drew Barry

**ACTOR TWELVE:**

John Quincey Adams  
Talk Show Host  
Andrew Johnson  
William McKinley  
Warren G. Harding

### **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

*The scene breakdown is for ease of rehearsal. When performing the play there should be no breaks between scenes. An intermission can fall after Scene 9.*

**Scene 1: In the Beginning**

*Actors 1 - 3 as Narrators; all other Actors*

**Scene 2: The Revolution and President Washington**

*All 12 Actors*

**Scene 3: Two Guys Who Don't Like Each Other**

*Actors 6 - 8*

**Scene 4: Who Wants a Job?**

*Actors 9 - 12*

**Scene 5: The Cowboy and the Dude**

*Actors 1 & 2*

**Scene 6: The General, the Man Nobody Liked, and the Salesman**

*Actors 3 - 7*

**Scene 7: The Talk Show**

*Actors 9 - 12*

**Scene 8: Law and Order**

*Actors 6 - 8*

**Scene 9: The Nation at War**

*Actors 1-6; all other Actors*

**Scene 10: I Wanna Be a Waiter**

*Actors 11 & 12, all other Actors*

**Scene 11: Gilded-Age Jeopardy**

*Actors 4 - 7*

**Scene 12: Spring Break**

*Actors 8 - 12*

**Scene 13: After School**

*Actors 1 - 3*

**Scene 14: Country Western Singer**

*Actors 4 & 5*

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**Scene 15: Whose Line Is It, by the Way?**

*Actors 9 - 12*

**Scene 16: Shakespeare in the White House**

*Actors 6 - 8*

**Scene 17: The General and the Terrier**

*Actors 1 & 2*

**Scene 18: The Big Debate**

*Actors 4 & 5*

**Scene 19: Barbecue and the Watergate Is Just a Hotel**

*Actors 5 & 6*

**Scene 20: Six Presidents in 60 Seconds**

*All 12 Actors*

## **End of Freeview**

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