

# How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Presidency

by D. Ulysses Donnelly

All of these political ads have me thinking about the presidency. This election cycle is too expensive, too nasty and has gone on way too long. Kinda like most Hollywood movies. After watching the two major candidates plug away at each other during every news cycle, I thought I'd nominate a few film presidents that you might consider writing in on November 2 as an alternative.

My first nomination is **Harrison Ford**. As you recall, he played President James Marshall in *Air Force One* (1997). Watching this film you realize that Ford is America's



wet dream of a president, an action hero who can go mano-y-mano with a terrorist leader at 30,000 feet. He didn't need bodyguards or vice presidents to help him. It was unnecessary for anyone to hold his hand when he fought terrorists or was being interviewed before a Congressional investigation.

The second name I'd like to throw out is **Martin Sheen**. Of all the people on this list, he has the most experience, after four years of playing President Josiah "Jed" Bartlet on TV's *The West Wing*. In addition, Sheen is a fantastic campaigner, who much like our own president, loves children and handles stress well. This was evident when Sheen played candidate Greg Stillson in *The Dead Zone* (1983).

Next is **Sam Waterston**, who is my pick as the straight-talking, serious candidate. This reputation is mainly from his solemn narration of Abraham Lincoln in Ken Burn's *The Civil War* (1996). But as a candidate, Waterston is known for telling it like it is, playing former Presidential Candidate **Jack Edwards** in *Mindwalk* (1990). He gives the people the truth as he sees it, saying "Americans want their leaders even dumber than they are." Plus his long-time portrayal of District Attorney Jack McCoy on *Law and Order* doesn't hurt.

No list of film presidents would be complete without **Peter Sellers**, who gave life to the understated President Merkin Muffley in *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). His coolness under fire and sense of diplomacy is evident throughout this superb film. But none more than when he delicately informs a drunken Soviet premier that an American military commander went "a little funny in the head" and launched an unprovoked war. A great film, though too bad we haven't had a bald president like Muffley in over 40 years (unless you count **Dick Cheney**). Speaking of a little funny in the head...

All the others on this list were just a warm up to my personal favorite write-in candidate. My final vote on November 2 will have to go to **Maurice Evans**. Who, you ask? None other than that great ape Dr. Zaius from *Planet of the Apes* (1968). True, he wasn't an elected leader. True, he turned his back on all the advice from his scientists because their facts contradicted to his ideology. It is even true that he isn't human. But hey, I'll vote for him, because he seems like such a nice ape; you know, just one of us normal guys who you'd want to have a banana with. But sadly, this is only fiction. I mean an un-elected, incompetent, religious zealot of a monkey becoming president? *Yeah, like that could happen.* ♦