

President	Bill Clinton
Chronological Order	42
Life Span	1946-present
Home State	Arkansas
Elected	1992, 1996

Political Party	Democratic
Vice President	Albert Gore
First Lady	Hillary Rodham Clinton

Children	One daughter
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Physical Attributes	6'2" tall, salt-and-pepper hair, blue-gray eyes, very large hands
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Undergraduate Education	Georgetown University (School of Foreign Service). He also attended Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship and graduated from Yale Law School
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Military Service	None
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Profession	Attorney
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Other Political Offices	Governor
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Nickname	The Natural or The Comeback Kid or Bubba or Slick Willie
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Family Lineage	English, Irish
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Religious Affiliation	Baptist
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Biographical Notes	<p>1. Four men were great presidents: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin Roosevelt. There were two or three other men, who given a different set of circumstances might have been great presidents, e.g., Thomas Jefferson and Woodrow Wilson. And there was one man who could have been, who <i>should</i> have been a great president, but was not — Bill Clinton.</p>
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Clinton had all the requisite gifts and experiences: a razor-sharp intellect, an uncanny ability to connect with people, a first-class education, twelve years as a governor, and a once-in-a-generation talent for politics. He came into office with a brilliant economic plan that he stuck to and fought for, a plan under which the American economy thrived. However, relentless attacks by his political enemies coupled with his personal weaknesses reduced his effectiveness, especially during his second term.

2. A contemporary described meeting Clinton in the White House in the following way. "It was like seeing the largest, strongest, smartest dog in a compound. He was so sure of himself, and he so loved being president, and he seduced everybody in that room. I mean, this guy would walk down a rope line and remember the [one thing] about your sister or brother that's most crucial to you. That instinct for creating a moment is just gigantic."

After a year on the job, Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury, Lloyd Bentsen, reflected on the eight presidents he had known and concluded that Clinton was probably the smartest: "I think that this fellow is a step above in the way of being able to correlate and see how it all works together." With respect to foreign policy, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, who had served under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Carter, said that Clinton "was the quickest study I've ever seen, more than Henry Kissinger, more than anyone I've ever worked with."

3. Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe III in 1946 in Hope, Arkansas. His father died in an automobile accident before he was born. When Bill was two, his mother Virginia went to New Orleans to train as a nurse anesthetist and left him in her parents' care. His grandfather, Eldridge Cassidy, ran a grocery store on the edge of a Black neighborhood in Hope. The store was one of the most integrated establishments in town, and



Cassidy treated his Black customers with respect and affection. This made a big impression on young Bill, who later recalled, "I could see that Black people looked different," but because his grandfather "treated them like everybody else, asking after their children and about their work, I thought they were just like me." Later, Bill was deeply affected by the 1957 integration crisis at nearby Little Rock Central High School.

As president, Clinton drew strong support from the African-American community, appointed Blacks to prominent positions in his administration, and made improving race relations a significant part of his presidency. In 1998, Nobel laureate Toni Morrison called Clinton "the first Black president," saying, "Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas." She noted that Clinton's indiscretions were scrutinized more than his career accomplishments and compared this to the stereotyping that Blacks sometimes endure. After his presidency, Clinton located his office in the Harlem section of New York City.

4. Soon after completing her training in New Orleans, Virginia returned to Hope and married Roger Clinton, whose last name Bill eventually took. Roger moved his new family to Hot Springs, a rowdy gambling and resort town of 50,000 in northwest Arkansas, where he ran the parts department in his brother's Buick dealership. At first, everything seemed fine. The Clintons lived in a five-bedroom, four-bathroom house in a pleasant, middle-class neighborhood. It soon became apparent, however, that the elder Clinton was an alcoholic whose idea of a good time, as Bill later put it, "was to gamble, get drunk, and do crazy things in cars or airplanes or motorcycles." During drunken sprees, he would sometimes beat his wife. When Bill was five, Roger fired a handgun inside the house, barely missing Virginia. The police hauled him off in handcuffs. Another time, he held a pair of scissors to his wife's neck. By his early teens, Bill, now six feet tall, had been thrust into the role of family defender. During one altercation, Bill broke into his parents' bedroom and forced a drunken Roger to stand. "Hear me," he said, "Never ... ever ... touch my mother again."

The Clintons divorced but remarried six months later after Roger pleaded for a second chance. Roger soon picked up where he had left off. Roger Jr., ten years younger than Bill, recalled how bad it was: "I'd pray he wouldn't get drunk – he'd go and get drunk. I'd pray he wouldn't hit us – he'd come home and hit us. I'd pray we'd have a happy household – we wouldn't." Then, when the elder Clinton was dying of cancer, Roger Jr. remembered praying "for him to die, and he wouldn't die. That's when I got tired of praying." But he did die when Roger Jr. was eleven, and Bill was away at college. Virginia married two more times.

One of the most striking things about Bill Clinton's turbulent home life is that almost no one outside the family knew about it. "I came to accept the secrets of our house as a normal part of my life," Clinton wrote in his memoir, *My Life*. "I never told anyone about them – not a friend, a neighbor, a teacher, a pastor." One of his biographers noted: "He decided to pretend it didn't exist. To pretend that everything was all right. To go to church ... with his Bible under his arm and be sunny and energetic, and positive, and simply not to accept it." Clinton's habitual inclination to suppress negative personal information, e.g., his affairs as governor and president, led him to perjure himself during the Paula Jones civil litigation and obstruct justice during the Monica Lewinsky Affair.

5. As a teenager, Clinton idolized President John F. Kennedy. Kennedy's clarion call to action, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country," struck a deep chord with Clinton. In July 1963, while in Washington participating in the Boys Nation mock government program, Clinton met JFK in the Rose Garden and shook his hand. The photograph that captured this handshake is one of the most famous photos in American history.

While in high school, Clinton, a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, decided that he wanted to attend college in Washington D.C., to be near the center of American politics. He applied to only one college – Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service – and was accepted. The School of Foreign Service was appealing to him because a background in foreign relations and foreign policy would be useful in a national political career.

6. At Georgetown, Clinton quickly made his presence felt. As the students moved into their dorms, Clinton went from room to room, introducing himself to them and their parents. To some, the six-foot-two, bushy-haired, garrulous, confident Clinton with the southern drawl may have seemed an oddity. And as one of the few southerners in his class, he was. But most liked him, and before long, the "amiable farm boy," as the student newspaper described him, was elected freshman class president.

If classmates assumed he was more amiable than bright, he quickly disavowed them of this notion. In a famously demanding Western Civilization class, he was one of two students out of 230 to earn an A. He was ambitious, competitive, and hardworking. After a lecture, he would be one of the students to go up to the

front and ask the professor to clarify this point or that. He developed a knack for “reading” his professors, i.e., for anticipating from the professor’s interests what was likely to be on the test, even when it was not obvious to the other students. A voracious reader, he always had two or three books unrelated to class going at any one time. When one of his professors noted that great leaders required less sleep than ordinary people, he began sleeping just five hours per night. He was elected president of the sophomore class the next year.

During his junior and senior years, he served as a clerk for Senator William Fulbright’s Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The clerkship, which allowed him to meet and observe many of the prominent political figures of the day, took up huge amounts of his time, but Clinton still maintained a 3.7 grade point average. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa and won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in England.

At Oxford, he studied political science for two years, traveled widely throughout Europe, and visited the Soviet Union. Even amongst his fellow Rhodes Scholars, Clinton stood out. Strobe Talbot, who shared a house with Bill for a year and later became Clinton’s deputy secretary of state, recalled, “You just knew that Bill Clinton was going to be a politician and that he was probably going to be President.”

7. Clinton became draft-eligible at age 18, like all young American men. At Georgetown, student deferments kept him out of the draft, but those deferments ended upon graduation. The details of Clinton’s encounter with the draft did not come to light until his 1992 presidential campaign. When they came out, the story was so complicated that it was difficult to understand exactly what had happened. But three things about Clinton and the draft were clear. First, he pulled strings to avoid being called up, and he did so in ways that, although not illegal, raised questions about his honesty and ethical standards. Second, he was not alone among members of his generation. Millions of young men contrived to avoid the draft, and some did so successfully. Third, Clinton agonized over his actions. He worried about the possible impact of service – or nonservice – upon the political career he hoped to pursue. He also spent many late nights talking with friends about the morality of the war and whether one was obligated to serve in a conflict you considered immoral. And then, there was the question of whether it was fair for privileged individuals to avoid service when others could not.

8. Clinton returned to the U.S. in 1970 to begin law school at Yale University. He applied to Yale because it was one of the country’s two or three most prestigious law schools, but also because it would give him time to pursue his political ambitions. Yale operated on the assumption that if you were smart enough to get in, you were smart enough to graduate, so it required neither regular class attendance nor formal grades beyond honors, pass, and fail. Clinton spent his first two months in New Haven canvassing Irish and Italian working-class neighborhoods on behalf of Joe Duffey, a Democrat running unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate on a pro-civil rights, anti-Vietnam War platform. Clinton rarely attended class. When the campaign ended, Clinton asked a classmate if he could borrow her class notes. “For what?” she asked. “For everything,” he answered. In another class, he showed up half an hour late for the final because it was open book, and he hadn’t yet gotten himself a copy.

In 1972, while still a full-time law student, Clinton was hired to work on South Dakota senator George McGovern’s presidential campaign. He worked the convention floor for McGovern at the Democratic National Convention in Miami, then, in the fall, co-managed the senator’s general election campaign in Texas. Although McGovern got crushed, the experience was a definite plus for Clinton. At age twenty-six, he had been a part of electoral politics at the highest level. While in Texas, he expanded his already formidable circle of friends and acquaintances; indeed, several of the people he met, including, most importantly, Betsey Wright, would play recurring roles in Clinton’s career.

9. One day during his first year at Yale, Clinton was sitting at a table in the library reading room, and he kept glancing at a female student a few tables away. Eventually, she got up and walked over to him. “Look,” she said. “If you’re going to keep staring at me, and I’m going to keep staring back, we should at least introduce ourselves. I’m Hillary Rodham.” Clinton was so surprised that he barely remembered his name in this his first meeting with his future wife. Eventually, they became inseparable.

Hillary Rodham was just as impressive a person as Clinton. She had grown up in Park Ridge, Illinois, an affluent white suburb of Chicago, where her father, Hugh, ran a small manufacturing firm. The Rodham household, though lacking the turbulence of Clinton’s, was far from placid, with her gruff authoritarian father setting the tone. Hugh encouraged Hillary’s interest in politics but demanded that the television be turned off during the Democratic National Convention. “My dad was a rock-ribbed, up-by-your-bootstraps, conservative Republican and proud of it,” Hillary recalled. Her mother was “basically a Democrat, although she kept it quiet in Republican Park Ridge.” In high school, Hillary played softball, was active in the student

council, and was a member of the Young Republicans and a Methodist youth group. Her parents encouraged her to excel, and she did. Voted "most likely to succeed" by the senior class, she went on to Wellesley College, an elite women's school outside of Boston.

Like many of her contemporaries, she underwent a political epiphany in college. By her senior year, she was tutoring black children in an inner-city neighborhood in Boston, going door-to-door for antiwar presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy, and switching party allegiance from Republican to Democratic. At commencement, she delivered a speech that brought the graduates to their feet and earned her national attention. *Life* magazine featured Rodham, along with graduates of three other universities, in an article entitled "The Class of 69: With Eloquent Defiance Top Students Protest Right Through Commencement."

In the spring of 1972, Clinton and Rodham were the prosecution lawyers in the Yale mock court "Prize Trial," and their performance provided a window into how their partnership worked. Clinton was soft and engaging, eager to charm the judge and the jury and make the witnesses comfortable. Hillary was clear, sharp, and all business. One onlooker commented that Hillary was never worried about stepping on toes, whereas Bill "would massage your toes."

10. After law school, Bill and Hillary went their separate ways, at least for the time being. Clinton returned to Arkansas and taught at the University of Arkansas Law School. He was a popular teacher, perhaps in part because he was an easy grader. "Bill doesn't give Ds or Fs because he might someday need those votes," said a colleague. But students also enjoyed his informal approach and genuine interest in their lives. He was especially popular among African-American students, who dubbed him "Wonder Boy" because he was so much more comfortable in their presence than the other white faculty members.

Meanwhile, Hillary worked on the staff of Marian Wright Edelman's Fund for Children, the precursor of the Children's Defense Fund, in Washington, D.C. In the summer of 1974, she joined the staff of the House Judiciary Committee that eventually recommended President Nixon's impeachment. Rodham's work on the committee, which impressed superiors and colleagues alike, opened up even more opportunities for her. When Nixon resigned, Hillary probably could have had her pick of jobs, e.g., a position at a prestigious Washington law firm or a job in the federal government. Or, given all the contacts she had made on the impeachment committee, perhaps she could have run for office herself. She did none of those things. To the chagrin of her admiring friends, one of whom told her she was "crazy," Rodham moved to Arkansas, first to teach law and then to practice law at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock. Friends wondered why she was giving up so much for so little. The answer was obvious. "She was absolutely, totally crazy about Bill Clinton," recalled one of her colleagues on the impeachment committee. There was also the promise of what he might accomplish – and what they might accomplish together. She repeatedly told another colleague, "Bill Clinton is going to be President of the United States someday!" Bill and Hillary married one year after she arrived in Arkansas.

11. Bill launched his political career in 1974 when he took on the longtime Republican incumbent congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt. In the year of Watergate, Clinton sensed that Hammerschmidt, a staunch defender of Nixon, was vulnerable. Clinton easily bested three primary opponents but lost to Hammerschmidt by two percentage points in the general election. But he won by losing. Because he came so close to pulling an upset, he instantly became a young man with a future. The next morning, Clinton was in downtown Fayetteville, thanking voters. As one of his biographers put it, "The next race had already begun."

The next race came two years later when Clinton won an overwhelming victory for attorney general, giving him a platform to speak out on behalf of consumers, utility-rate payers, and crime victims. Clinton performed his duties conscientiously, but he viewed this job as a stepping stone to higher office. To help him decide where to go next, he hired Dick Morris, a controversial but brilliant political consultant. Morris helped Clinton position himself for a successful run for governor, adroitly sidestepping two other rising stars in the state's Democratic Party, Dale Bumpers and David Pryor, who also harbored national aspirations. In 1978, at the age of thirty-two, Bill Clinton became the youngest governor in the nation.

12. For scores of friends, wrote biographer David Maraniss, Clinton's inauguration as governor in January 1979 "had the aura of a generational rite. From all sections of the country, they made the pilgrimage to gray, freezing Little Rock. They were there to witness the coming of age of one of their own, the first in their class to reach such prominence on the political stage." Those attending represented almost every stage of Clinton's life. They included friends from high school, dorm mates from Georgetown, law school colleagues from Yale, Texans from the 1972 McGovern campaign, and Rhodes Scholars. There were even two Louisianans who were with him at Boys Nation when he shook hands with JFK.

What was there about Clinton that attracted this loyal assemblage? It attested to his knack for forming lasting friendships. A veteran Arkansas newspaper reporter described how it might begin: “He gets close to you, he touches, he establishes a physical connection – arm on a shoulder, a handshake. He looks you in the eye and, for a short period of time, makes you think you’re the only person in the room. And he quickly finds the common foundation – hometown, knows your cousin, knows somebody who went to the school you went to, knows your boss.” Clinton made it look easy, but he worked at it, too. After meeting people, he would jot down their relevant information on an index card: name, address, phone number, birthdays, wedding dates, updates on a new job, and family bereavements. By the time he became governor, there were approximately 10,000 index cards. (So, “The Natural” also possessed the instincts of a master organizer.) And then, Clinton stayed in touch. Fellow Arkansas politician David Pryor recalled: “You’d hear from people, ‘Oh, I just heard from Bill Clinton. He dropped me a postcard,’ or ‘He called me up on my birthday,’ or ‘My mother broke her ankle, and Bill Clinton called her.’”

Clinton’s ever-widening circle of friends, unofficially convening for the first time at his gubernatorial inauguration, played a crucial role in his rise to prominence. Later dubbed “Friends of Bill” (FOB), they gave him a national network of supporters, many of whom would achieve distinction in journalism, academia, entertainment, and business. Just as they were willing to make the pilgrimage to Little Rock in 1979, they and their counterparts would be willing to later drop what they were doing, almost at a moment’s notice, to assist Clinton when the need arose. And Hillary had an influential group of friends as well.

13. Clinton’s first term as governor began with soaring hopes and ended in bitter disappointment when he lost his bid for re-election in 1980. A major campaign issue was the car tag levy bill he had signed. Clinton proposed that tax to improve roads, and he wanted to do it based on the car’s value so that Arkansans driving old pickup trucks would pay less taxes than those tooling around in new Lincolns. But the state legislature approved an increase based on vehicle weight, which hit working people hard. So, Clinton had a choice: sign or get no bill. He signed. “It was the single dumbest mistake I ever made in politics until 1994,” he said.

The 1980 loss devastated him. He thought his political career was over and nearly ended it of his own volition – he seriously considered multiple job offers. But in the end, he stayed in Little Rock and joined a law firm. Then, one day in 1981, at a small-town gas station, he ran into a man whose anger at the car tag tax was so great that he bragged to Bill that he had persuaded ten family members to vote against him. Clinton then asked the man if he would vote for him if he ran again. The man said, “Sure I would. We’re even now.” Clinton ran to the phone, called Hillary, and told her he thought he could regain the governorship in 1982. And he did. He was elected to another two-year term in 1984, a four-year term in 1986, and another four-year term in 1990 (of which he served two years before becoming president).

14. In 1988, the Democratic nominee for president, Michael Dukakis, asked Clinton to deliver one of the nominating speeches at the Democratic National Convention. It was a disaster. Before his largest audience so far, he gave a long and boring speech. As he went on for thirty-two minutes, twice the allotted time, cameras caught delegates at first talking to themselves, then drawing their hands across their throats as the speech wore on and shouting, “Get the hook.” When Clinton said, “In conclusion,” the audience broke into raucous applause. (Clinton wasn’t all to blame. Dukakis’s aides had written the speech.) The next night, *Tonight Show* host Johnny Carson announced in his opening monologue that Clinton had just been approved as an over-the-counter sleep aid by the surgeon general.

The speech could have been extremely harmful to his reputation, but his survival instincts kicked in, and that, plus a stroke of good luck, salvaged the situation. It so happened that two FOBs – Harry and Linda Thomason – were Hollywood TV producers. They got Bill a spot on the *Tonight Show* shortly after Carson’s devastating putdown, and Clinton’s self-deprecating humor, on-camera poise, and excellent saxophone solo won the day. Far more people saw this winning performance than his speech at the convention. From then on, the show became the first stop for politicians in trouble.

15. The defeat of Michael Dukakis in 1988 – the third in a row for the Democrats – sent a deep chill through the party ranks. Among those most concerned were the members of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an organization founded after Ronald Reagan’s re-election in 1984 by moderate to conservative party members, many of them vulnerable southerners. DLC members, including Clinton, feared their party was destined to minority status unless it regained the support of the white middle-class and working-class voters who had been drifting to the GOP in ever-increasing numbers since 1968. For years, Republicans had been attacking Democrats with charges of being profligate spenders, soft on crime, weak on national defense, and beholden to special interest groups. By 1988, those identifying themselves as Republicans had almost pulled

even with those identifying as Democrats. More ominously, 53 percent of all eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds identified as Republican. Political scientists at the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), the DLC's think tank, posited that "the national Democratic Party is losing touch with the middle class, without whose support it cannot hope to build a presidential majority." Someone or something would have to inspire the Democrats' revival.

The "someone," as it turned out, was Bill Clinton. Following the 1988 election, council president Al From pressed Clinton to take on the organization's chairmanship. Despite lingering memories of Bill's dismal performance at the Democratic National Convention and persistent rumors about his personal life, From regarded the Arkansas governor as "the most attractive political animal he had seen in his life." Clinton's popularity among African-Americans in his home state was a plus since it countered the DLC's image as the "Southern White Boys Club." Also, his work on the McGovern campaign made him more acceptable – at least not objectionable – to the liberal wing of the party. From told Clinton, "Have I got a deal for you. If you take the DLC chairmanship, we will give you a national platform, and I think you will be President of the United States."

Clinton accepted the offer and quickly proved his worth. "This guy delivers our message better than any other politician," From said. In return for his service as chairman, Bill got the national platform he was promised plus a nascent campaign organization replete with a staff of advisors, a steady flow of detailed policy briefs from the PPI, and access to the DLC's wealthy benefactors. In May 1991, the DLC's national convention in Cleveland served the unofficial launch of Clinton's presidential campaign with Clinton giving an excellent speech.

16. In 1992, Clinton decided to run for president, and a month before the New Hampshire primary, he led the pack. He had raised an impressive amount of money, hired a talented staff, and was delivering a message that was registering not only with mainstream Democrats but also with Democrats who had been voting Republican in recent elections. His political talent was so apparent that Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* dubbed him "The Natural," after the "supremely gifted baseball player" Roy Hobbs in Bernard Malamud's famous book of the same name. Moreover, it began to appear that the Democratic nomination might be worth having after all. Although President Bush still had a comfortable lead in the polls, the afterglow of the successful Gulf War was dimming, and people were increasingly expressing concerns about a lingering recession. But just when Clinton's prospects looked brightest, the trouble began. A supermarket tabloid reported that Clinton had carried on a longtime affair with Gennifer Flowers, a beautiful one-time television reporter and nightclub entertainer in Little Rock. According to the story, Clinton regularly stopped by her apartment on the pretext that he was visiting aides who lived in the same building.

With his candidacy suddenly in peril, Clinton again went on national television. Accompanied by Hillary, he appeared on CBS's highly-rated *Sixty Minutes* program immediately following the Super Bowl. The program marked a milestone of sorts in American politics. Never before had a major candidate been asked to disclose the intimate details of his personal life on national television. Clinton denied – falsely, it turned out – that he had had an affair with Flowers. About as close to the truth as he came was when, without providing details, he admitted to "wrongdoing" and to "causing pain in my marriage." But it was Hillary's steadfast support that left the strongest impression. When the interviewer suggested that theirs was a marriage of convenience – "an understanding or arrangement" – she replied indignantly: "You know, I'm not sitting here – some little woman standing by her man like Tammy Wynette. I'm sitting here because I love him, and I respect him, and I honor what he's been through and what we've been through together. And you know, if that's not enough for people, then heck, don't vote for him."

More harmful were the new controversies that followed. The *Wall Street Journal* recounted how Clinton avoided the draft twenty years ago. Then, pressed to say whether or not he had ever used drugs during his college years, he admitted trying marijuana once or twice at Oxford. But he added that he "didn't like it, and didn't inhale, and never tried it again." The "didn't inhale" line reinforced an impression for dupliciousness that he would never shake. His aides called it the "Slick Willie" problem. "As time went on," recalled press aide Dee Dee Myers, "you'd always find out there was more to the story. It wasn't that what he told you wasn't true; it just wasn't the whole story." That, she concluded, "was hard for everybody."

At this point in the campaign, the national audience saw the survival instinct that earned Clinton the nickname "The Comeback Kid." He campaigned twenty hours a day; he and Hillary shook every hand they could find. As the campaign drew to a close, he addressed the "character issue" by saying, "I'll tell you what I think the character issue in this election is: How can you have the power of the presidency and never use it to help people improve their lives 'til your life needs saving in an election? ... I won't be like George Bush. I'll never forget who gave me a second chance, and I'll be there for you 'til the last dog dies." Clinton finished a

very respectable second to Massachusetts native Paul Tsongas in the New Hampshire primary and went on to win the Democratic nomination for president.

17. The 1992 general election campaign focused primarily on domestic issues, specifically the economy. Clinton's unofficial campaign slogan was "It's the economy stupid," which highlighted the hard times many Americans were experiencing. Bush had not enacted any significant legislation to help the economy, and as the campaign progressed, the voters began to feel that he did not understand or appreciate their problems.

This idea was reinforced at the second presidential debate, which was of the "town hall" variety, whereby the candidates sit on stools and responded to questions from ordinary citizens in the audience. Clinton's performance was masterful, and Bush's was disastrous. The key moment came when a woman asked the candidates how the national debt affected them personally. President Bush struggled to respond, asking the questioner for clarification. Clinton stood up, took a couple of steps in the direction of the questioner, and, understanding that her awkward question about the national debt was really about economic hard times, asked her how the economic downturn had affected her. "You know people who've lost their jobs and lost their homes?" he asked. When she answered yes, Clinton began a brilliant two-minute description of how hard times affect people, saying that when somebody got laid off in Arkansas, he could feel for them because he probably knew them personally. While Clinton spoke, the camera caught Bush checking the time on his watch as if he preferred to be somewhere else. Clinton's response and Bush's reaction helped fix in many people's minds the image of Clinton as a man who could empathize with the struggles of ordinary people and Bush as a man who was bored by the subject.

Ross Perot ran as a third-party candidate and complicated the race. He won over some conservative Republicans and independents. Clinton received 43 percent of the popular vote, Bush 38 percent, and Perot 19 percent. Clinton defeated Bush in the Electoral College 370 to 168 votes.

18. On January 7, 1993, less than two weeks before his inauguration, Clinton sat down with his new economic team in his Little Rock living room for a budget tutorial. The group included his treasury secretary Lloyd Bentsen; his chief economic advisor, Robert Rubin; and Leon Panetta, his federal budget director.

They outlined an economic theory for him. First, and foremost, the deficit must be reduced. This would impress the Federal Reserve and Alan Greenspan that the government's fiscal house was being put into order. Once Greenspan and the Wall Street bond markets became convinced that the days of massive government spending were over, interest rates would come down. This would spur investments by corporations and lower mortgage rates for homeowners. In theory, vast suppressed potential for productivity would be unleashed, and the economy would boom.

Clinton's heart told him no — deficit reduction meant fewer government programs — but his head told him yes. He went with his head, fought hard for this plan, and eventually, the economy boomed. After his presidency, when his critics argued that he had nothing to do with the booming economy, that he had just been lucky enough to be president during good economic times, he replied, "If you see a turtle on top of a fence post, it didn't get there by accident."

19. The economy flourished under Clinton. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was 3,241 on the day he took office. On March 29, 1999, it closed above 10,000 for the first time ever. In 1992, the year before Clinton took office, the federal government was running an annual deficit of \$290 billion, which was 4 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the Congressional Budget Office projected yearly deficits of about \$400 billion by the turn of the century. Instead, there were budget *surpluses* for fiscal years 1998-2001, the only such years from 1970 to 2023. By 1999, the federal government was running the largest surplus as a percentage of GDP since the Truman administration.

Clinton presided over the longest economic expansion in the nation's history. During his presidency, 22 million new jobs were created, and the unemployment rate was the lowest since the 1950s. The median household income grew by a staggering 11 percent — more than under any other president since that data was first gathered in 1967.

20. One of the seminal events of Clinton's first term was the 1993 budget battle. Clinton wanted to reduce the deficit, and this would require a tax increase. Republicans were unanimously opposed to such an increase, so Clinton needed almost every Democratic vote to get his budget passed. He worked the phones relentlessly, making deals and twisting arms. The budget bill passed in the House, 218 to 216, and its fate in the Senate came down to the vote of one man — Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska (D).

Kerrey called Clinton at the Oval Office and said, "I'm going to vote no."

Clinton shot back: "If you want to bring this presidency down then go ahead. ... All I'm doing is catching

grief for doing what everyone knows is the most difficult problem we face."

Kerry lost his temper and fired back, "I really resent the argument that somehow I'm responsible for your presidency surviving."

Clinton — channeling his inner LBJ — exclaimed, "F--k you!" He then added, "If that's what you want, you go do it," and hung up the phone. Kerrey changed his mind and voted for the bill, which passed when Vice President Al Gore broke a 50-50 tie in the Senate.

21. The North American Free Trade Agreement, which President Bush had negotiated, had not been passed by the Democratic Congress. NAFTA would tear down tariffs and other trade barriers with Mexico and Canada, creating the world's largest free trade zone. NAFTA, Clinton said, would provide a shot in the arm for a sluggish economy because reducing tariff barriers would expand markets for American goods and services. Clinton predicted that NAFTA would create 200,000 new jobs in the United States by 1995. Clinton conceded that some Americans would lose their jobs because of enhanced competition from north and south of the border. But these displaced workers could be retrained to take even better-paying jobs than the ones they had lost. Failure to pass NAFTA might mean Japan or Europe might move in to capture the lucrative Mexican market.

In pushing for the pact, Clinton encountered a different political calculus than he had faced in the budget fight. NAFTA had strong business support, so many Republicans in Congress approved of it. The Democrats, however, were another matter. Organized labor and its representatives in Congress denounced the agreement. "This NAFTA is nothing but a job-stealing, tax-raising, community-destroying agreement," said the Democratic House whip. As for job retraining, organized labor was scornful. What was some fifty-year-old who'd worked his or her whole life on an assembly line in Detroit supposed to do? Uproot the family and go back to school? Then uproot the family again to search for some elusive job?

Vice President Gore helped turn the tide in the administration's favor when he debated the merits of NAFTA with one of its most strident opponents, H. Ross Perot, who, during the presidential campaign, had famously predicted that the trade pact would create "a giant sucking sound" of jobs draining into Mexico. Gore and Perot appeared on CNN before one of the largest audiences in cable television history. Gore came off as reasonable and level-headed, Perot as cranky and unstable, and the vice president won the debate handily. The debate produced a decisive shift in public opinion; 60 percent of the viewers said they were now inclined to support NAFTA,

Clinton and Gore skillfully lobbied for the bill; between them, they saw or phoned 200 legislators, while cabinet members made 900 calls. The effort paid off when the bill passed the House by a vote of 234 to 200 and the Senate by 61 to 38, even though a majority of Democrats voted against it in both houses.

22. Early in his first term, Clinton took on the issue of health-care reform. He set up a White House task force, led by Hillary and Ira Magaziner, a FOB from their Oxford days, to design the plan and write the bill, which was entitled the Health Security Act. Having the bill emanate, more or less fully formed, from the White House was a mistake because it did not use the skills or get the needed buy-in from members of Congress. Also, Hillary and Magaziner insisted upon a controversial element of the plan that limited annual insurance premium increases to the rate of inflation. Almost to a person, Clinton's economic advisers opposed this provision as unworkable. But the president, after listening to both sides debate the issue for two hours, sided with Hillary and Magaziner. The provision caused insurance companies to oppose the bill en masse, and even Alain Enthoven, the Stanford economist who devised the heart of the plan, withdrew his support. The defeat of the Health Security Act was a significant victory for the GOP.

23. The most significant foreign policy fiasco of Clinton's first term occurred in Somalia, where a civil war had raged for two years between the militia of Mohammed Aidid, a ruthless warlord, and the barely functioning central government. The war had devastated the population and rendered Somalia a failed state. Calls for a humanitarian intervention arose, and in December 1992, during his final weeks in office, President George H. W. Bush responded. He ordered the deployment of 28,000 American troops to Somalia, promising that they "will not stay one day longer than is absolutely necessary."

Invariably, the intervention dragged on, and in September 1993, Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, convinced Clinton to send American forces to kill or capture Aidid. A firefight ensued, resulting in the downing of two Black Hawk helicopters and the deaths of eighteen Americans — at the time, the largest single-day loss of life for the U.S. since Vietnam. American news broadcasts showed images of Somalis dragging two American soldiers' bodies through the streets of the capital, Mogadishu. Clinton got the U.S. disentangled fast, as American public opinion demanded. Americans decided they'd better think twice about

these humanitarian interventions, but they were not the only ones watching; a little-known Islamic fundamentalist based in Sudan named Osama bin Laden made mental notes that the U.S. seemed to have no stomach for death.

The Mogadishu tragedy would have further disastrous consequences because the public outcry over the incident convinced Clinton not to intercede in the tribal warfare between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda a few months later. In this tiny East African nation, an estimated 800,000 men, women, and children, most of them Tutsis, were murdered by machete-wielding Hutus in the space of 100 days. A small U.N. force was already on the ground, but without reinforcements, it found itself helpless to prevent the slaughter.

24. In the winter of 1993, the Whitewater scandal came to a head. While Bill was governor, the Clintons had invested in a land deal to build vacation homes on the White River in Arkansas. Eventually, the deal went sour, and the project's primary supervisor, James McDougal, a friend of the Clintons, was shown to have misused some funds. The press, egged on by conservative Republicans, demanded that the Clintons' release their records relating to the relevant time period. They did not, because Hillary was adamantly opposed – she feared that they would eventually have to release information about her work at the Rose Law Firm and her commodities trading activities.

Eventually, people became skeptical, and Senator Bob Dole called for the appointment of a special prosecutor. Clinton complied. He said later that this was the biggest mistake of his presidency.

25. In 1993, Clinton signed the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which mandated background checks and waiting periods for firearms purchases. It was named after James Brady, President Reagan's press secretary, who was grievously wounded during the 1981 assassination attempt that almost killed the president. The bill had been held up for years by Republican opposition in Congress.

Clinton signed into law the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, commonly referred to as the 1994 Crime Bill. It is the largest crime bill in American history. It provided for 100,000 new police officers and \$9.4 billion in funding for prisons, which were designed with significant input from experienced corrections officers. Senator Joe Biden of Delaware drafted the Senate version of the bill with significant input from the National Association of Police Organizations.

The legislation included bans on assault rifles and magazines holding more than ten rounds of ammunition. It created sixty new federal death penalty offenses for crimes related to acts of terrorism, non-homicidal narcotics offenses, murder of a federal law enforcement officer, civil rights-related murders, the use of WMDs resulting in death, and carjackings resulting in fatalities. The bill allocated \$1.6 billion to help prevent and investigate crimes against women. The bill passed despite strong opposition from the NRA, which opposed the assault rifle ban and magazine size limitations.

26. Sensing the possibility of a big, perhaps historic, victory in the 1994 midterm elections, the Republicans turned it into a referendum on Clinton's presidency. The chief architect of the GOP's strategy was the man Democrats blamed for the decline of bipartisanship in Washington, the House minority whip, Newt Gingrich. Gingrich's broadsides against the Democrats were often outrageous. They were, he said, "the enemy of normal Americans" who had "no concept of family." They were the "party of total hedonism, total exhibitionism, total bizarreness, total weirdness." When Republicans spread unfounded rumors that Democratic House Speaker Tom Foley was gay, a Gingrich aide was quoted as saying, "We hear it was little boys." Preparing Republicans for the election, Gingrich encouraged them to use incendiary words when talking about Democrats – words like betrayal, bizarre, antflag, antifamily, pathetic, radical, sick, and traitor.

Gingrich's most significant contribution to the campaign was his ten-point "Contract with America," which he and his Republicans promised to pass during the first 100 days of a Republican-controlled Congress. Proposals included tax cuts, congressional term limits, welfare reform, and a constitutional amendment requiring the federal government to balance the budget. Although polls showed that most Americans were not familiar with the GOP manifesto, it energized Republican candidates and probably increased Republican turnout in the election. The election was a rout of historic proportions. The GOP gained fifty-four seats in the House, eight seats in the Senate, and seized control of both chambers from the Democrats.

The health-care fiasco hurt the Democrats, but there were other factors. The NRA claimed to have defeated twenty Democrats because they voted for the assault rifle ban. And while the economy was beginning to show signs of life, they weren't recognizable enough for most people to notice. To Clinton himself, there were echoes of his 1980 gubernatorial defeat: he hadn't listened. He later reflected that if he'd dropped health care when he knew it would die anyway and pushed for welfare reform instead, he might have salvaged things.

27. There was a darker side to the right-wing rage in the country aimed not just at Clinton but at the government and American society in general. Far-right fringe movements that trafficked in race hatred and conspiracy theories against Jews had existed for decades. But two events had driven even larger numbers into what was called at this time the militia movement: the 1992 raid by federal agents on the home of survivalist Randy Weaver, which resulted in the death of his unarmed wife and son at Ruby Ridge, Idaho; and the government's siege the following year of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. The siege ended in tragedy when 94 people, including more than 20 children, perished in a fire of uncertain origin.

On April 19, 1995, exactly two years after the Waco raid, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols exploded a bomb at the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, including 19 children attending a daycare center in the building. Four days later, after both men had been arrested, Clinton traveled to Oklahoma City and delivered a moving eulogy. "You have lost too much," he told the mourners, "but you have not lost everything. And you certainly have not lost America, for we will stand with you for as many tomorrows as it takes."

28. Of all the foreign policy crises Clinton confronted, none was more confounding than that which arose in the Balkans. The crisis played out in two acts: Bosnia during Clinton's first term and Kosovo during his second.

Yugoslavia (in Serbo-Croatian, the "Land of the South Slavs") had been cobbled together by the Great Powers after World War I. It was a convergence point of three distinct religious-based cultures: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam (from the days of the Ottoman Empire). During the Cold War, Yugoslavia was neither East nor West, and its patchwork of ethnicities and religions was held together by the dominant personality of its dictator, Josip Broz Tito. Tito died in 1980, and when the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Yugoslavia fractured with different regions declaring their independence as nations: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was multiethnic, comprised of Muslim Bosniaks (44%), Orthodox Serbs (32.5%), and Catholic Croats (19%). Almost immediately, the Muslim, Serb, and Croat inhabitants of Bosnia were at each other's throats. Supplied with money and arms by Slobodan Milosevic, president of nearby Serbia, Bosnian Serbs waged a genocidal war – "ethnic cleansing" was the euphemistic phrase used at the time – to rid Bosnia of Croats and especially Muslims. Over the next four years, 250,000 people, most of them Muslims, would die, and upwards of two million would be forced to leave their homes. President Bush deplored the violence but opposed American intervention. "We don't have a dog in this fight," concluded Secretary of State James Baker.

In July 1995, Serbs attacked the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica and massacred 8,000 Muslim men and boys. In August, three American negotiators died when their car plunged off a treacherous mountain pass in Bosnia. The two events prompted the Clinton administration's determination to end the hostilities. Although the Serbs remained on the offensive, they were now encountering resistance not only from Muslims but also from Croats, who had been holding back for fear of living under Muslim domination.

The U.S. convinced its NATO allies to launch air assaults on Serbian sites. The assaults, the largest in NATO's history, had the desired effect. Along with the Muslim-Croat counteroffensive and multilateral economic sanctions, the air strikes brought Milosevic to the negotiating table. The negotiations, held in Dayton, Ohio, and presided over by American diplomat Richard Holbrooke, produced the general framework for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreements are commonly referred to as the Dayton Accords. To enforce the agreement, NATO stationed 60,000 troops in the country, including 20,000 Americans.

29. Flush with his success in the 1994 midterms, Newt Gingrich picked a fight over the federal budget in November 1995. The Republicans proposed a balanced budget to be achieved via huge cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, and other social programs and were willing to let the government shut down (due to lack of funding) unless Clinton gave in. Just hours before the deadline for the shutdown, Clinton met with Gingrich and the other Republican legislative leaders and told them, "I don't care if I go to five percent in the polls. I am not going to sign your budget. It is wrong. It is wrong for the country." The government shut down for a few days, but the American people blamed the Republicans, who were forced to back down over the budget.

30. After the healthcare fiasco of 1994, it would have been natural for Clinton to declare Ira Magaziner *persona non grata* within his administration, but he did not. Instead, he asked his friend to figure out ways to harness new emergent technologies to promote economic growth. Magaziner decided to work on a set of rules to govern e-commerce on the Internet – which barely existed at that time (1995).

Magaziner decided that – in contrast to the healthcare proposal – this process would be transparent and bipartisan. He published his proposed e-commerce protocol on the Web and asked for suggestions; the

protocol went through fourteen public revisions before it was approved and announced by Clinton on July 1, 1997. Magaziner's approach was Libertarian; not just anti-censorship but also opposed to the imposition of a sales tax on cyber-purchases to encourage the growth of e-commerce. This policy became the international standard.

The Clinton administration didn't create the technology boom of the 1990s, but it might have strangled the new economy through overregulation or by limiting competition (like many telecommunications lobbyists wanted). Instead, the White House – led by Vice President Gore, who had a passion for these issues – acted to encourage a free market in emerging technologies. Mobile phone services blossomed after the FCC auctioned the rights to a portion of the radio band dedicated to cellular use; the Internet boomed, in part, because the FCC ruled that connections could be made at the price of a local call rather than a long-distance call; the Telecommunications Act of 1996 encouraged competition in both the local and long-distance telephone markets. "Our new approach was to use the authority of the telecommunications law to rescind the compact between the government and the status quo in the information sector," said Reed Hunt, Clinton's first FCC chairman. "Companies might fail, service might be interrupted, and choice could confuse customers. But we would unleash the power of change." Clinton himself was not Internet-savvy – he preferred communicating by phone instead of email. But his ability to understand the changing economy and to describe the impact of that change for average Americans were reasons the public trusted him on these issues.

31. In January 1996, Kenneth Starr, a conservative Republican, took over as the special prosecutor in the Whitewater case. When he could not prove wrongdoing by the Clintons over Whitewater, he expanded his investigation into other aspects of their Arkansas past.

32. In 1996, Clinton passed an historic welfare reform bill. The bill put limits on the number of years welfare could be received and included strong incentives for work over welfare. These stipulations upset some liberals but pleased many moderates. This bill and his economic plan positioned Clinton as a centrist, not a liberal Democrat. The electorate approved, and Clinton easily defeated Bob Dole in the 1996 presidential election, 379 to 159 electoral votes.

33. On August 7, 1998, two nearly simultaneous terror attacks occurred at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Hundreds of people died, including dozens of American foreign service personnel. The attacks were carried out by Al Qaeda. Thirteen days later, their leader, Osama bin Laden, was supposed to be at a camp in Afghanistan, and Clinton ordered a cruise missile strike on the camp. Unfortunately, bin Laden escaped unharmed.

34. Paula Jones, encouraged by conservatives, filed a sexual harassment suit against Clinton over an incident that allegedly took place in Arkansas in 1991. Clinton should have settled out of court, but Hillary was against it, and he did not want to give the apology Jones sought.

Instead, the suit went to court, and when Clinton was deposed in January 1998, he lied under oath when questioned about his affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Also, he asked Lewinsky to lie in her written deposition to the court, which she did. He also pressured White House Secretary Betty Currie to say he had never been alone with Lewinsky.

Moreover, he lied to Hillary and the American people. At an event in the Roosevelt Room with Hillary and Al Gore, he looked into the television cameras and said, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anyone to lie, not a single time – never. These allegations are false."

35. Kenneth Starr pursued Clinton over his behavior in the Paula Jones case, and consequently, the House of Representatives passed two articles of impeachment against Clinton on mostly party-line votes. Article I alleged that Clinton lied in his grand jury appearance during Starr's inquiry. Article II alleged that he had obstructed justice in the Paula Jones case.

At the impeachment trial in 1999, the Senate acquitted Clinton. On Article I, 45 senators voted to convict, while 55 voted for acquittal. On Article II, the vote was 50-50. Both were far from the two-thirds necessary to remove him from office.

36. In 1998, a long-simmering feud between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the Serbian province of Kosovo erupted into open warfare. (Kosovo and Albania share a border.) Following the signing of the Dayton Accords, Slobodan Milosevic had increasingly pressured Albanians to leave Kosovo, where they constituted

ninety percent of the population. A reign of terror ensued, and thousands of Albanians fled for their lives. The situation took a dire turn when a Serbian assault on a small village claimed the lives of 45 civilians, including women, children, and elderly men.

NATO commenced bombing raids to dissuade Milosevic. However, since Kosovo was part of Serbia, instead of backing down, Milosevic stepped up his assault. Indeed, the deadliest part of the war for Kosovars came after, not before, the NATO intervention. Within weeks, thousands had been killed or forced to flee. Before long, half of Kosovo's 1.8 million people were dead, missing, or in exile. At this time, Clinton ordered the mobilization of 100,000 American troops.

Then, just when events seemed to be spinning out of control, Milosevic relented. Russia, not Clinton's call-up, seems to have been the deciding factor. Russian leader Boris Yeltsin was worried about the precedent being set – NATO intervening in the internal affairs of a European, nonmember state. He withdrew his support of Milosevic in order to end things, and the Serbian leader agreed to settle.

37. In 2000, Clinton came excruciatingly close to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at a Camp David peace conference with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. After eight days of negotiations, Barak asked for a private one-on-one meeting with Clinton. At the meeting, Barak gave Clinton Israel's "bottom line," which was very reasonable. It called for the formation of a new Palestinian state, with Israel giving back the West Bank territory it had seized in 1967, except for a nine percent annexation, to be compensated for with a land swap. On Jerusalem, Barak agreed to give the Palestinians control of the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, as well as control over several other neighborhoods. Barak was willing to make reasonable compromises on other questions, including the right to return for refugees. Clinton, who had mastered all the details of the negotiations down to the ethnic composition of every neighborhood in Jerusalem, was euphoric – this was a better package than he had expected.

Clinton then met one-on-one with Arafat and tried his best to persuade the Palestinian leader to accept the deal or some version of it. When he failed to get that response, Clinton raised his voice: "This is the best deal you are gonna get. For God's sake, don't turn this down. It'll never get better." But Clinton's plan did not give Palestinians full sovereignty over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, home to the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Dome of the Rock is sacred to Muslims because it is the place where the Prophet Muhammed ascended into heaven with the angel Gabriel and his faithful horse Buraq. But it is also sacred to Jews because it is the place where Abraham came to sacrifice Isaac. So, Despite Clinton's plea, Arafat turned down the deal.

Shortly before Clinton left office, Arafat called him to thank him for his peacemaking efforts and to tell him that he was a great man. "I am not a great man," Clinton replied. "I am a failure, and you have made me one."

38. Clinton came into office promising to reduce carbon emissions and take other measures to fight off the effects of climate change, which science had recognized since the late 1980s as partially caused by human activity. Clinton's predecessor, George H. W. Bush had accepted the science and instructed the EPA to pursue solutions. Clinton did the same, appointing solid environmentalists to key positions. But when the Gingrich Congress came in, the GOP swerved hard to the right on these issues. The "job destroying" EPA occupied a prominent place on the new right's enemies list. Many of Clinton's actions on behalf of the environment took the form of staving off attempts by Republicans to weaken regulations or gut the Endangered Species Act.

In his last two years in office, Clinton set off on a conservation spree by placing vast parcels of land under federal protection. In January, 2000, it was one million acres of land around the Grand Canyon and islands off the California coast; in May, an initiative to protect coasts and coral reefs; and just two weeks before leaving office, sixty million acres of national forests.

After Vice President Al Gore left office in 2001, he became an environmental activist. The film *An Inconvenient Truth*, which he wrote and starred in, won the Academy Award for Best Documentary of 2006. The film features a slide show that, by Gore's own estimate, he has presented over 1,000 times to audiences worldwide. His *An Inconvenient Truth* book won a Grammy for the Best Spoken Word Album in 2009. Gore shared, in two equal parts, the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."

Gore received the Democratic nomination for president in 2000 but chose to distance himself from Clinton, instead of emphasizing the administration's accomplishments, because of the President's scandalous personal behavior. He lost to Republican George W. Bush in a highly contested election that was ultimately decided by a partisan vote in the Supreme Court

39. Hillary was elected to the U.S. Senate from New York in 2000 and re-elected in 2006. In 2008, she ran for president and came close to winning the Democratic nomination, which went to Barack Obama. Hillary served as secretary of state during Obama's first term and received the Democratic nomination for president in 2016. In the general election against Donald Trump, she won the popular vote by 2.86 million but lost the election 304 to 227 electoral votes.

40. When a President leaves office, he becomes a member of the unofficial "Presidents Club" comprised of the living ex-Presidents. Some members of the club despise each other (e.g., Nixon and Carter); some become close friends unexpectedly (e.g., the easy-going, ex-jock Jerry Ford and the uptight, ex-engineer Jimmy Carter, and also the liberal Harry Truman and conservative Herbert Hoover); but no two ex-Presidents have ever bonded quite like Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush. They worked on various projects together — including raising funds for the victims of the 2004 tsunami near Sumatra and for Hurricane Katrina victims — and they became so close that the Bush clan came to view Clinton as a member of their family.

The bond between Clinton and the Bush family was evident at the 2011 gala held at the Kennedy Center in Washington to pay tribute to Bush. Jimmy Carter, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all spoke and praised 41's lifetime commitment to national service, but the closing speaker was Clinton. Towards the end of his speech he said:

We took seven trips together. This man who I'd always liked and respected and run against ... I literally came to love. ... and I realized all over again how much energy we waste fighting with each other over things that don't matter. ... He can literally do no wrong in my eyes ...

Before the event concluded, Laura Bush asked all twenty-seven Bushes in attendance to gather for a family photograph, and the Carters and Clinton were standing quietly off to the side. After the Bushes lined up, Neil Bush yelled out, "Bill, Bill! Brother of Another Mother! Get in here!" And so, in the back row of the Bush family photograph stands the man who defeated George H. W. Bush in 1992 — Bill Clinton.

George W. Bush liked to joke about how close Clinton and his father were. One year at the white-tie Gridiron Dinner in D.C., he said that Clinton, recovering from surgery, "woke up surrounded by his loved ones: Hillary, Chelsea ... my Dad."

41. Clinton also had an interesting relationship with another former president: Richard Nixon. Although Nixon was more or less in exile at the time, as president Clinton came to depend on him for foreign policy advice, especially concerning Russia. On one occasion, Bill invited Nixon to the White House, and the two men stayed up until two a.m. talking foreign policy. Clinton truly admired Nixon's ability to cut to the heart of foreign policy problems, write about them cogently, and come up with solutions. A week after Nixon's death in April 1994, Clinton told CNN's Larry King: "Just today I had a problem, and I said to the person working with me, 'I wish I could pick up the phone and call Richard Nixon and ask him what he thinks we ought to do about this.'"

42. In 1997, Clinton established the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to "strengthen the capacity of people in the United States and throughout the world to meet the challenges of global interdependence." In 2003 it was renamed the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation. Through 2016, the foundation had raised an estimated \$2 billion from U.S. corporations, foreign governments and corporations, political donors, and various other groups and individuals. The foundation has won accolades from philanthropy experts and has drawn bipartisan support. Its programs include the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the Clinton Global Initiative, the Clinton Climate Initiative, the Clinton Development Initiative, The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative, the Clinton Health Matters Initiative, and disaster relief.

43. When Clinton was formulating his deficit-reducing budget plan with his economic team in 1993, they were amazed by his ability to assimilate complicated macroeconomic concepts. But Hillary was not. She later told a colleague: "In law school, Bill did a typical Bill thing in his Corporate Finance class. He never went to lectures, but then spent a week or two cramming, and he got the highest grade in the class. The professor called him, a bit miffed I believe, and asked him how it was possible that he was able to do so well. 'It's just like politics,' Bill said. 'All you have to figure out is who's screwing who.'"

44. Clinton's public charm – his ability to talk, to empathize, to understand; his willingness to fall behind schedule, to infuriate his staff, merely because some stray citizen on a rope line had a problem or a story that needed to be heard – was one of his most endearing qualities. Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota once told a story about a friend of his, a schoolteacher named Dennis Wadley, who was dying of cancer in 1994. "Dennis was a political junkie," Wellstone recalled, "and I arranged for him to meet the President just before he died. We met at the end of the day at a local television station in Minneapolis. Clinton came right over to us, and he immediately sized up the situation – Dennis didn't want to talk about his disease; he wanted to have a policy discussion. And the President stood there for forty-five minutes and gave Dennis the gift of taking him seriously, listening to him, and responding intelligently. He never mentioned the illness. It was an incredibly gracious act, entirely natural. Effortless."

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