

"...A Kid in Iowa Who Grows Up To Become President..."

by Joe Mulder

"Hourglass says she knows a kid in Iowa who grows up to become President..."

So says Moist, a character in Joss Whedon's transcendent internet serial "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog." Because I'm a presidential trivia nerd, this throwaway line made me think, the first time I heard it, "wow, that's so interesting to ponder. Somewhere, right now, there's a kid out there who will grow up to be the President of the United States." And then I thought, "wait; is there?"

There might not be. Just for fun (and it was fun for me, even if it doesn't turn out to be fun for you), I went back 100 years (I didn't go back all the way to George Washington, because I have only so much time to devote to this) from the time that Moist said his line (summer of 2008) and decided to take a look, every ten years, at what each and every future President of the United States was up to along the way.

An important note: if anything you find in the following paragraphs looks wrong, it probably is. If your uncle is an expert on, like, Lyndon Johnson, or something, don't pick a fight with him based on something you read here. It won't end well for you. I did the best I could but I don't have the time or the resources to fact-check everything Wikipedia says about these guys.

Anyway; onward. Here's what I found:

December 28, 1856: Woodrow Wilson (d. February 23, 1924)

November 2, 1865: Warren G. Harding (d. August 2, 1923)

July 4, 1872: Calvin Coolidge (d. January 5, 1933)

August 10, 1874: Herbert Hoover (d. October 20, 1964)

January 30, 1882: Franklin Roosevelt (d. April 12, 1945)

May 8, 1884: Harry Truman (d. December 26, 1972)

October 14, 1890: Dwight Eisenhower (d. March 28, 1969)

August 27, 1908: Lyndon Johnson (d. January 22, 1973)

February 6, 1911: Ronald Reagan (d. June 5, 2004)

January 9, 1913: Richard Nixon (d. April 22, 1994)

July 14, 1913: Gerald Ford (d. December 26, 2006)

May 29, 1917: John F. Kennedy (d. November 22, 1963)

June 12, 1924: George H.W. Bush

October 1, 1924: Jimmy Carter

July 6, 1946: George W. Bush

August 19, 1946: Bill Clinton

August 4, 1961: Barack Obama

Summer of 1908: Theodore Roosevelt was President. Woodrow Wilson, 51, was president of Princeton University and was engaged in an extramarital affair with a socialite named Mary Peck. Warren G. Harding, 42, was two years removed from a short and relatively undistinguished stint as Lieutenant Governor of Ohio, and would make an unsuccessful gubernatorial run two years later. Calvin Coolidge, 36, was a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and had just celebrated the birth of his second son. Hebert Hoover, 34, was a mining engineer who had worked on projects from Australia to China and whose lectures at Columbia and Stanford were about to be published as *Principles of Mining*, which would come to be used as a geology textbook. Franklin Roosevelt, 26, married three years and a father of two, took a job with the Wall Street firm of Carter Ledyard & Milburn. Harry Truman, 24, was a member of the Missouri National Guard and lived and worked on his grandparents' farm in Grandview, Missouri. Dwight Eisenhower, 17, was a student at Abilene High School in Abilene, Kansas. Lyndon Johnson was born in a small farmhouse in a poor area of Stonewall, Texas.

Summer of 1918: Woodrow Wilson was President. Warren G. Harding, 52, was a United States Senator from Ohio. Calvin Coolidge, 46, was Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts and would be elected Governor in November. Herbert Hoover, 44, was head of the American Food Association, in charge of encouraging Americans to ration foodstuffs for the war effort. Franklin Roosevelt, 36, visited Britain and France as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, meeting Winston Churchill for the first time on that particular trip. Harry Truman, 34, was in France as an Army captain in the command of Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, 60th Brigade, 35th Infantry Division. Dwight Eisenhower, 27, was a temporary Lieutenant Colonel in the National Army, training tank crews in Pennsylvania. Lyndon Johnson, 10, was an elementary school student in Johnson City, Texas. Ronald Reagan, 7, had moved around with his family to a few different cities and towns in Illinois and had already been nicknamed "Dutch" by his father. Richard Nixon, 5, was living with his Quaker family in Yorba Linda, California. Gerald Ford, 5, was living in Grand Rapids, Michigan with his mother and stepfather and, though identified as Gerald R. Ford, Jr. after his stepfather, would legally be named Leslie Lynch King, Jr. until 1935. John Kennedy, 1, was living with his parents and his older brother in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Summer of 1928: Calvin Coolidge was President. Herbert Hoover, 54, was serving as President Coolidge's Commerce Secretary and securing the Republican nomination for President. Franklin Roosevelt, 46, had run unsuccessfully for Vice President of the United States eight years earlier. He was preparing to run successfully for Governor of New York, an office vacated by Democratic presidential nominee Al Smith. Harry Truman, 44, was presiding judge for the court of the eastern district of Jackson County, Missouri. Dwight Eisenhower, 37, graduated from the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Lyndon Johnson, 20, was a student at Southwest Texas State Teachers' College, on the debate team and editing the school newspaper. Ronald Reagan, 17, had just graduated from Dixon High School in Dixon, Illinois and was preparing to attend nearby Eureka College. Richard Nixon, 15, was about to enter Whittier High School in California following two years at Fullerton High. Gerald Ford, 15, was working towards the rank of Eagle Scout and was about to start a distinguished football career at Grand Rapids South High School. John Kennedy, 11, was residing with his family in a rented 20-room mansion in the Bronx. George H.W. Bush, 4, was living with his family in Greenwich, Connecticut. Jimmy Carter, 3, was living with his family in Plains, Georgia.

Summer of 1938: Franklin Roosevelt was President. Harry Truman, 54, was a United States Senator from Missouri. Lieutenant Colonel Dwight Eisenhower, 47, was in the Philippines as an assistant military advisor to the Filipino government. Lyndon Johnson 30, was a United States Representative from Texas. Ronald Reagan, 27, was an actor, appearing in B-movies such as *Swing Your Lady*, *Accidents Will Happen*, *Cowboy From Brooklyn* and *Brother Rat*, the latter of which co-starred his future first wife, Jane Wyman. Richard Nixon, 25, opened up a La Habra, California branch of the law offices of Wingert and Bewley, and met his future wife Pat when both participated in the Whittier Community Players production of *The Dark Tower*. Gerald Ford, 25, had, after a remarkable football career at the University of Michigan, turned down contract offers from the NFL's Green Bay Packers and Detroit Lions in order to begin studying at Yale Law School. John Kennedy, 21, on summer break from Harvard, was working with his father at the American Embassy in London. George H.W. Bush, 14, was a student at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Jimmy Carter, 13, was living with his family in Plains, Georgia.

Summer of 1948: Harry Truman was President. Dwight Eisenhower, 57, served as Chief of Staff of the United States Army, became President of Columbia University, and published his memoirs, *Crusade in Europe*. Lyndon Johnson, 40, was a United States Representative from Texas and was campaigning for the United States Senate. Ronald Reagan, 37, was president of the Screen Actors Guild, was best known for his role as George "The Gipper" Gipp in *Knute Rockne, All American*, and was in the process of getting a divorce from Jane Wyman. Richard Nixon, 35, was a United

States Representative from California working with the House Un-American Activities Committee on the Alger Hiss case. Gerald Ford, 35, was engaged to a Betty Ford and campaigning for his first term as a United States Representative from Michigan. John Kennedy, 31, was a United States Representative from Massachusetts. George H.W. Bush, 24, graduated from Yale with a Bachelor's degree in economics. Jimmy Carter, 23, was training in the United States Navy's fledgling nuclear submarine program. George W. Bush, 2, was living with his parents in Connecticut. Bill Clinton, 2, then known as William Blythe, was living with his grandparents in Hope, Arkansas while his mother attended nursing school in New Orleans.

Summer of 1958: Dwight Eisenhower was President. Lyndon Johnson, 50, was a United States Senator from Texas and the Senate Majority Leader. Ronald Reagan, 47, was married to the former Nancy Davis and was the host of the popular television show "General Electric Theater." Richard Nixon, 45, was Vice President of the United States. Gerald Ford, 45, was a United States Representative from Michigan. John Kennedy, 41, was a United States Senator from Massachusetts and had unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for Vice President two years earlier. George H.W. Bush, 34, was president of an oil company that he was in the process of moving from Midland, Texas to Houston. Jimmy Carter, 33, was in Plains, Georgia running his family's agricultural business, which he had left the Navy to oversee following the death of his father five years earlier. George W. Bush, 12, moved with his family from Midland, Texas to Houston. Bill Clinton, 12, was living with his mother and stepfather in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Summer of 1968: Lyndon Johnson was President. Ronald Reagan, 57, was Governor of California and was positioning himself as the possible Republican candidate for President should front-runner Richard Nixon not garner enough delegates to win the party's nomination. Richard Nixon, 55, was the front-runner for the Republican nomination for President. Gerald Ford, 55, was a United States Representative from Michigan and the House Minority Leader. George H.W. Bush, 44, was a United States Representative from Texas, the first Republican to represent Houston. Jimmy Carter, 43, was running his family's agricultural business and, following a three-year stint in the Georgia State Senate, was planning to make a second gubernatorial run after failed bid in 1966. George W. Bush, 22, graduated from Yale with a Bachelor of Arts degree and enlisted in the Texas Air National Guard. Bill Clinton, 22, graduated from Georgetown University with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree and won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. Barack Obama, 7, was living with his mother and stepfather in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Summer of 1978: Jimmy Carter was President. Ronald Reagan, 67, had narrowly lost the Republican presidential nomination to incumbent President Gerald Ford two years earlier and was preparing for another run at the presidency in

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1980. George H.W. Bush, 54, after having served for a year as CIA director, was chairman of the Executive Committee of the First International Bank in Houston, was a part-time professor of Administrative Science at Rice University, and was a director of the Council on Foreign Relations. George W. Bush, 32, was working in the family oil business in Texas and preparing for what would be an unsuccessful run at the United States House of Representatives in the fall. Bill Clinton, 32, was Attorney General of Arkansas and was running an ultimately successful race for Governor. Barack Obama, 17, was living with his grandparents in Honolulu and attending Punahou School.

Summer of 1988: Ronald Reagan was President. George H.W. Bush, 64, was Vice President of the United States and the Republican nominee for President. George W. Bush, 42, was in Washington, DC, working on his father's presidential campaign. Bill Clinton, 42, was Governor of Arkansas and gave a widely-mocked 32-minute opening night speech at the Democratic National Convention that many thought would do irreparable harm his political career (it wouldn't). Barack Obama, 27, after working as the director of DCP (Developing Communities Project) in Chicago, traveled to Europe and Kenya before entering Harvard Law School.

Summer of 1998: Bill Clinton was President. George W. Bush, 52, was about to be reelected as Governor of Texas. Barack Obama, 37, was an Illinois State Senator.

Which brings us to 2008. Here's the point of all this: at the end of June, 1946, Jimmy Carter, at 21, was the youngest person in the world who would one day grow up to be President of the United States. And unless someone 66 years old or older wins the presidency in 2012, or someone 70 years old or older wins in 2016, or someone 74 years old or older wins in 2020 (and so on), no United States Presidents will have been born between October 1, 1924 (Carter) and July 6, 1946 (W). That's almost 22 years.

If we're closing in on the tail end of a similar run, it's quite possible that there is currently no "kid," in Iowa or anywhere else, who grows up to be the President.

And so, in conclusion: it's quite possible that Moist's friend Hourglass is a damn liar.
