

A Presidential Suite, Etc.

By Jay Nordlinger
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Today, I have an Impromptus column, which begins with the question of deterrence. Why? I mean, deterrence is always a good subject, and an important one, but why now? I'm responding to a tweet by Ben & Jerry's (so help me).

Oh, Ben and Jerry: If only your thinking about politics and world affairs were half as good as your ice cream.

In my column, I also discuss the bravery of Russian journalists (astounding); the Ukraine debate; George Crumb, the late American composer; and more.

If music is your bag, you may be interested in my current "New York Chronicle," published in *The New Criterion*, here.

Okay, some mail. Two days ago, I had a piece on Reagan and Reaganism (and anti-Reaganism). A reader writes,

You are just a kid. When I was a high-school freshman, and on the debate team, I asked my dad what our politics was. He said, "We're Al Smith Democrats. And that means we vote Republican a lot." Then he gave me a copy of *God and Man at Yale*.

Another reader writes,

Just read your birthday thoughts about President Reagan. You were being borderline curmudgeonly once again. But that's okay.

I suppose that I must confess to being a Goldwaterian politically, but that might reveal my age. Actually, I was conservative even before Goldwater arrived on the scene, but he personified my political views. Frankly, I'm a Hayekian. That's what I really am.

Many years ago, I heard David Horowitz speak at a Cato Institute luncheon. He began roughly as follows: "They call me a 'neoconservative,' probably because I'm Jewish. They also call me a 'bomb-thrower,' because of my personality, no doubt. Actually, I'm a Hayekian in my heart."

A beautiful line.

Another reader writes,

Thanks, Jay. Reaganite-dinosaur-zombie deluxe here. In my moral and intellectual development, there was Sister Mary Goretti, my kindergarten teacher. She let me range free. Then I found Friedman, WFB, Reagan.

I was changing the channels one day and saw WFB leaning back in his chair. I think he was talking about Anselm's "than which no greater can be conceived."

And, yes, Ambassador Kirkpatrick — another influence.

In my piece, I said I could remember only two presidential birthdays — the birthdays of the first two presidents I "knew": Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan (October 1 and February 6). Do you ever know any presidents better than your "first" ones, when everything is fresh and exciting?

A reader writes,

I can't help you remember February 22 as George Washington's birthday, but perhaps something taught me some 62 years ago by Father Ronald Schultz, my high-school algebra teacher, will help you remember the year of Washington's birth. It's 1732 (Gregorian calendar), which is the same four digits as the square root of 3, i.e., 1.732. Too much math?

Yes.

In my piece, I also discussed some presidential naming. Kids named after presidents. Our reader – this same reader – continues,

None of our children is named "Reagan," though we did take our three oldest to his first inauguration in 1981, when our son was six and our twin daughters were four. Our son subsequently named his second daughter "Reagan." She's now a freshman in college, where her roommate is named "Kennedy." I'm told their room has been dubbed the "Presidential Suite."

Marvelous. Thank you to one and all. And, again, for today's Impromptus, go [here](#).