

POP CULTURE

# Hail to the stars



JEFF BRIDGES PLAYS THE NATION'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

By CHRIS KOSELUK  
Special to the Chronicle

Polls show this to be the closest presidential election in years. Some say it's because the two candidates are so much alike. But there may be another explanation: Blame it on movies featuring presidential characters.

Lately it seems that moviegoers have been inundated with Hollywood stars playing the country's commander in chief, fighting everything from terrorists and alien invaders to giant meteors and Canadians.

Maybe that's why it's hard to get excited about a candidate who just wants to lower taxes. But don't take our word for it. Instead, take Preview's election-year challenge. See



JACK NICHOLSON GIVES THE PRESIDENCY A TRY.

how many actors you can match to the chief executives they've played on the big screen. Answers appear on Page 18G.

- Here are the actors:
- A. Jeff Bridges
  - B. Michael Douglas
  - C. Henry Fonda
  - D. Harrison Ford
  - E. Morgan Freeman
  - F. Gene Hackman
  - G. Dan Hedaya
  - H. Anthony Hopkins
  - I. Kevin Kline
  - J. Jack Nicholson
  - K. Bill Pullman
  - L. Tim Robbins
  - M. Peter Sellers
  - N. John Travolta
  - O. Jack Warden

Here are the presidential characters:

1. As widowed president Andrew Shepherd, this actor attempts to oversee affairs of state as he pursues an attractive female lobbyist in 1993's *The American President*.
2. Nuclear devastation is played for laughs in 1964's *Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. This actor, playing President Merkin Muffley, finds himself engaged in a battle with the Russian ambassador in the U.S. War Room.
3. After space aliens blow up the White House in *Independence Day*, this actor, playing take-charge executive Thomas J. Whitmore, jumps into a jet fighter to show the extraterrestrials they can't mess with the United States.
4. He's not the most dignified president, but he's a good laugh when confronted with Dr. Evil's dated threats in last year's *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*.
5. In the *Absolute Power*, Clint Eastwood witnesses him, as President Richmond, committing a murder in the White House.
6. As President Dale, he has to run for his life as Martians stampede through the Oval Office in the 1996 comedy spoof *Mars Attacks!*
7. In the 1998 comedy/drama *Primary Colors*, he plays presidential candidate Jack Stanton, whose successful run for the Oval Office is jeopardized by his uncontrollable urge to bed a number of his female constituents.
8. One actor plays both the president and a look-alike who takes his place in the 1993 comedy hit *Dave*.
9. This actor received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of Richard Nixon.
10. As President Bobby, this veteran character actor inadvertently turns to an illiterate simpleton, who learned everything he knows in life by watching television, for advice in the 1979 comedy *Being There*.



MORGAN FREEMAN FINDS HIMSELF WITH MORE PROBLEMS THAN HE BARGAINED FOR AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF.

11. When a jet carrying a U.S. nuclear bomb heads uncontrollably toward Russia, this actor's president makes the life-and-death decision to also drop a bomb on New York in the 1964 political thriller *Pull My Solo*.

12. As President Tom Beck, he contends with the impending danger of a giant meteor hurtling toward Earth in the 1996 disaster adventure *Deep Impact*.

13. Glowering and scheming, he seemed even more like Nixon than Nixon in last year's underrated Watergate spoof *Dick*.

14. This food-obsessed president boldly appoints a woman to be vice president, then plays political hardball when his enemies attack her in the current *The Contender*.

15. He's gung-ho chief executive James Marshall, who turns into a one-man army when Russian terrorists hijack his plane and kidnap his family in the 1997 action hit *Air Force One*.



MICHAEL DOUGLAS STRIKES A PENSIVE POSE AS PRESIDENT.