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Person of the Year

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Person of the Year

President George W. Bush was selected by *Time* magazine as the Person of the Year in 2003. How often have presidents been awarded this distinction?

Time magazine began naming a Man or Person of the Year 77 years ago, in 1927. In 19 of those years, the sitting president or president-elect was dubbed. Another way of looking at it: Of the 14 presidents since 1927, 11 were selected Person of the Year when they were either the sitting president or president-elect. An interesting assemblage of chief executives they make: one was assassinated; one had a physical disability; one felt totally unprepared for the job; one was impeached; one would be driven from the White House in disgrace. (Remember, the Person of the Year is not always a saint. *Time*'s list, after all, includes Hitler, Stalin, and the Ayatolluh Khomeini.)

These are the 11 U.S. presidents whom *Time* has named Person of the Year.
1932 -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
1934 -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
1941 -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
1945 -- Harry S. Truman
1948 -- Harry S. Truman
1959 -- Dwight D. Eisenhower
1961 -- John F. Kennedy
1964 -- Lyndon B. Johnson
1967 -- Lyndon B. Johnson
1971 -- Richard M. Nixon
1972 -- Richard M. Nixon and Henry Kissinger
1976 -- Jimmy Carter
1980 -- Ronald Reagan
1983 -- Ronald Reagan and Yuri Andropov
1990 -- George H. W. Bush
1992 -- Bill Clinton
1998 -- Bill Clinton and Kenneth Starr
2000 -- George W. Bush
2004 -- George W. Bush

As the above list shows, one president earned the distinction of being named Man of the Year three times: Franklin D. Roosevelt, in fact, holds the all-time record.

Six presidents have been named Person of the Year a total of two times. (But note this caveat: while Dwight Eisenhower received the distinction twice, the first time was in 1944, when he was supreme commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, eight years before he was elected president.)

Four presidents have been named Person of the Year once.

Timing is important. Of the 11 presidents who achieved Person-of-the-Year status, 8 did so in their first year in office.

The only president named Man of the Year two years in a row was Richard Nixon, in 1971 and 1972; he shared the second time around with his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger. The only administration that received the nomination three years in a row was FDR's, from 1932-1934; in 1933 the administrator of the National Recovery Administration, Hugh Johnson, got the nod.

All four presidents with a Texas connection -- Eisenhower, LBJ, and the two Bushes -- have been named Person of the Year.

Since 1927 three presidents never made it onto *Time* magazine's cover as Man of the Year: Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Gerald R. Ford.

Yet ten additional individuals who were never themselves president were named Man of the Year because of their close association to the White House:
1929 -- Owen Young was a famous financier associated with the Hoover administration.
1933 -- Hugh Johnson was head of FDR's National Recovery Administration.
1943 -- General George Marshall oversaw the commander in chief's war effort.
1944 -- General Dwight D. Eisenhower took the offensive against Hitler's Third Reich.
1946 -- Secretary of State James F. Byrnes served under Truman.
1947 -- Secretary of State George C. Marshall also served under Truman.
1954 -- Secretary of State John Foster Dulles served under Eisenhower.
1965 -- General William Westmoreland served under Lyndon Johnson.
1972 -- Henry Kissinger was Richard Nixon's national security advisor.
1973 -- Judge John Sirica presided over the Watergate scandal proceedings.
1998 -- Kenneth Starr led the investigations against Bill Clinton.

Adding these names to the presidents, you see that our chief executives or individuals closely associated with them made Time's list on 30 occasions during the past 77 years.

For the complete list of *Time* magazine's Man or Person of the Year from 1927-2003, see
http://www.time.com/time/personoftheyear/archive/stories/index.html

(Question from Diane N. of Charleston, SC)