



Episode 591: Presidents Who Screwed Up America

Guest: Brion McClanahan

WOODS: All right, you've got this great new book; I just gave everybody the super long title and subtitle. And okay, what made you decide the presidents have to be talked about? Haven't we talked about the presidents enough?

MCCLANAHAN: Well, no, I think that we haven't talked about them enough, at least in the way I talk about them in the book. And the idea that I followed, it actually was born out of my 2012 *The Founding Fathers' Guide to the Constitution*. When I was doing the interviews for that, I made a statement that every president in the last 100 years, virtually every president, should have been impeached. And people were shocked by that. In fact, I was on with G. Gordon Liddy, and he got a good laugh out of that, and he said, well, I agree (laughing). But that was one thing that people were trying to key in on, and I said, you know, I need to write something that would explain why I would say that.

And the yardstick I used by which to measure the presidents is how the defended their oath, which is to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. And this has really never been done before in this kind of way. It's been piecemeal, but so what I wanted to do was look at all the presidents and say, okay, we've got Barack Obama, who's awful. We all agree with that. But how did he get here, and where did all that come from? And so I trace executive abuse essentially from the first administration to the Obama administration, and I pick – the title says 9, but there are actually 13 presidents in there who did a very bad job, at least according to their oath. And then I put 4 in who I thought did a really good job according to their oath.

And some of these people are not really household names. Now, your listeners are going to recognize Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge, but the person I said is the greatest president in American history is John Tyler, so maybe not a household name. And on the other side, again, your listeners are very savvy, so they're going to get them, but you know, Abraham Lincoln's in that group, and Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt, FDR, Truman, Johnson, Nixon, of course the last four, but then also Andrew Jackson and George Washington, who does not escape a little critique as well.

So I wanted to have this comprehensive look at the executive branch and where it's gone off the rails and maybe what we could do about it. I offer a chapter on that as

well. So it was a lot of fun to write, and I think it's going to be maybe surprising to the mainstream reader, and also maybe a few surprises in there for your readers as well.

WOODS: Well, no doubt. It's really well done. It's actually longer than the typical Regnery book. There's really a lot of meat in here. I know that when I've worked with Regnery, they always want me to make my book shorter, so I was glad they gave you the space to do what you want to do. And you know, the other day they sent me a proposal for a book that would be such a big hit and I think would sell like crazy, and I just had to tell them no. I have too much going on right now, and I may be doing — it looks like I'm doing a different book with somebody else, but ah, darn it. So good for you being out there with Regnery. They'll help get the word out about this, and of course we want to get the word out here on the show.

I'm looking at the table of contents, though, right now just to remind me about the presidents. I kind of knew which nine you were going to choose here — or as you say, 13 ultimately. I don't want to make it too easy on you by giving you Abraham Lincoln. You know, that is just — you're prepared for that; you've got your talking points. Not going to happen. People are going to have to read that for themselves. And they hear too much from me about Teddy Roosevelt. So pick another one of these nine, and explain to me why it is that you're choosing somebody, with the exception of Richard Nixon, somebody who is revered — *revered* — by the textbook authors, and you're saying, not only should we not revere the person, we should condemn this person.

MCCLANAHAN: Well, I think the really fun one — and you said no Lincoln — in every interview I've done on this book so far, everyone's asking me about Lincoln.

WOODS: That's why we're not doing it here (laughing).

MCCLANAHAN: (laughing) So it's refreshing not to answer "Lincoln." So the one that people just — it's like they're avoiding it like the plague is George Washington. Now —

WOODS: Oh, let's talk about George Washington then.

MCCLANAHAN: Yeah, so George Washington. Now, I admire George Washington. He is the Indispensable Man; he is the greatest American in American history in my estimation. I've written about him in other books. I think he's a real American hero. He is one of the greatest of the founding generation if not *the* greatest. But as president, he did a couple of things that were wrong, and I think, again, I did this, and we're going to take the sacred cows to task when we need to do it, and Washington was one of those guys. So the two things that Washington did — now, you can blame Hamilton for those too, because Hamilton was in Washington's ear all the time. But the two things he did was his response to the Whiskey Rebellion and the Neutrality Proclamation.

So the response to the Whiskey Rebellion, you know, you had famously this tax revolt on the frontier, and these Pennsylvania farmers weren't going to pay the taxes, which what most people don't realize is that tax that they were rebelling against had already

been repealed, so there was going to be no tax anyways. But they're in rebellion against this tax; you know, they're going after tax collectors, etc., etc. And so Hamilton insists that the Army be marched into Pennsylvania put down this tax revolt.

And what's really funny about that is when they show up – of course there's nobody there, but the real part that's the constitutional controversy is that they had no permission from the state of Pennsylvania to do this. The governor of the state, Thomas Mifflin, who was actually part of the entire ratification and drafting process of the Constitution, did not give them permission to enter the state. The legislature did not give them permission to enter the state, and as per the Constitution, you need permission from a state to march the Army into the state to put down a "rebellion," and that's the justification they were using. So Washington was violating the Constitution at Hamilton's request in doing this.

Now, as far as the Neutrality Proclamation, here you have a situation where Washington, we would all agree with the move here not to try to get the United States involved in a war with France or Great Britain, but he does it unilaterally. He just says, look, we're going to be neutral. And Madison takes him to task for this. Of course there's a very famous Pacificus-Helvidius debates where they go over this issue, Madison and Hamilton, and essentially Madison says, look, there's no power in the Constitution, the executive branch where you can issue a unilateral proclamation to say we're going to be neutral and we're going to stay out of war. This is Congress' job to do. Congress declares war and by default they also determine peace. The president can't do it by themselves.

So Washington was doing two things here that I think you can see trace elements of this as we move forward in, say, Andrew Jackson or Abraham Lincoln or any of the proclamations that have been issued in the last, say, 200 years almost now that have been issued by the executive branch. Madison would say they're all unconstitutional, and of course, according to the original Constitution, he's exactly right. So Washington is one of these people that should be criticized for what he did, and he often gets a free pass.

WOODS: All right, that is a surprise. Well, it's not a surprise to me or to a lot of the listeners, but that would be a third rail. You would not say anything negative about George Washington. And I have to agree with you, by the way, and I'm not one to – I don't worship politicians; I don't hold them in – I don't have superstitious reverence for them, but I do think that it is historically noteworthy and people noted at the time that Washington did not establish a military dictatorship after the war was over, and the fact that he relinquished authority in effect twice: first after the war and the second at the end of his presidency. These are unusual things in the history of the world, and I think anybody needs to acknowledge that. But this gets taken to a creepy, weird, idolatrous extreme, probably not just in U.S. history but in the history of all different countries where we hold these people up as if they are completely perfect, when of course they're not and we shouldn't expect them to be.

All right, now let's stick to the ones that I see in your table of contents. Now, did Regnery have any – be honest with me now. Let's talk about this. Did Regnery, the publisher, have any input into presidents that had to be chosen. Like for example, did they say to you Obama has got to be one of them?

MCCLANAHAN: No, they didn't say that, but I think it was assumed that he would be in there. But they actually gave me pretty free rein, and that was refreshing, because I had tried to include Lincoln in another book, and they said absolutely not. It can't sell with an attack on Lincoln. And so when I pitched this book, they said we're fine with Lincoln, go for it, because they're trying to appeal to a different audience I think, and they want a libertarian audience, is what they're going for. But they had no qualms about me putting Lincoln or Nixon or the Bushes – in the Obama chapter I've got George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush in that chapter. They had no problem with that. Or Teddy Roosevelt. I mean, this is surprising, because for years they had blocked those. It was refreshing to be able to just write whatever I wanted to write for them.

WOODS: Yeah, absolutely. That's wonderful. All right, let's talk about – even though you are primarily in 19th century historian and a Southern historian. At the same time, you've done a lot of work in a lot of areas. You've done obviously constitutional stuff, you've done Founding Fathers stuff, so you're quite versatile. But here you're also talking about 20th century history, which I find very interesting, so I'm going to choose one now, and I choose Harry Truman. I want the Brion McClanahan version.

MCCLANAHAN: All right, Harry Truman. Now, Harry Truman is an interesting guy. I think – you know, there are some things to like about Harry Truman, and I'll say that as a person. There are some things to like about him. He was kind of this middle class, underdog kind of story, and we like that in American politics, you know, a guy that was the haberdasher. He loses his business, and then he becomes somebody. So we think, oh, that's really refreshing. But when you read what he said about stuff, you think to yourself, this guy is a megalomaniac. He's a maniac. He's out there saying – he wrote a letter to his daughter saying, you know what, if I had all the money in the world, I'm not going to buy houses and cars; I'm going to buy votes (laughing). Come on.

So he's this guy that gets into power, and of course as president he's essentially going to go ride Roosevelt's coattails into the vice presidency and then of course as president. He's going to essentially take Roosevelt's Second Bill of Rights and implement it, or at least try, through what's often called the Fair Deal. So Truman's going to go out and push for things that we would recognize today, whether it's national healthcare, a higher minimum wage, all things that are completely unconstitutional, which thankfully at the time none of this stuff was implemented, but of course it has been since. You know, we've got Obamacare and all these things. But Truman was definitely pushing a legislative agenda that Roosevelt would have recognized.

Now, the things of course the Truman gets a lot of credit for I think are the things that we should also vilify him for, and one of those things is the Korean War, which he gets involved in completely unconstitutionally. I mean, Truman goes out and essentially gets the United States involved in a war. It's the first war the U.S. has been involved in that's not a declared war. So we're going to invade Korea all for the United Nations. In fact, he has this very strange address where he says, you know, we have to get involved in the Korean War, because we're worried about the impact of North Korea on the future of the United States' security. Right, so we had – I guess it's all those North Korean bombers that were flying overhead at the time that we had to worry about at that particular point. But we're going to get involved in this war that's a complete disaster for the United States, for the Constitution and executive power.

And then of course you get things moving forward, where you have the creation of the CIA, and you get the Dulles brothers and all the other things that come out of that. So we get domestic spying. But I mean, Truman is a disaster. That doesn't even include his attempt to nationalize the steel industry. He talked about – he did it once and talked about it before that. He wanted to hang steelworkers. He wanted to put them in the Army and hang them, because they had the gall to oppose the federal government policies and were on strike. So I mean, this is – I mean, just some crazy stuff that was going on in the Truman administration.

WOODS: Yeah, Kevin and I – I think of the three of us as being kind of a trio in some ways, and Kevin and I – I'm talking about Kevin Gutzman – we wrote a chapter on that whole steel mill fiasco in *Who Killed the Constitution?*

MCCLANAHAN: Right.

WOODS: All right, so Truman is just – there are so many areas in which Truman is bad, and yet he still – I remember back in 1988, it was almost the first campaign I followed closely. Oddly enough when I was 12 I did actually follow Reagan versus Mondale in '84 pretty closely, especially for a 12-year-old. But I remember Mike Dukakis and George H.W. Bush, each one of them in 1988 was posing as Harry Truman. They were both trying to say we're just like Harry Truman in one way or another. And of course this is extremely bizarre, because when Truman left office, he had the lowest approval rating of any president, including Nixon at the time of his resignation. Why would you compete for that designation, I ask rhetorically.

MCCLANAHAN: Yeah, I don't know. One of the things about Truman and people don't realize it, but when we had the creation of Medicare, he and Bess were the first two to sign up for it. So here we have the Great Society and Johnson, they're the first two to get their Medicare card. So great, of course they're going to do that, because they love that Second Bill of Rights and this expansion of unconstitutional government programs. But I don't understand the fascination with Truman. I can from the Left, because he's their guy. This guy was putting the Second Bill of Rights into effect, and now you can trace every Democrat talking point, every leftist talking point back to that period, and you find where it comes from. Truman cut his teeth during the

Roosevelt administration, so I understand the infatuation with Truman on that side, but on the Right I just don't see it. It's hilarious to me.

WOODS: You know, let's say something about Barack Obama if you don't mind, because I almost never talk about him on the show. If you look back, this is Episode 591 – and of course Brion's book is going to be linked there, TomWoods.com/591, and I recommend you read it. You're going to learn something. Even if you think you're an old hand at this, you're going to learn something. I always learn something from Brion. But you look back at those 591 episodes, there's not that – okay, we talk about Obamacare, I suppose, and we've talked about the stimulus. But given the almost crazed obsession with Obama that I see in the right-wing media, there's surprisingly little on the show about him, mainly because I think it's just so obvious that that's just not fun for me. I want something that's more of a challenge, you know? But yet I still feel like I have some obligation to talk about him.

So you are unfortunately the guinea pig who has to do this for me. So you've got to summarize what are the good reasons to be against Obama. A good reason to be against Obama is not that he's a secret Muslim, if you ask me, because I'm sorry, but I don't know a whole lot of Muslims who are promoting gay marriage and want to put a rainbow flag image up on the White House. I'm not seeing that. So I don't go for that. I mean, he holds progressive, leftist social views down the line, all of which are incompatible with Islam. I mean, of all things to criticize the guy for, it just seems like you don't have to reach for controversial claims about his background. He's handing you material. Every day he's handing you material, and they have to dig into his past, and well, he grew up over here, and he had this influence. Okay, yeah, if we had ten lifetimes we could get to that stuff. But he's handing you material. Name me some things that he's handed us that we should be upset about.

MCCLANAHAN: Well, sure. One of the things about the book, one of the pitches for the book is that it didn't start with Obama. And I think that's the problem. People think, oh my gosh, Obama's just the worst president in American history –

WOODS: I know.

MCCLANAHAN: – and if we just had George W. Bush back, right, it'd be so good (laughing). Well, Obama is awful for so many reasons. First of all, you've got a president who refuses to execute laws that have been passed. Now, in some ways I could say this is actually a good thing. By refusing to execute the Obamacare legislation, we were saved from that for a while. But we know why he was doing that: for political reasons. So you've got that. Of course the president is constitutionally required to enforce the laws, and he says that law is constitutional, so hey, he's got to enforce it.

But you also have the excessive use of signing statements and executive orders. I mean, these things – of course, something that goes way back before Obama, but he's doing it just like every other predecessor before him did it and using executive orders to legislate from the executive office. You've got the non-recess recess appointment,

where he just says, look, the Congress is in recess, so I'm going to appoint this guy. And of course we know that was unconstitutional and illegal. You've got the bombing campaign in Syria where he had no congressional authorization to do this. So Obama hands you things all the time to say, well here we have executive abuse. We've got an elected king.

But of course everyone focuses on the fact that maybe he wasn't born in the United States or maybe he's a Muslim – all of this stuff that's just kind of silly at the end of the day. There's too much to talk about Obama, as you said, to criticize his past or his background. We've got a president that doesn't follow the Constitution, and the funny thing is every time he says, well, you know, I taught a little constitutional law (laughing), I have to laugh, because it's indicative of law schools. They don't really teach the Constitution; they teach case law over and over again, so you just find all these Supreme Court decisions or federal court decisions that back up what you're doing, and hey, you're good to go there. And who cares what the original Constitution says; it's all about what the judicial system has said in relation to this particular law and how they're going to pat themselves on the back and make it legal somehow.

WOODS: Now, by the way, I have no problem with people who are interested in, for instance, what his intellectual influences have been and the circles that he's traveled in. I mean, that is interesting stuff. But as I say, the more arcane discussions of, again, whether he's a Muslim. I mean, really? I just cannot get over this, especially when his foreign policy is basically, although maybe 10% less friendly to Israel than other presidents, it's basically nothing other than mainstream, bipartisan U.S. foreign policy. There's nothing particularly different about it. He's somewhat less bellicose in some ways, but other than that I don't see any real big difference. So my question to you is, as you go through these criticisms of Obama and they're things like, as you say, the non-recess recess appointments, and bombing without getting congressional authorization, how many of those things, though, are things that other presidents didn't do? How many of these things are unique to Obama?

MCCLANAHAN: Nothing.

WOODS: And now I think we'll get to the reason that they don't really want to talk about what he's doing.

MCCLANAHAN: Yeah, nothing. There's nothing unique to Obama there. And actually in that chapter, I say, look, for the last 28 years, we've suffered essentially under the Barack Obama administration, which is true. You go back to George H.W. Bush and you look at the Gulf War. I mean, he actually said he did not need to notify Congress of what he was doing. He just gave them a courtesy call. Now that is preposterous. So I'm just going to go and go to war with Iraq, but I don't really need to consult Congress on that. I mean, this is absolutely crazy. And of course, the H.W. Bush administration, you get the Americans with Disabilities Act; you get the attempt to use the executive branch for federal gun grab.

You have all the things that you could – of course if you just put Barack Obama there, if you substitute George H.W. Bush for Barack Obama, people would be going absolutely nuts over this, but because it's a Republican, oh, that's okay. We can't really criticize him for that. And same thing with George W. Bush. So none of the things that Obama has done are unique to the Obama administration, and I think that's the major problem with the executive branch and how far we've gotten off of the original executive that was sold to the states in 1788.

WOODS: Yeah, I think this is why they don't want to get to the substance of it, because of course their own people have done all these things. Now on the other hand, you can talk about the stimulus, which of course is just a variant of the George Bush stimulus although on a larger scale, and you could talk about Obamacare, which is a large scale intervention, although it's built on the idea of the individual mandate that comes right out of the Heritage Foundation and Newt Gingrich.

MCCLANAHAN: Right. I mean, you're exactly right. What Obama exposes is that there is a hypocrisy in the "American right."

WOODS: No, there isn't. I refuse to believe that, Brion. You're telling me these people are hypocrites?

MCCLANAHAN: (laughing) Well, no. No, I don't really believe that.

WOODS: (laughing)

MCCLANAHAN: But yeah, there's a hypocrisy of the American right, and I think this is the nature of mainstream "conservatism," and what that actually is is just a slightly less intrusive big government. Or it's a variation of it. We want to use big government to do these things but not these things. But big government's fine; it's great; we love it for these things. And so this is why – what's interesting, though, is that when I've been doing the interviews for this book, there are people that agree with me. Hey, we need to hold our people's feet to the fire just as much as Obama. Oh yeah, I think Americans are finally waking up to this. They're starting to realize it, but it's taking some time, and this is why I'm always so positive about things. Things are changing in America, and it wasn't like this 20 years ago.

Think back to 1994 when the Republicans took Congress. And I was caught up in that too. Oh yes, so many things are going to change. We've got the Congress. We're going to go in and we have this contract for America, and we're going to go in and change things. And then you get a whole bunch of crickets, and nothing happened.

WOODS: Oh yeah, I even remember the media was of course caught up in this. Both sides collude in this. The right wing, so-called, wants to claim that everything's going to change so that they can get more donor money from suckers, and the media of course wants to play it up because that's just who they are. Plus, even when there's a tiny, tiny, tiny change, the media wants to make it sound like it's catastrophic. And

they even were talking about, I guess Dick Arme y in an unguarded moment had something about privatizing the post office.

MCCLANAHAN: Right.

WOODS: I mean, that was how radical it seemed, like things were really going to start happening in 1994. So I'm saying that, Brion, so people don't think that you were just terminally naive at that time. It wasn't totally crazy to think that way. It really wasn't.

MCCLANAHAN: Well, no, but as soon as it all didn't happen I think that was really a turning point in some ways. Now, some people started thinking about – maybe mainstream Republicans, when all that stuff didn't happen by the late '90s, and then of course the Bush administration, again, people think, oh yeah, here we go, we got our guy, and then look what happens. So I think this was a really turning point for a lot of people, particularly younger people about our age. We really saw this firsthand, where we were excited about some things and we got nothing. So where do we go from here?

And I think that's why everyone's turning against the establishment. At a particular age in life, they're saying the establishment does not represent us. That's why so many young people were attracted to Ron Paul, because it was something different. It really was something different, and Paul walked the walk. So you wanted somebody like that, not an establishment "conservative" who wasn't going to do anything.

And you bring up Heritage Foundation. A lot of these groups don't want change to happen, because if change happens then they can't raise money. I mean, think about it. If some of these things were actually to happen, then they can't go out and say, well, we've got to raise money tomorrow because we need to fight big government, we need to fight Barack Obama. Well, let's say they undid Obamacare. Well, then they can't raise money in undoing Obamacare anymore, so they actually lose money by actually effecting real change, and voila, their coffers go dry. So I think that's a problem with the establishment. They can't make money if things actually do change in Washington, D.C. They've got to have the constant threat of that big evil out there that they have to rail against that they never want to change in the first place.

WOODS: Before we go on, I want to tell people about the special deal we're doing here, because I want to give away free autographed copies of Brion's book. Tell them the title once again, the full title with the subtitle.

MCCLANAHAN: Sure, it's *Nine Presidents Who Screwed Up America – And Four Who Tried to Save Her*.

WOODS: All right, you're going to get a free autographed copy of that book but with a subscription to our LibertyClassroom.com website, because Brion is going to be unveiling in the coming days a brand new course on the U.S. presidency, and it's going to be just fantastic. This ain't nothing like what they taught you in school, at all, and at this point I've given up keeping count of how many courses we have at Liberty

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Brion, let's talk about one of your alleged good presidents. I am skeptical, but I am willing to listen. Let's see, I know you want to talk about John Tyler, just because I know you. I've known you for a long time, and I know that of those four, you would most like to talk about John Tyler. Am I wrong?

MCCLANAHAN: That's correct, yeah.

WOODS: All right, so let me give you a – I mean, you have to get a 19th century figure in here, so let's talk about John Tyler. What makes him so great?

MCCLANAHAN: Well, John Tyler I call the greatest president in American history for the simple reason that here's a guy that assumed office, the first president to assume office after William Henry Harrison kicks the bucket, and he comes in and you have the Whigs just exuberant about the fact they've taken Congress, they've got the executive branch, they're really going to get their agenda through.

But they didn't think about John Tyler and who he actually was. This is a guy that cut his teeth at the table with Thomas Jefferson, and so he's a Jeffersonian. His father was very good friends with Thomas Jefferson, and he was the guy that gave the one speech against the Force Bill when Andrew Jackson was trying to get that rammed through Congress. So he was a states' rights Democrat, but he becomes a Whig because of the nullification controversy in South Carolina. He can't support the Democrats anymore.

So he comes into office, and the Whigs have a meeting with him. The cabinet, they say, look, Tyler, here's what's going to happen. You're going to rubber stamp all of their legislation, because we're going to run the show, and you're just going to do what we say. And Tyler says, no, that's not what I'm going to do. I'm the president. If you don't like it, you can resign. So they start passing all this legislation through the Congress. They're going to get a new charter for a Third Bank of the United States. They're going to get federally funded internal improvements. They're going to start pushing for higher tariffs. And Tyler vetoes everything.

In fact, Henry Clay, who was behind all this legislation get so angry, he goes to the White House – which they called the executive Mansion – goes to the White House, and he gets in a heated argument with Tyler, and Tyler basically just lets him have it. He says, look, I'm here, I'm in the executive branch; I'm going to do what I have to do to do my job. You go back to the Capitol and you do what you have to do, but understand that essentially I'm going to veto everything that's unconstitutional. And they never spoke again.

And in Tyler's veto messages, he actually wrote in one of the veto messages on the rechartering of the bank, the second bill that came before him, that he has a duty to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, and because of that he has to veto unconstitutional legislation. And so this is quite refreshing. You have an independent executive who's not worried about his own reputation or his party, because the Whigs would kick him out of the party for this, and he's doing what he needs to do to protect the Constitution. So I think Tyler doesn't get enough respect or admiration from people. He really was doing what he had to do to preserve the original Constitution, and that's why I call him the greatest president in American history.

WOODS: Before I let you go, Brion, I want to ask you this. Suppose – I mean, I know it's obvious, if I were reading a book on the presidency by Doris Kearns Goodwin, I know which presidents she'd choose as the good ones: all the ones that you choose as the bad ones, you know, maybe with the exception of Nixon. I already know that. BUT what if I read a book on the presidency that was put together by, I hate to pick on the Heritage Foundation – actually, why did I say that? I don't hate to pick on the Heritage Foundation. Suppose the Heritage Foundation put together a book on the presidency. What would I read there? How would it be different from yours, and how would it be different from Doris Kearns Goodwin?

MCCLANAHAN: Well, I think it would be almost similar to Doris Kearns Goodwin. The only difference you would have is maybe you would get someone like Ronald Reagan in the good ones. But you would definitely see Lincoln. You'd probably even see FDR because of his activities during World War II. I mean, he is revered by conservatives, many conservatives because he won World War II theoretically. You would see Teddy Roosevelt on a Heritage Foundation list. So you would see the people that Goodwin would pick. I think the only difference is maybe the Heritage Foundation would not include Johnson. Goodwin might include Johnson. Maybe they wouldn't include Truman. Goodwin might include that.

But what I've done is essentially flipped the entire ranking system on its head. And you mentioned the classes coming up. When you get that one, the 10 presidents that I picked that are the good guys, those are all, as I call them, those are the catfish, they're the bottom feeders of the presidential ranking system, and these guys are the worst of the worst according to modern rankings. But they're usually pretty good, because what they're doing is actually adhering to their oath. The guys that are always the best are the ones that didn't do a very good job with that.

So you would find that there's a lot of similarities between those on the Left and the Right, whom they pick for the good guys in contrast to the ones that I pick, which, I actually had someone tell me, well, I like your book, but I don't like the fact that you put Jefferson and Tyler in as the good guys, and I don't like the fact that you put Lincoln and Roosevelt and Nixon in as the bad guys. So essentially it's very partisan. They didn't like that I'm picking on Republicans and I've elevated these "Democrats," at least in their mind, to a revered position. They just can't see past the R and the D.

WOODS: All right, so remember, everybody, we're going to give you a free copy of Brion's book if you join LibertyClassroom.com by Tuesday. You only have till Tuesday, February 16th. And you know you're going to forget to do it, so do it right now, then just drop us a line. There's a contact page there or on my site, and let us know you want the book. So once again, Brion, tell them the title.

MCCLANAHAN: *Nine Presidents Who Screwed Up America – And Four Who Tried to Save Her*. And if you want the free book, tell Tom you want it personalized. I'll even sign it over to you with your name on it.

WOODS: I mean, come on, right? Plus we've got coupon – I'll have the whole offer spelled out on the show notes page. If this is too much for you to comprehend, that you're getting a discount and a free book, I have it all spelled out at TomWoods.com/591, as well as a link directly to Brion's book that you can get if you just want to buy his book. Go right ahead and do that. We strongly encourage that. All right, Brion, best of luck promoting the book, and I can't wait to get your new course up in the coming days. It's going to be great, and best of luck with the promotion.

MCCLANAHAN: Well, thanks a lot, Tom. I appreciate you having me on.