

# [Never johnny carson. also, on the very day](https://assignbuster.com/never-johnny-carson-also-on-the-very-day/)

Never had the country experienced an inaugurationlike Ronald Reagan’s in 1981. For a start, there was its extravagance: thebiggest fireworks display; the most celebrants at the most glittering balls; the most stars of stage and screen performing, partying, and creating the worsttraffic jams of the most limousines ever seen in Washington. “ This is the first administration to have apremiere,” quipped Johnny Carson. Also, on the very day of his first inaugurationcame news of the release of 52 American hostages in Iran that had been held for 444 days. America’s long humiliation was over, swept away by asense of jubilant relief combined with a surge of patriotism and nationalconfidence. In the coming years, oil, the cause of so many of PresidentCarter’s problems, flowed anew from the Middle East in relatively inexpensive abundance. Reagan even survivedan assassination attempt when would-be assassin John Hinckley’s bullet bouncedoff the armored presidential limousine before striking him in the chest.

Reagan was especially adept at shrugging offembarrassing revelations, such as the news that his wife, Nancy, often dictatedhis travel schedule with the help of an astrologer. He even managed to eluderesponsibility for the worst White House scandal since Watergate, the illegalsale of arms to Iran and illegal diversion of the profits generated to aid the Contrarebels in Nicaragua. Reagan was “ just like a Teflon fryingpan,” said Congresswoman Pat Schroeder of Colorado. “ Nothing sticks to him.

” Good luck followed the new president from the dayhe won the U. S. election on November 4, 1980. Contrasted with all the merrymaking on the day ofhis arrival into Washington was the persistent uneasiness of many Americans, worried about the economy and grappling with the incongruity of a one-timeB-movie actor in the nation’s most important job.

However, most fears wererelinquished as the new president pledged to cut taxes, subdue the continuingdouble-digit inflation, get the economy growing, and strengthen the military towin the Cold War.  He followed through on most of his promises. The economy, pumped up by tax cuts and increasedmilitary spending, soared in the longest peacetime expansion in U. S. history. Unemployment, which in Reagan’s firstyear reached 10. 7 percent, the highest since the Great Depression, shrank toabout half that level by the end of his second term.

Inflation plummeted from12. 5 percent to 4. 4 percent.

For the entire decade, the gross national productnearly doubled, and an estimated 20 million new jobs were created. By thesemeasures, what had come to be known as Reaganomics was a roaring success.  However, Reagan failed disastrously in his vow tobalance the budget. In eight years, he piled up more new federal debt than hadaccumulated in two centuries.  The total red ink nearly tripled to $2.

6trillion on his watch. “ America has thrown itself a party,” warned economistBenjamin Friedman, “ and billed the tab to the future?”  Voters seemed not to mind that Reagan had createda burden to future generations through a national debt that almost tripledduring his two terms. Furthermore, they gave him the highest popularity ratingsof any president since polling began in the 1930s. Under Reagan, as he poppedjellybeans from the stein on his Oval Office desk to his smiling mouth, Americanswere more attuned to jazz singer Bobby McFerrin’s bouncy little ditty,” Don’t Worry, Be Happy.”  Reagan radiated winning good cheer during his twoterms, saying once, “ What I’d really like to do is go down in history asthe president who made Americans believe in themselves again.”