

96 and Not Dead Yet: White House Dreams Bulldozed

by [Reg Green](#) (December 2025)



Prime Minister Romano Prodi, Reg Green, Sophia Loren, and Hillary Clinton at the White House, May 1998

Since you ask, I do have a story related to the White House's new ballroom. This is it: when Bill Clinton was president, my wife and I were invited to a banquet at the White House for the visit of the Italian prime minister, Romano Prodi. Disappointingly, she couldn't go but I have a romantic memory of that night nevertheless.

Taking a break during dinner and on my way down a long, long,

empty corridor I saw coming toward me, also quite alone, Sophia Loren. It is imprinted on my memory like the last scene in *The Third Man* where Joseph Cotten sees Orson Welles' lover walking toward and then past him on a bleak solitary road.. "I'm not going to miss this opportunity like he did," I thought.

As we were about to pass, my knees like water, I stopped and said, "I want to introduce myself, Miss Loren." I didn't know what to call her. "I'm the father of Nicholas, the little boy whose organs we donated after he was shot in Italy." She smiled, knowing the story immediately, full of sympathy. "We Italians feel very close to you," she replied. My knees turned to Prosecco. I know Nicholas would have approved of me telling her; he liked beautiful things.

After dinner, the band struck up, the President and first lady took a turn on a dance floor the size of those at crowded nightclubs and, at a given signal, the rest of us joined in. By then, however, Sophia was in someone else's arms and I was partnering my daughter Ann who, though a delightful companion, is not quite the same thing.

On the other hand, no doubt she was thinking, "I wish the President had asked me to dance instead of Daddy."

[Table of Contents](#)

Reg Green is an economics journalist who was born in England and worked for the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times of London*. He emigrated to the US in 1970. His books include *The Nicholas Effect* and his website is nicholasgreen.org.

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