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Newsweek

October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition

SECTION: SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 26**LENGTH:** 1570 words**HEADLINE:** 'His Name's Dutch Reagan'**BYLINE:** By **Edmund Morris****HIGHLIGHT:**

The son of an alcoholic father and a religious, theatrical mother, he had, even then, a kind of mysterious charm. This first excerpt is the fictional narrator's account of the young Reagan.

BODY:

The real **Edmund Morris** was born in Nairobi, Kenya, on May 27, 1940, the son of an airline pilot. The fictional narrator who recounts the earlier parts of Dutch was born in Chicago on Aug. 9, 1912, the son of an opera singer and a meatpacking scion who dabbled in politics and sounds a bit like a Roosevelt Republican. The real Morris uses this imagined narrator to observe **Ronald Reagan's** long journey from high school football player to lifeguard to college agitator, then radio announcer, Hollywood actor, labor leader, corporate spokesman and finally governor of California--at which point the real Morris steps into the story. This excerpt from an early chapter presents a speculative daydream in which the narrator, sent overseas to prep school in England, contrasts his distant, privileged circumstances with those of the young Dutch Reagan in Dixon, Illinois.

Where, I wonder now, was **Ronald Reagan** on June 27, 1925? What if (the passage of seventy-four years allows a certain measure of daft speculation) I had hijacked a dirigible and floated westward while **time** stood still? What bird's-eye view might I have gotten of Dutch's little world, under that same June sun?

Might that be his scrawny figure running along the sidewalk, desperately looking up at me? Why does he throw his arms out in seeming supplication? Even as I stare down, the boy leaps and makes a convulsive contraction of his whole body, as though something has socked him in the stomach. Then he lands, straightens, and mimes a casual throw. A football fantasy! Perfectly acceptable by Dixon standards. But he better not pretend he's Richard III.

Not that that's likely. At fourteen, young Reagan has yet to act in a play at school. Recently, however, his mother persuaded him to deliver a recitation at one of her readings. The applause stirred vague longings in his breast--if not for the theater, then for some life transcending the local and the present. He draws well enough to see himself earning a living as an artist. Alternatively, he dreams of living in the wild with wolves, or joining his good friend Frank Merriwell at Yale, or following his alter ego Dick Falkner [hero of Reagan's favorite inspirational Christian novel, *That Printer of Udell's*] to Washington. Or perhaps he is a Warlord of Mars, and is about to deploy that planet's Strategic Defense Initiative against my dirigible:

A great fleet of Zodangan battleships rose from the camps of the besiegers without the city, and advanced to meet us.... Our green Martian warriors had opened fire on them almost as they left the ground. With their uncanny marksmanship they raked the oncoming fleet with volley after volley.

That running boy, catching that imaginary ball, still leaps and contracts in memory. It wasn't play-acting, one contemporary spectator recalls, it was reality, even to the facial expressions and grunts.

If so, then how much more real, and painful, it must have been for Dutch to hear, in the fall, that he was too slight to make the scrub at Dixon High. Purple and white varsity jerseys glowed in the window of Vaile O'Malley's Menswear, but they were cut for men more massive than his 125 pounds. Had he been baptized a Catholic like his brother Neil, he could not have more passionately perceived those colors as representing cardinal privilege and grace. I just had to wear one of those purple and white jerseys. The best he could hope for was to try for captain of the school's B team, in the hope that by his junior year he could tilt the scales in his favor.

The next year, the narrator finds himself in Dixon with Paul Rae, a fictional friend, watching a football game in which Dutch Reagan is playing guard.

I saw--I registered--I calibrated--a square-cut youth of nearly sixteen, about five feet ten inches tall and one hundred and sixty pounds in weight. He was not yet grown to proportion (his legs lacked heft and his chest was shallow) but his shoulders were broad and he walked with extraordinary grace. There was none of the arms-out swagger that jocks affect, no sense either of hurry or hesitation, just flowing, forward, lynx-like momentum. His face irked me. It had an adolescent coarseness and an air of studied jollity, as if he knew he was being watched. When he waved at a cheering fan and grinned, his upper lip pulled to the right. His eyes had the rubbed, overstrained look of somebody used to glasses. I sensed that he was reacting to sound rather than sight.

Who's this fellow? I whispered. Paul shrugged. The square-cut youth and I briefly exchanged glances. I had an odd sensation of blueness and blindness. A million miles away, a factory siren wailed. His purposeful body moved on, exuding liniment. I dropped the candy wrapper I had been holding--and as I reached for it, his wet sleeve brushed my hand.

His name's Dutch Reagan, the boy next to Paul said, leaning over. Didn't make the first four games, but when we got licked 34-0 by Sterling, Coach fired the regular guard and took him on. Dutch gonna win his letter for sheer grit.

The narrator, back in England, stays abreast of young Reagan's life through letters from Paul in Illinois, who includes details about Dutch's summer job as a lifeguard in a park on the Rock River in 1927. At one point they discuss Margaret Cleaver, Reagan's steady girlfriend, a preacher's daughter who ultimately broke her engagement with him in 1934.

I learned that Reagan was something of a river rat, having swum and paddled and skated most of the distance between Dixon and Grand Detour [where Paul Rae lived]. He had taken a lifesaving course at the South Side YMCA, and been certified for competence by the Red Cross. That meant, apparently, that he was able to undress in deep water and swim a hundred yards at top speed; to surface-dive eight feet down and recover no fewer than four heavy objects; to execute, repeatedly, four carries (Head, Cross Chest, Tired Swimmer's, and Arm-Lock), to demonstrate Double Grips and Strangle Holds, left and right and front and back; and, last, to perform one and a half minutes of Prone Pressure Resuscitation.

These impressive qualifications, Paul wrote, had persuaded Mr. and Mrs. Graybill, the managers of

Lowell Park Beach, to hire Dutch at a salary of fifteen dollars a week, plus all the hamburgers, onions, pickles, and root beer he could consume at the food stand. He had authority over all who came to swim or sunbathe, and the additional responsibility of keeping the Dixon sluice gate free of drowned bodies.

What thoughts ran through Dutch's head on placid forenoons, when the river was an unbroken swell through his clip-on shades--only to be disturbed by the first busload of day-trippers bursting out of the forest? As it happens, we know. He doodled some Meditations of a Lifeguard and published them in his high school yearbook. Paul sent me a copy, superscribed Mark Twain--move over.

On they come, hoards [sic] of swimmers, bathers, sleepers, or what have you! A mob of water-seeking humans intent on giving the beach guard something to worry about.

A frail and forty maiden out to enjoy the rippling waves, and to cling tightly to the lifeline, as she squeals and giggles....

An answer to love's sweet young dream--a proud little sweetheart dragging her manly catch down to the river's edge....

A Sunday School class, from the picnic up the park, swarms over the lifeboats and raft, and keeps on swarming as long as anything remains to be swarmed over.... Like a low accompaniment to their shrieks [sic] and howls, the lifeguard paints the ether a hazy blue, by the use of lurid, vivid, flaming adjectives...

Dutch was (according to Paul) going steady with a very earthbound young woman indeed. Margaret Mugs Cleaver was definitely not the type to laze away the Lord's **time** at Lowell Park--whose sands she equated with those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Darkly pretty, short, terse, and tough, she dominated her class at North Side High School. She was ambitious without push, cultured, and charitably inclined. She spoke, wrote, acted, and debated with easy skill.

By the end of 1927, I was hearing that Dutch--taller and broader now, a DHS squad regular--was Dixon's Model Boy, just as Margaret Cleaver was its most brilliant girl. Ladies at the Christian Church Missionary Society were predicting their engagement in about four years' **time**. He had been elected president of the North Side student body; she was president of the senior class. They were officers of the school Dramatic Society, cozily acting opposite each other in a play called You and I. Under her sophisticated influence, Dutch had been heard trying to speak French. She was writing most of the news articles for next spring's Dixonian; he was its art director.

When I saw the volume half a century later, I found to my fascination that Dutch had laid it out in the style of a silent-movie storyboard. The various sections were given such title cards as Directors, Cast, Stage, and Filming. He had illustrated each of these cards with silhouette drawings of himself as an authority figure. He calls orders through a megaphone. He sits behind his desk, solitary and darkly directorial. To this day, when I show this last silhouette to veterans of **Ronald Reagan's** White House, they gasp with recognition. The resemblance to the man in the Oval Office is almost occult.

He drew it, I tell them, when he was 16.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Early days: (Left to right) Jack, a shoe salesman, with Neil, Ronald (nicknamed Dutch') and Nelle

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October 4, 1999

SECTION: NATION; Pg. 58**LENGTH:** 1787 words**HEADLINE:** Mixing Fact and Fiction;Our review of the new Reagan **bio**: the author's trick of putting himself in the story often captures the subject but loses the reader**BYLINE:** John F. Stacks, With reporting by Ann Blackman/Washington**BODY:**

It was the summer of 1989, as I recollect, the kind of swampy, sweaty Washington day that makes cheap, polyester, short-sleeve shirts stick to the bulging middles of the bureaucrats. **Edmund Morris** and I ducked into the coolness of the F Street Club. Edmund had driven over from his Capitol Hill town house in his new Jaguar sedan. But even the soothing luxury of the club didn't seem to console Edmund.

"I just don't get him," he complained. He was working on the first authorized **biography** of a sitting President, **Ronald Wilson Reagan**. Part of Morris' mountainous \$ 3 million advance was already earning interest in the money market. "He seems so vacant, so empty," Morris complained. "Yet he did great things; he was a great President. Maybe as great as Teddy Roosevelt." Edmund had won a Pulitzer for his 1979 **biography** of the heroic T.R.

I hadn't spent as much **time** with Reagan as Edmund had, but I had covered him as candidate and as President. I first interviewed Reagan in 1967, when he was Governor of California. I told Edmund that story, hoping it would be instructive:

I was ushered into the Governor's office in Sacramento, and there sat Reagan, suit coat buttoned, appearing to pore over some documents. I clicked on the tape recorder, or thought I did. Assured of a magnetic record, I neglected to take notes. We talked for nearly an hour. Back at the hotel, I discovered that the tape had not worked. When the panic subsided, I replayed the conversation in my head, for in those fine days, my memory was still crisp. Reagan had said nothing of interest. Blank tape, empty notebook, shallow man.

The first part of this reminiscence is fictional, although some of the specifics are true. I have never met **Edmund Morris**. The account of the interview in Sacramento is true, or is at least my best recollection.

And that's what it's like reading Morris' new **biography**, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (Random House; 874 pages; \$ 35). There is fact and there is fiction, and they are jumbled together.

The facts are meticulously footnoted in an epic 115-page section at the end of the book. But so is the fiction. Morris has created detailed and utterly false notes to buttress the fanciful parts of his book, which feature a fictional character, also named **Edmund Morris**, who is a contemporary of Dutch Reagan's. That he called the book a "memoir" and not a **biography** is of course a tip-off to the game.

This dramatic departure from standard **biographical** orthodoxy has already, even before the book goes on sale this week, set off alarms, with traditionalists condemning Morris and Morris himself scheduling a blitz of appearances on the TV yack shows to explain and defend his heterodoxy. The Old Guard from the Reagan White House, who had arranged Morris' appointment as official chronicler, are all holding their breath, concerned only that their beloved President be lovingly portrayed, by whatever device. Said Ken Duberstein, Reagan's last White House chief of staff: "I'm not looking forward to it, and I don't know anyone who is." Perhaps not accidentally, the very boldness of Morris' device is bringing a flood of attention to the book, 14 anguished years in the making, and will surely spark an initial rush to buy it. Finally, it will rekindle the debate over whether Reagan moved the history of his **time** or was merely present at its creation.

Morris' bizarre conceit of inserting his fictional alter ego into some parts of Reagan's life story begins in the very first chapter, in which Morris recounts his (apparently real) agony over whether to accept the role as the official presidential **biographer**. He alludes, confusingly, to having seen Reagan as a youth, and then tells the apparently true story of spending an evening with the Reagans at the White House.

"There's one good reason to do it, aside from the money," he tells his wife on the way home. "I've known Dutch much longer than anybody realizes. He least of all!" Reagan was then in his 70s and the real Morris in his 40s, and the literary hallucination begins.

"Damned if I can figure him out, though," Morris continues to his wife. "Is he a political genius, or a bore?" This, of course, is the central Reagan conundrum that many **biographers** have tried to answer. As he seeks to answer it, Morris traces the life of the future, nearly godlike President through the eyes of the fictional Morris. There is an encounter on the football field: "The square-cut youth and I briefly exchanged glances... A million miles away a factory siren wailed. His purposeful body moved on, exuding liniment. I dropped the candy wrapper I had been holding--and as I reached for it, his wet sleeve brushed my hand."

Then comes a visit to the swimming beach in Dixon, Ill., where Reagan was a lifeguard and where, he would eventually claim, he made 77 rescues over the years: "He was deeply tan, and at least four inches taller than when I had last seen him. His chest was bigger, his legs stronger and straighter... Presently he shrugged off the top of his damp suit. The loops fell away, leaving behind pale ghosts of themselves. Midge sang."

Later, in Hollywood, the fictional Morris becomes a hack screenwriter and spies Reagan and his soon-to-be first wife Jane Wyman on the beach: "This mature Dutch--'Ronnie' she calls him--is tall and sparely straight, constructed in flats, a mobile Mondrian... Even his pectorals are flat and square; he has no bulges in him, of brawn or brain."

The temptation, once the ruse is discovered, is to ignore the long sections about the faux Morris. But buried within these sections are some trenchant and worthwhile observations about Reagan. After a dreamy sequence imagining Reagan practicing his swimming, Morris observes: "The swimmer enjoys a loneliness greater, yet oddly more comforting, than that of the long distance runner. One tunnels along in a shroud of silvery bubbles... Others may swim alongside for a while, but their individuality tends to refract away, through the bubbles and the blur. Often I have marveled at Reagan's cool, unhurried progress through crises of politics and personnel, and thought to myself, He sees the world as a swimmer sees it." It is an elegant way to describe the serene detachment that marked the public, and private, **Ronald Reagan**.

The Reagan who emerges in Dutch is often of heroic dimension. But Morris is also acute and critical

about the sometimes goofy, floating chimera who was President for eight years. Morris cites a former aide as saying that the President's attention span "would compare to that of a fruit fly." He tells the story of seeing President Reagan the morning after they had actually dined together at the Morris home: "Not only did he fail to mention our dinner, it was obvious from his smiling yet distant demeanor that he did not recall it."

Morris' image of Reagan today, in decline under Alzheimer's, is poignant and surreal. "He will rake leaves from the pool for hours, not understanding that they are being surreptitiously replenished by his Secret Service men." When Reagan acknowledged his ailment in 1994, many who had been struck by his odd driftiness during the White House years began to wonder whether it had been the disease beginning its assault on his brain. Morris is adamant in opposing that view. "To those readers who will seize on this as evidence of incipient dementia in the White House, I reply: You do not understand that actors remember forward, not backward. Yesterday's take is in the can; today is already rolling: tomorrow's lines must be got by heart."

Maybe, but Reagan was, by the accounts of those who worked most closely with him, one of the most passive and incurious men to ever occupy the Oval Office. During his first term, one of his closest advisers swore that on his own, Reagan could not have found the office of the White House chief of staff. Morris' reconstruction of the Iran-contra scandal paints a devastating picture of a floundering and uncomprehending Chief Executive.

What set Morris off on his risky, semi-fictional path? The author was seriously late in delivering his book and anguished about writer's block and his inability to get to the core of Reagan. Perhaps it was the arrogance of the intellectual who cannot make himself believe that a person with an ordinary mind can be a powerful leader. Perhaps it was the need to do something different with Reagan's life, to justify the big advance and the long delay in producing the book.

The historical sleight of hand has one virtue, aside from creating commercially valuable buzz. Trying to thread one's way through what is made up and what is real in this book is not unlike being around the actual Reagan, who invented statistics, replayed movie plots as if they were history and answered questions with such bewildering non sequiturs that interrogators were stunned into silence. This **biography** could have been called Zelig Meets Chauncey Gardner.

Morris is also a brilliant writer--of both fact and fiction. His stylishness is so dazzling that the reader may want to forgive the manipulation he has employed. Again, this re-creates the experience of being around Reagan, who was so deeply likeable as a human being that even the most querulous reporter could be charmed into protecting him from his own vacuousness.

In the end, however, the fact/fiction bipolarity erodes some of the book's brilliance. The reader begins to doubt Morris even when he describes events without resorting to dramatic trickery. His account of Reagan's summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in Iceland is so vivid as to make it seem Morris sat with the two leaders. In fact, Morris admits he was not there; he went to Iceland later and, relying on interviews, "enjoyed the scribe's traditional advantage of being able to recollect emotions in tranquility." Morris' brilliant portrait of Teddy Roosevelt's rise to the presidency was of course built from research embellished by his imagination.

In T.R., Morris had a President who moved events. He seems to want to believe that to be true of Reagan as well. Morris says as much in the final, cloying scene of the book. He tells the reader that he himself was one of the people lifeguard Dutch saved from the river, and concludes: "Some day, I hoped, America might acknowledge her similar debt to the old Lifeguard who rescued her in a **time** of poisonous despair..."

The writer's job, Morris observes, is different from the actor's in that the author tries to remember backward, to turn experience into a literary account. "To the actor, only artifice is actual," Morris writes. Unfortunately in this book, Morris has switched roles.

--With reporting by Ann Blackman/Washington

GRAPHIC: COLOR PHOTO: TERRY ASHE--WHITE HOUSE, BONDING Morris with the President in 1986, as the project got under way: "I've known Dutch much longer than anybody realizes."; B/W PHOTO, A PRESIDENT'S LIFE: YOU ARE THERE, Des Moines, Iowa, 1933 Reagan began his career as a kind of performance artist, embellishing cryptic wire accounts of baseball games for radio. The fictional Morris says he studied under the prairie painter Grant Wood at the same **time**, thus learning the way Reagan looked at the world; B/W PHOTO: GEORGE TICE, [A PRESIDENT'S LIFE: YOU ARE THERE], Dixon, Ill., 1927 Reagan spent several summers as a lifeguard at a riverside beach. Morris imagines seeing his tanned, powerful body up on the chair and says he saw him swim the Australian crawl. One of the 77 people Dutch Reagan rescued, Morris says at the end of his book, was the fictional author himself; B/W PHOTO: EVERETT, [A PRESIDENT'S LIFE: YOU ARE THERE], Hollywood, 1941 The real **Ronald Reagan** had the lead role in the forgettable International Squadron. Fictional character Morris imagines being asked to doctor the script. He fails miserably and winds up serving as a mere technical consultant on the film and watching the (actual) near incineration of the future President in a staged fire on the Warner Bros. set; COLOR PHOTO: SUSAN BIDDLE--WHITE HOUSE, CONUNDRUM Did he move history, or was he merely present at its creation?

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Newsweek October 4, 1999,Copyright 1999 **Newsweek**
Newsweek

October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition

SECTION: SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 22**LENGTH:** 1686 words**HEADLINE:** The Book on Reagan**BYLINE:** By Evan Thomas and Jon Meacham**HIGHLIGHT:**Engaging yet enigmatic, **Ronald Reagan** eluded even his **biographer**. Exclusive excerpts--and the story behind **Edmund Morris's** controversial memoir.**BODY:**

He seemed placid, even becalmed, but **Ronald Reagan** swept over the nation like a wave. Was he, as so many of his detractors believed, an amiable dunce? If so, how did he change the course of history? As president, he restored national confidence, launched an economic boom, and, with Mikhail Gorbachev, ended the cold war. Reagan led the West (and much of the rest of the world) away from Big Government to an era of Free Markets. Republicans pine for him; even many Democrats grudgingly grant Reagan the president's greatness. Yet to friends and foes alike Reagan the man seemed familiar yet enigmatic--elusive, mysterious, just out of reach.

He flummoxed his authorized **biographer**, too. In 1985, **Edmund Morris**, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, was given complete access to President Reagan, his papers, his aides, his friends and his family--and a \$3 million contract from Random House. Seven years later, Morris was, by his own account, desperate. I wrote a lot, but it was sterile stuff, says Morris. I knew something was seriously wrong. Reagan was eluding me even as he eluded everyone else. In contrast to Teddy Roosevelt, who was all exterior--everything he said or wrote revealed the man, Morris says Reagan was totally interior. He lived inside his head, in the proscenium of his own imagination. He was not a deliberate deceiver. It never occurred to him to let anyone in his thought processes because that was where he lived all the **time**. And so Morris cast about for a way to break his writer's block and tell Reagan's story.

The method he chose is already provoking controversy among scholars and critics, and it may befuddle many readers. Morris created an imaginary character, a fictional contemporary to observe Dutch, Reagan's nickname as a youth. The early narrator is given a fictional, detailed family background, a school history and friends. Along about 1968 in the narrative, the character becomes Morris himself, and by the Reagan presidency Morris is watching his subject at first hand, often perceptively and always vividly. Though there are brushes between the imagined narrator and the protagonist, Morris is careful not to put words or thoughts into the mouths or minds of historical characters, including Reagan. In an interview, the author described his tortured 14-year effort to craft Dutch: *A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, which **NEWSWEEK** excerpts this week. The author is well aware that his unorthodox approach is risky, but he defends it as both intellectually honest and

the only way to let the reader see the world as Reagan sees it: cinematically and imaginatively.

Does the book work? Did Morris go too far in inserting a fictional figure into a work of presidential **biography**? Readers will have to decide for themselves, and the early evidence is mixed. When news of the device broke last week, Maureen Dowd called it Forrest Gump **biography** in The New York Times; Stanford University historian David M. Kennedy told **NEWSWEEK** that though he has not yet read the book, word of Morris's technique has all my claxons and alarms... going off. One **NEWSWEEK** editor was confused when he read the opening chapters, unable to understand how Morris, whom he had met and who is 59, could possibly be in his mid-80s--the age the narrator of the first half of the **biography** would have to be. True, the jacket copy cryptically refers to the device, but otherwise there is no warning to the reader that nearly half the book to come, although based on fact, is told through fictional eyes. Looking to the footnotes won't necessarily help: Morris uses some of them to offer supporting documentation for his narrator's family background. The book is massively documented and gracefully written, but the author--and the cast of fictional characters who form a circle around the imagined narrator--can intrude on the story; there is, at times, too much narrator and not enough Reagan. This is not anything like traditional **biography**, and readers looking for a chronological, analytical assessment of Reagan's life and legacy will be disappointed--and many will no doubt view this cinematic **biography** as yet another assault on the ever-weakening line between fact and fiction.

How did this happen? When Morris first met Reagan at a state dinner in 1981, he found the president to be large, benign, an attractive but bland personality. I couldn't conceive of writing more than a paragraph about him. Seated next to the president at a lunch a year later, I thought he was shatteringly banal, says Morris. When friends close to the president began to broadly hint that Reagan would welcome Morris as his **biographer**, the author, deep into volume II of Theodore Roosevelt, brushed them off. But he began to have second thoughts. Invited to dine with the Reagans at the White House residence in the winter of 1985, Morris found Reagan staring across the Mall at a statue of Thomas Jefferson. I stand here and he looks back at me, Reagan explained, majestically, yet somehow quite unselfconsciously. The moment charmed Morris--and piqued his sense of grandeur and romance. He was beginning to see the possibilities for a dramatic narrative, and decided he wanted to write about Reagan after all. So I went right to the top, Morris recalls. I went to Nancy. The First Lady was agreeable and set him up with White House imagemeister Michael Deaver. It was astonishingly quick and easy, Morris recalls. The Reagans made no demands. Nancy's a control freak, but she never once even asked to see the book. (Morris sent her a copy via FedEx to arrive last Saturday.) The author was granted reasonably free access within the White House, though wary aides barred him from some sensitive meetings. He met alone with the president about once a month.

The attraction quickly wore off. Though he saw no signs of Reagan's Alzheimer's until after the president left office, Morris found his subject sometimes vacuous. After three or four meetings, I realized that culturally he was a yahoo and extremely unresponsive in conversation. When you asked him a question about himself, it was like dropping a stone into a well and not hearing a splash. I never got anywhere in interviews, except for odd moments of strangeness, like the **time** I showed him a leaf and he began talking about his boyhood. Morris's spirits revived somewhat when he began to read Reagan's personal diary after Reagan finished his second term in 1989. They were unemotional, pragmatic, thoughtful--not analytical, but cool and collected. The president, in the author's view, had a healthy ego but no vanity. Reagan did meticulously count how many times his speeches were interrupted by applause, Morris notes, but more as a professional, measuring how well he was doing.

Despite his growing admiration for Reagan, by 1992 Morris was miserably blocked. I felt I just couldn't do it. My subject resisted orthodox narrative and analysis, the author recalls. The surface reality of Reagan was boring. His everyday conversation was boring. His documents were boring. He was a mystery that had to be plumbed, and I could only plumb it with this inspiration I had. The lightning struck one day as Morris stepped on an acorn as he wandered the campus at Reagan's alma mater, Eureka College, in Illinois. I literally got the taste of electricity in my mouth, Morris recalls. I thought of Reagan. If only I could have been there in the fall of 1928! I could describe him as vividly

as I could describe him as president. Morris began to think that, in a sense, he had been there. All **biographers** make an intense imaginative leap into the reality of the past. I knew literally what it was like at Eureka. I had studied old photographs, put them up close to my nose. My idea was to give physical form to the **biographer's** mind. It was there already. I just gave it flesh.

Thus was created the fictional narrator, born in 1912, the son of Arthur Morris, scion of a wealthy Midwestern family. The fictional narrator goes to school in England and brushes up against Reagan at a Dixon High football game, where he develops a fascination from afar. Morris did not stop at one manufactured character. He also created a newspaper columnist, Paul Rae, to give a bitchy, gossipy, humorous point of view, and a son for the fictional narrator, named Gavin, who becomes a fierce student radical railing and plotting against the conservative Governor Reagan in California in the late '60s. I had to acknowledge that this was a **biography** of someone who was violently controversial, says Morris, who a large portion of the population detested and was afraid of.

Morris never warns the reader that these characters are fictional. The idea would have died on the page, Morris insists. It would be like an actor turning to the audience in the midst of a performance and talking in conversational tones. I didn't want to break the spell. At one point, Morris considered a total bluff--putting out the book under another author's name. Obviously, says Morris, an impractical idea.

Morris's Reagan lived in the theater of his own mind, where the president created an ideal world that sometimes bore little relation to reality. That Reagan was able to make the real world more like his imagined one at times is a testament to his will and his manipulative powers. Did the president really believe, for example, in the Strategic Defense Initiative? To him, says Morris, it was a twinkling, floating reality there in the sky. Reagan recalled the image of a protected city from Edgar Rice Burroughs's Princess of Mars and from his days playing Brass Bancroft, the federal agent who used an Inertia Projector to save the day. Pretty far out--and yet Star Wars may have finally convinced the Kremlin that it could not compete in a high-tech arms race. At times, Morris seems to shake his head in wonder. Readers, too, may be shaking their heads at Morris by the **time** they finish his book.

As he finished the manuscript of Dutch, Morris noted that this is a strange book about a strange man. About that, at least, there can be no debate.

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 24**LENGTH:** 590 words**HEADLINE:** The Author Goes on the Record**BODY:**

Already under fire for creating a fictional narrator in his **Reagan** biography, **Edmund Morris**, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, explained his thinking.

NEWSWEEK: Why did you use the device of a fictional narrator? MORRIS: The narrator of *Dutch* is only semifictional. Indeed, for most of the later parts of the book, the narrator is me, and my observations of Ronald **Reagan** are direct and documented. All I have done in the way of fictionalizing myself (I never fictionalize him) is make myself **Reagan's** contemporary, in effect extending that closeness of observation--plus the same density of documentary detail--back to the earlier stages of his life, in order to render it as vividly and honestly as I do the presidency. And all I ask of the reader is simply to accept my presence as unquestioningly as we accept that of any truthful storyteller who acts as an intermediary between what he knows, and what we want to know in turn.

I think my method is an advance in biographical honesty because by giving the narrator flesh, as it were, I make the reader more aware of the fact that this narrator's opinions are not necessarily fair. They are as fallible and subject to change as that of any ordinary human being, as **Reagan**, in the course of a long life, becomes more and more extraordinary. His growth to world stature is so slow, yet so steady and inexorable, that the narrator is equally slow to recognize his greatness--but the realization, when it comes, is wholehearted and tinged, ultimately, with real affection.

Why did you not alert the reader, outside the book jacket? I don't like the word alert. You mean I should alarm him, blow a cautionary whistle, say, Proceed at your own risk? Why shouldn't he just simply start reading the Prologue to *Dutch*, and see if he can stop? If he does, either I have failed him as a writer, or RR has failed to hold him as a character. But if he (or more likely she, since most books are bought by women) falls into that pleasant state of absorption which is the ideal all writers strive to evoke, then total communication has been achieved.

I've never understood the patronizing neurosis among our print editors and our television producers that everything these days, whether it be a report from Chechnya or a new series on Masterpiece Theatre, has to be announced, introduced, explained, made easy, by some authoritative figure. Why can't an original approach be allowed to explain itself? What's to be afraid of in a story full of human incident and moral drama--a story that casts its own spell (I mean here the spell of **Reagan's** powerful personality, and the improbable variety of his many careers) from the moment I hand the president a leaf from the tree he used to sit under as a boy, to the moment, 670 pages later, when I return to that tree and bring the huge narrative to an end?

What do you really think of Ronald **Reagan**? I have gradually, over the course of many years, come to the conclusion that he was a great president. More interesting to me than greatness, however, is that he was throughout his life such a strange combination of innocence and wisdom, charm and hard force, gregariousness and aloofness, egocentricity without conceit, aggression without cruelty, imaginativeness and cultural ignorance, sentimentality and emotional coolness. I could go on for a quarter of an hour and not exhaust his contrary opposites. He is also--to finish with a simple statement--the bravest and most incorrupt figure I've ever studied.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: 'A strange book about a strange man': So says Morris of his work, the product of 14 years and amazing access

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 27**LENGTH:** 481 words**HEADLINE:** The Morris Method: An Album**BODY:**

Here are some other examples of the narrator's imagined brushes with **Reagan**. The first is his seeing Dutch lifeguarding:

Watching him--indeed, trying to imitate him--helped me understand at least partly the massive power of his personality. The swimmer enjoys a loneliness greater, yet oddly more comforting, than that of a long-distance runner. One tunnels along in a shroud of silvery bubbles, insulated from any sight or sound other than vague perspectives of water, and the muted thunder of one's own arm strokes and breathing. Others may swim alongside for a while, but their individuality tends to refract away, through the bubbles and the blur. Often, I have marveled at **Reagan's** cool, unhurried progress through crises of politics and personnel, and thought to myself, He sees the world as a swimmer sees it.

Returning to the United States in the spring of 1928, the imagined Morris spends a term at Eureka College:

Manifestly a loner, Dutch was never alone. There was something attractive about the simplicity of his enthusiasms--Eddie Cantor, the Olympics, last night's social, next week's game--and his urgent desire to tell us what we already knew. Although his manner was egalitarian and friendly, the only opinions he seemed to value were those of authority figures: senior faculty, varsity players, and society officers. He was already, irredeemably, a frat man, Mugs [his girl friend, Margaret Cleaver] having gotten her sister's boyfriend to pledge him to Tau Kappa Epsilon. Even in those dim distant days, people did things for Dutch...

I was introduced to Dutch several times, and each was the first as far as he was concerned. Paul asked if he recognized us from the beach at Lowell Park, whereupon he tapped his glasses and shook his head, smiling.

Later in the book, the narrator's voice--by now admiring, if bemused by, **Reagan's** rise to political prominence--is supplemented by that of his son, Gavin, a student radical at Berkeley. Gavin reports to his dad, who is in England, on the speech **Reagan** gave on Barry Goldwater's behalf in 1964:

Dad, I take back what I said about the fertilizer speech. Not that he's not still full of merde, but, man, can he work up an audience. The whole country's talking about it. Including bakery ladies.

The whole country?

Half an hour on NBC, prime time. The GOP went for broke and did it ever pay off. Money's coming in so fast they don't know what to do except replay the speech, over and over on local stations. Too late to save Goldwater, I think.

What did **Reagan** say? We've not heard about it here.

Oh, you know, government in your pocket, better dead than Red.

And you were impressed.

No, I was repulsed. He's Babbitt, don't you think I rumble that? Quick, strong, funny--dangerous as hell.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Always the hero: **Reagan** as a lifeguard on the Rock River, late 1920s

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October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition

SECTION: SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 28**LENGTH:** 1059 words**HEADLINE:** On the Prowl in Hollywood**HIGHLIGHT:**When **Reagan** went West to become a star, he reveled in a world full of beautiful people--then found a wife**BODY:**

While **Reagan** builds his movie career after a stint of sportscasting in the Midwest, the narrator becomes an aspiring screenwriter in Hollywood. Since Morris's imagined youthful self lives in Santa Monica and operates on the fringes of the film industry, he has plenty of opportunity to observe **Reagan** (who remains cheerfully unaware of his scrutiny) and to hear studio gossip about Ronnie and Jane Wyman, who was to become **Reagan's** first wife.

Dutch was not yet a one-girl guy. he was seen squiring dishy Lana Turner around town, and joked that he wasn't acting in her company. He also dated Margaret Lindsay, Mary Jane Crane, and the exquisite Anita Louise. How much sex he was getting was a matter of speculation. I heard from a starlet named Lucile Fairbanks and her boyfriend Owen Crump, a writer at Warners, that Dutch was regarded as the studio's porch warmer, more gab than grab, and no threat to any virgin.

Yet his local cavalry commanding officer asserted that Lieutenant **Reagan** was a greater 'swordsmen' than Errol Flynn--a remark I gathered was meant metaphorically. If so, Dutch was shy about communicating it. We guffawed over a magazine spread of suggestive swimming lesson cheesecakes that showed him intertwining limbs with a buxom starlet (RONALD **REAGAN** SHOWS SUSAN HAYWARD THE PROPER POSITION). Their couplings reminded me of nothing so much as Greek sculpture: a cold choreography of elbows, knees, and clenched buttocks. Dutch exuded no hint of musk. His skin shone with clean health, his eyes with clean thoughts.

Warners publicists sought to pair him off with somebody more midwestern than Miss Hayward, an ingenue equally curvy yet tougher, more seasoned in her sexuality. Twenty-one-year-old Jane Wyman not only looked the part (that button nose was definitely trans-Mississippi), she was eager to play it. In her case, however, a considerable degree of acting was necessary.

Not that she didn't find **Reagan** attractive: she had been unable to repress a squeal of delight when she first saw him. Her challenge was to hide the fact that although she was six years his junior, she was far ahead of him in adult experience, both professional and emotional. She had come to Hollywood when he was still in high school. His idea of trauma was being benched; Jane had a couple of previous husbands to keep quiet about, and dark memories of being given away in childhood.

She had been born Sarah Jane Mayfield in Saint Joseph, Missouri, on January 5, 1917. Her father had decamped for San Francisco when she was five years old, and her mother, desperate for money, made what seems to have been an unofficial adoption deal with some middle-aged neighbors. So little Miss Mayfield became Jane Fulks, and, after Mrs. Fulks was widowed in 1928, moved with her to Southern California. She attended Los Angeles High School under that name, and, when barely sixteen, married a young salesman named Ernest Wyman. The marriage did not last more than a year or two. Meanwhile, Jane sang and hoofed her way onto the sets of various Fox and Paramount musicals, winning a Warner Bros. contract on May 6, 1936.

A nervous breakdown around the time she first laid eyes on Ronald **Reagan** might have had something to do with the fact that she was about to become Mrs. Myron T. Futterman. But Jane was not the type to let another marriage get in her way. Within three months, the wealthy Mr. Futterman (who had something to do with the rag trade) was history. When I first saw Jane on the sand with Dutch, she was suing for divorce.

I gathered that their affair was older than Warners would allow--officially, they were supposed to have met on the set of *Brother Rat* in July 1938. Whatever the case, there was no question about their mutual attraction. He saw the small, fine bones, the easy smile, and wide-eyed brown gaze that had always been his ideal of female beauty. And Jane?

An undated interview clip preserved in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin gives a hint of what, besides simple desire, drew her to Ronald **Reagan** in 1938, and transformed her. She admitted to being unable to trust or confide in anyone until she met him:

Marrying Ronnie worked a miracle for me. It changed a dull, suspicious, anxious woman [into] someone at ease.... I was drawn to him at once.... He was such a sunny person... genuinely and spontaneously nice.

So far this chapter has been largely about sex. How could it not be? We were, all of us, actors and writers and musicians and dancers, so young, healthy, and hedonistic in one of the most sensual cities since Sodom. In any case, our sensuality went beyond sex into a general celebration of the life physical. We exercised hard (in the surf, I was as lithe as the next man) and later, driving off to cocktails somewhere in loose pale clothes, we felt proud of our lean, tanned bodies. God, how good we felt there!

Make that good-looking, one of my friends from that time amends, with a sad jangle of oversized earrings. (To me, she will always be a sleek teenage half-Turk, Bubbles Schinasi, but she answers now to Mrs. Arthur Hornblow, Jr.) And predatory. When Clark Gable or Errol or Ty Power came into the room, you could just feel the heat waves shimmering.

What about **Reagan**?

Oh no, never Ronnie.

Why? He was as attractive as any of those guys.

Yes, but female desire is attuned to male desire. Clark, Errol, obviously were crazy about women. Ronnie just--wasn't. I don't think he ever looked at Ann Sheridan, and she was luscious.

Perhaps not. He certainly admired a lot of other girls, though, and was admired right back. I remember a class of Los Angeles art students voting him the most nearly perfect male body in Hollywood, and at least two women told me that his voice was irresistible, particularly the way he had of breathing around words. I also recall him sitting on the sand with a bunch of guys ogling some pouter pigeon--it may have been Jane--as she breasted her way into the sea. He must have been under orders not to wear spectacles in public, because he peered painfully at the retreating figure. Then he jabbed at the sides of his eyes, pulling the flesh tight, and stared long and hard through sloed slits. The effect was of almost oriental lechery.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Squeals of delight: Jane Wyman and **Reagan** were a photogenic couple, savoring the sun in Tinseltown's prewar days

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 31**LENGTH:** 1565 words**HEADLINE:** The Role of a Lifetime**HIGHLIGHT:**

At long last, as he turns 70, **Reagan** reaches the White House--an actor at the pinnacle. What was he really like? What did he believe? A portrait in power.

BODY:

Ronald **Reagan** adjusted his white tie in the mirror, then, conscious of being watched, spun on his dance pumps, winked, and leaped into the air. His heels clicked. I'm the President of the United States! he said.

And so he was, happily and confirmedly, after an Inauguration Day that had realigned the American political landscape with a suddenness unmatched since Franklin Roosevelt's accession to power in 1933. Unlike his predecessors, he had seen no reason to take the oath of office behind the Capitol, in the shade, overlooking a dull parking lot. Instead, he staged the ceremony on the great building's front terrace, where he could feel the sun on his face (the gray sky broke and sent down a shaft of light as he began to speak). He directed his oratory down the sweep of its steps, the slope of its park, reverberantly onward and outward, through loudspeakers and monitors and transistors, along the expanding angles of Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues and the grand axis of the Mall, crowded with thirty-two thousand people, across the Potomac and over the Blue Ridge Mountains, west, west, west.

The first **Reagan** Inaugural was not so much an address to posterity as a conversation with ordinary Americans who could not afford to attend the most expensive exercises in presidential history. (The cost of hiring obligatory morning dress--pearl-gray vest, silk tie, and cutaway coat--acted as a deterrent to the clerks and cabbies whom **Reagan** addressed in his speech.) But they could listen, and they could look at him towering over his drained little predecessor, noting above all the way that he faced. After all the self-doubt of the Seventies, Ronald **Reagan** gave his back to Islam and Communism and Malaise, and just about burst the tube of every television set in the country with his message that Independence was redeclared.

What did he see that night in the mirror of the Washington Hilton Hotel holding room, just before he turned to face his family and clicked his newly presidential heels? More to the point, what did the mirror see?

A man just about to turn seventy, one inch taller than six feet, weighing about a hundred and eighty-five pounds stripped, broad as a surfboard and almost as hard, superbly balanced, glowing with health and handsome enough for a second career in the movies. Hair so dense and fine as to

amount to a Marvel Comics helmet, slicked with Brylcreem and water to a blue-black sheen, diffusing any hint of gray. Teeth white, gums like a boy's (dentists even praise the clarity of his saliva), breath sweet, fingernails naturally shiny, unribbed, lucent as seashells. No fidgety mannerisms; an air of always being comfortable in his clothes. Rather fewer wrinkles, especially about the jowls, than photographers remember seeing a few years ago. Absolutely no makeup--just a clear and sanguineous complexion that blushes the moment he sips alcohol, or fears a woman has overheard one of his ribald jokes.

Since salubrity is an important aspect of American power--we do not like our leaders to look unhealthy, as Richard Nixon discovered--and since **Reagan's** physical impact is so potent, we might ponder its larger implications. This perfectly functioning body (weak eyes, deaf right ear, and a swelling prostate aside) moves, or rather glides, toward every obstacle with neither hesitation nor hurry. It is driven by a strange will consisting mainly of paradoxes: aggression without hostility, ego without vanity, superiority without snobbery, and that moral passion **Reagan** describes as a clean hatred. Unlike Woodrow Wilson or Jimmy Carter, with their killer smiles and passion to preach, he has no contempt for the ungodly, nor does he have Theodore Roosevelt's bulldozer determination to move in a straight line. He advances by simply not noticing obstructions. Thus, when one deflects him, he assumes he has changed course voluntarily, and if it rolls out of his way, shows neither surprise nor gratitude.

Earlier today, for example, Iran relieved him of Carter's hostage problem before he had so much as come down from Capitol Hill. Were the 52 freed so soon after his speech for fear of him, or as a final taunt to Carter, or was the timing a mere matter of logistics? Whatever the truth, **Reagan** has the gift of luck.

He is also endowed with a happy nature, his optimism unquenchable, his smile enchantingly crooked, his laughter impossible to resist. If these attributes, together with all the others listed above, do not constitute grace, in the old sense of favors granted by God, then the word has no meaning. Even his rare explosions of anger are, in an odd way, benign, as when he silently and accurately hurled a bunch of keys at Mike Deaver's breastbone, or referred a disloyal California legislator to the baseball bat in his office: I should have shoved it up your ass and broken it off. But such explosions only briefly disturb his equanimity, which otherwise surrounds him like a pool. He seems nerveless, incapable of fear, as when he once piled too many rocks into a trailer at Rancho del Cielo, and found his Jeep being dragged backward down a boulder-strewn escarpment: Sisyphus relaxedly steering in reverse, while all four wheels scrabbled for stability, and the engine screamed nying-nying-nying.

The world that rotates inside his cerebellum is, if not beautiful, encouragingly rich and self-renewing. It is washed by seas whose natural ozone produces a healthful brown smog over coastal highways, and rinsed by rivers that purify themselves whenever they flow over gravel. Its rocks suppurate with so much untapped oil that Alaska alone has more petroleum reserves than Saudi Arabia. Americans should not feel guilty about pumping this bounty into their private cars; the automobile has exactly the same fuel-efficiency rating as the bus.

Reagan's world is not entirely without environmental problems. It glows with the radioactivity of coal burners (much more dangerous than nuclear plants), and is plagued by deadly diseases spread by insects, because pesticides such as DDT have been prematurely outlawed. Acid rain, caused by an excess of trees, threatens much of the industrial northeast. Geopolitically, the globe presents many challenges. Almost all its heads of government, with the exception of Margaret Thatcher, are older than himself; China seems determined to reincorporate with Taiwan, although **Reagan's** personal preference would be to recognize them both; similarly, North and South Vietnam should never have been permitted to join, having been separate nations for centuries. The Soviet Union, bent on invading the United States via Mexico (a stratagem of Nikolai Lenin), is largely proof against retaliation, its vital industries throbbing away in hardened underground caverns; the economy of South America is a mess, particularly in Portuguese-speaking Bolivia; even the Last Best Hope of Man is under siege by the United Nations, which threatens to replace the Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments with covenants abolishing private property.

In fairness toward Ronald **Reagan**, even those most horrified by his encyclopedic ignorance must accept that a President-elect has for years been fielding hundreds, sometimes thousands, of questions a day, and often has to improvise policy, or call up anecdotes on the spot, when he is groggy with fatigue. What horrifies, though, is that **Reagan** says exactly the same things when he is fresh, and after he has been repeatedly corrected; his beliefs are as unerasable as the grooves of an LP. The only reliable way to recognize the approach of a **Reagan** untruism is to listen for signal phrases: I have been told... and, As I've said many times...

When he expresses views simply and declaratively, they should nevertheless be taken seriously, because they represent core philosophy. God wrote the Bible, and the Bible condones capital punishment. Sodomy is a sin. However, homosexuals have a Constitutional right to teach in public schools. Abortion is murder. Property is sacrosanct; so is privacy. Men may bear arms. Women are superior to men, therefore equal rights will downgrade them. Art should affirm moral values. Hard work is mandatory, boredom impermissible. Charity begins at home. Communism is evil because it saps the individual will. When men fail to drive toward a goal or purpose, but only drift, the drift is always toward barbarism.

The hardening of his mind would seem to be the result of several factors beside the onset of old age. One is the big secret of top-level politics: that most of its duties are merely automatic, and that most decisions are a matter of initialing the recommendations of underlings. For a long time now, he has been doing things over: campaigning for the Governorship twice, traveling from town to town and delivering the same basic speech (with variations from his well-worn file of variations); spending two terms in Sacramento, each consisting of four budget battles, four legislative sessions, four summers, and four seasons of strategy. And there have been three campaigns for the Presidency, during which the towns and speeches and babies and barbecues streamed into the equivalent of a video loop. No wonder **Reagan** sometimes gives the impression of being incapable of surprise.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Ego without vanity: New to Washington, **Reagan** is comfortable in his clothes and certain in his beliefs ; PHOTO: Family matters: Patti, Nancy, **Reagan**, Michael, Maureen and Ron in '76. **Reagan** was an aloof father, leaving his kids hungry for his attention.

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 32**LENGTH:** 681 words**HEADLINE:** The Woman Who Kept Him Going**BODY:**

Morris uses the occasion of the evening of the Inauguration, in 1981, to describe the extended **Reagan** family--and especially Nancy, the center of the new president's universe.

Nancy **Reagan's** determination to keep her husband well fed, well rested, and undistracted by any hint of family problems (of which there are plenty) has profoundly indebted him to her. To her credit, Nancy has never pretended fully to understand Ronald **Reagan's** aloof yet ardent nature. She claims only to love him back, and know him (insofar as he can be known) better than anyone else. This knowledge extends to his principal weakness, a tendency to trust everybody, which she compensates for by trusting nobody at all. There is a photograph of the **Reagans** being received by Pope Paul VI, in which it is clear that His Holiness better not mess with Ronnie.

In a town famous for its coldness--where one can be in mid-sentence at a cocktail party, only to find one's interlocutor striding away sans any apology at first sight of somebody more famous--Nancy will soon be feared by many as an operator par excellence. Although her famous father Dr. Loyal Davis (I have his hands... surgeon's hands) is actually only her stepfather, she seems to have inherited his neurologist's conviction that all human behavior can be controlled, if necessary by cutting.

As yet, she has few people to protect **Reagan** from. The new administration is being formed with spectacular speed and efficiency, and loyalty to last year's campaign promises is a condition of appointment. Liberals in Congress and the national press are in no hurry to challenge so popular a President, while Washington hostesses delight at the message winked by Nancy's beaded, white, one-shoulder Galanos gown: it is party time again on the Potomac. Not for her the dimmed lights and reluctant white wine of the Carter era, Rosalynn's dour discussions of mental health and human rights. Her compatibles are the fashionable wives of very rich men and amusing walkers like Truman Capote and Jerry Zipkin, who keep her supplied with scuttlebutt from both coasts. She loves to lunch out, gives good phone, and never tries to finish her husband's jokes. In a word, the **Reagans** look like fun.

And what of their children? They are a dissimilar group, divided between two mothers, united only by their starved love for Ronald **Reagan**. The President simultaneously dazzles and intimidates them with his celebrity, now amplified beyond imagining by the busyness of power. He was always a remote father (delicious though his company was, when available), and was made shy by their love when they tried to express it. What chance of requital now, as Dad becomes the father of all the people?

Ron **Reagan**, 22, is a decent and well-balanced youth, with all of his father's charm and none of his mystery. Although the beautifully proportioned body is recognizable to anyone who ever swam at Lowell Park in the 1920s, the long Botticellian face is sui generis. Patti Davis, 28, is an authentic product of the Age of Aquarius, sexually and pharmaceutically adventurous, limber from yoga, pro-abortion and anti-nuke, vegetarian, guitar-thumping, street-smart. Like all of the **Reagan** children, she is perpetually short of money.

Michael **Reagan** is the most starved child of all, not even flesh of **Reagan's** flesh, a 35-year-old cauldron of secret shame (he was repeatedly molested by a camp counselor in childhood) and occasional uncontrollable anger, which he vents in smashed glass and telephone tirades. He used to be proud of his father's nickname for him, schmuck, until he looked it up in a Yiddish dictionary.

Maureen, at 40, is the eldest and largest of the President's children, her brilliant smile and button nose reminding the world that there once was another Mrs. **Reagan**. Had she Jane Wyman's graceful body, she might have made a career in show business, since she sings and acts well, memorizes like a VCR and luxuriates in the spotlight.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: His best friend: 'I can't imagine life without her,' **Reagan** once said of Nancy

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 34**LENGTH:** 1601 words**HEADLINE:** At the Edge of Death**HIGHLIGHT:**

On that gray March day in 1981, the president came closer than we thought to succumbing to an assassin's bullet. The inside story of the shooting.

BODY:

On March 30, Ronald **Reagan's** schedule called for him to return to the hotel where, seventy days before, he had clicked his heels and saluted himself as President of the United States. He had a speech to deliver after lunch to the Building Trades Council of the AFL-CIO. Without knowing why--some instinct against offending blue-collar sensibilities, perhaps?--he took off his usual Corum gold watch, and exchanged it for one that was older and cheaper.

Reagan's speech at the Washington Hilton was an uninspired appeal for support of his budget proposals. He got just enough applause to satisfy him, and left the hotel at 2:25 p.m., stepping through a side door into gray, damp afternoon light. The usual retinue accompanied him: his doctor, a senior aide (Michael Deaver), three or four Secret Service agents, and James Brady, Press Secretary to the President, a fuzzy bear of a man loping a yard or two behind. The usual motorcade awaited in the hotel's curveway, not more than thirteen feet ahead, engines humming; the usual little knot of press and onlookers stood to his left, restrained by the usual cops.

What was not usual was a fluttering, cracking noise in the crowd as he raised his arm to wave. A force like a battering ram shoved him forward, and he found himself hurtling through the open door of the presidential limousine. (He thought he caught a glimpse, as he passed the window, of a blond bystander crouched in police-pistol style, spraying bullets: two zinged against the metal and bulletproof glass around him.) He hit his head on the doorjamb and fell onto the car's transmission hump, so violently that his upper back was almost paralyzed with pain. Haul ass! a voice in his ear shouted. Let's get out of here!

Now it was the car that was moving, accelerating down the slope of Connecticut Avenue back toward the White House. The way was clear, because the avenue was already cordoned off. In seconds they were traveling at sixty miles an hour. **Reagan** realized that the heavy body lying on him was that of Jerry Parr, his White House security chief. Jerry, get off, I think you've broken one of my ribs, he managed to say, but then pain choked his voice, and blood began to cough from his lungs. He assumed, as did Parr, that he had spiked himself internally. Neither of them yet knew that six bullets fired in less than two seconds had hit four people outside the Hilton; that James Brady was on the sidewalk with a shattered skull; and that one of the bullets was now lying within an inch of **Reagan's** heart. It was a .22 Devastator, designed to explode on impact. Missing flesh at first, the

slug had hit his car's armored right-rear panel and forged itself into a tiny, high-speed circular saw blade, spinning into his chest with such surgical precision that Parr, feeling him all over, detected no sign of entry.

Rawhide not hurt, Parr radioed to an agent in the car behind, using the President's code name. He was deliberately lying, to mislead eavesdroppers on the Secret Service frequency. Let's hustle, he added, hoping that his colleague would sense that Rawhide was, on the contrary, hurt quite badly. The blood Parr saw, bright and frothy, frightened him enough to redirect the motorcade along Seventeenth Street, then west to George Washington University Hospital.

Reagan, ashen-faced, was by now having difficulty breathing. He made himself get out and walk toward the emergency-room door. Parr offered no help, sensing that it was important to him to cover the fifteen yards alone. Just inside, out of public sight, the President's knees buckled and his eyes rolled up.

He remained conscious enough to feel himself being caught up, carried, laid on a cart, and stripped. His lungs could not take in enough air; he was afraid of suffocating. A voice cried, Let's get some oxygen into him. He could not move under the mask they clamped on his face. His vision tunneled: all he could see above the mask's bulge was a white tiled ceiling. He did not know that he was losing blood internally, at such a rate that his systolic pressure dropped by half. Yet his obstinate heart continued to beat, lowering the pressure still further, until his brain was at the point of drought.

By now it was clear that one intravenous line was not going to be enough to save his life: packed red-blood cells and fluid would have to be sloshed into him through three more arterial lines that were not so much conduits as canals. Only when a nurse lifted his left arm to insert one did the neat slit on the side of his chest manifest itself. Oh-oh, he's been shot.

Earlier, when the white phone rang on the emergency-room desk, signifying a White House extreme response alert, a voice had said, without elaboration, The Presidential motorcade is en route to your facility. **Reagan's** car had arrived so quickly that the sound of beepers paging senior staff physicians mixed with the wail of sirens outside. Trauma teams had one fully equipped bay ready for the President, while another was set up for James Brady, coming separately by ambulance. Yet another awaited Timothy McCarthy, a Secret Service agent shot in the chest. Walkie-talkie messages advised that the blond bystander's fourth victim, a Washington policeman, was being treated elsewhere for a bullet to the spine.

All of this urgency built up into a sort of audiovisual montage around **Reagan**, more multilayered than he could register. Compounding it was a huge influx of agents from the White House and the FBI, many of them waving guns. Jerry Parr blocked off a protective perimeter around the emergency area, while waves of panic and grief eddied outward into the drizzle. The Department of Defense sent out a worldwide advisory, raising crisis readiness one notch.

Four men mown down in less than two seconds by a person impossible to see either before or after the chattering explosions; rain; ricochets; a mad scrimmage; yet within all the chaos, an accidental geometry so precise as to bring **Reagan** to the edge of death. We had no idea how close the President actually came to dying that afternoon. The fact that he lost 3,500 cubic centimeters of blood--well over half his total supply--was suppressed for a long time. So was another, literally chilling detail: some of the replacement packs pumped into him had not been warmed enough after refrigeration. Ultimately, he traded half of his own fresh blood for the staler, cooler contributions of strangers--a major physiological insult from which he would never entirely recover.

Joseph Giordano, head of the ER trauma team, inserted two chest tubes to relieve the pressure in **Reagan's** pleural cavity. But blood continued to gush. An X-ray showed the Devastator floating palely behind the heart shadow. Or was it actually in it? At first, not even Dr. Benjamin Aaron, the hospital's senior thoracic surgeon, could tell. He inferred, however, that the bullet had been deflected by a rib and expressed through some major vascular structure. It would have to be removed to stop the bleeding, which was now a steady and lethal 300 cc. per quarter hour. That meant an immediate

thoracotomy. After fifty minutes in the trauma unit, the President was wheeled to Operating Room 2, Nancy holding his hand.

Notwithstanding his failure to remember the ensuing hours, he was already coming back from the edge, with systolic pressure reverted to 120 and, incredibly, his wit intact. The little jokes Ronald **Reagan** perpetrated, through blood-caked lips, before lapsing into unconsciousness have become part of American legend: Honey, I forgot to duck.

The operation, beginning at 3:24 p.m., was not easy. It took me forty minutes to get through that chest, Dr. Aaron told Deaver. I have never in my life seen a chest like that on a man his age. Another quarter hour was spent feeling for the bullet, which lay so deep in lung tissue that it had to be tracked with a catheter and squeezed out like a tiddlywink. Bleeding soon stopped. The President's chest was closed at 5:20 p.m. He had sailed through surgery, the hospital announced, and was an excellent physical specimen.

Reagan's recovery, unlike that of the brain-damaged Brady, was instantaneous. (News of the other victims was kept from him, to avoid complicating his emotions.) Regaining consciousness at 7:30, he was unable to continue joking aloud, because tubes crammed his nose and throat. So he reverted to weak scribbles on pink paper:

I'd like to do this scene again--starting at the hotel

He was able to speak again when aides visited him the following morning, March 31--I should have known I wasn't going to avoid a staff meeting--and he signed a bill they had brought, to demonstrate that he still was President of the United States. Four nights after the operation, however, **Reagan** developed a mysterious fever, and on April 4 began to bring up fresh blood. Renewed terror spread through the West Wing: his doctors could not diagnose what was wrong. He proceeded to heal himself, with the help of broad-spectrum antibiotics, over the course of the next week. On April 11, the President was well enough to walk out of the hospital on his wife's arm, with Jerry Parr again behind him, as nurses clapped and cried. The entire White House staff was waiting for him in the Rose Garden, under light spring rain.

I know it's going to be a long recovery, he wrote on his first evening back in the White House. Whatever happens now I owe my life to God and will try to serve him every way I can.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: 'Oh-oh, he's been shot': Wounded, he traded half his own blood for the cooler contributions of others ; PHOTO: A difficult recovery: This image was reportedly doctored to remove a tube protruding from his robe

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*Newsweek October 4, 1999,*Copyright 1999 Newsweek
Newsweek

October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition

SECTION: SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 36**LENGTH:** 1958 words**HEADLINE:** As the Shadows Lengthened**HIGHLIGHT:**

The hour was late. In 1986, after **Reagan's** last campaign, Iran-contra broke, soiling a once Teflon White House. An aging president's lowest moments.

BODY:

On October 22, 1986, the president signed a tax-reform bill on the South Lawn of the White House, before thousands of applauding supporters, and was puzzled to notice that **Reagan** came out of his pen before Ronald. Tiredness--or whatever else had begun to ail him--notwithstanding, he had to embark now on the last campaign of his political career, on behalf of a raft of Republican members of Congress facing difficult re-elections in November. He traveled across the country with his usual detached enjoyment, and was particularly pleased when Admiral John Poindexter, the national security adviser, informed him, forty-eight hours before Election Day, that David Jacobsen, one of the five remaining Beirut hostages, had been released. **Reagan** accepted this happy coincidence as proof that all things happen for the best--his mother's favorite bromide. For a while it seemed that Poindexter might be able to supply another hostage, but Americans went to vote on Tuesday without such an added inducement. By late evening, two things were clear: that the Democratic Party had regained control of the Senate, and that the news media were avidly interested in a story, just published by the Lebanese weekly *Al-Shiraa*, that Robert C. Bud McFarlane had recently visited Iran in an airman's uniform, with two planeloads of military hardware, and a message from the President of the United States.

In due course, recently was corrected to May 1986, and the two planeloads shrank to a single pallet of spare parts for Hawk missile batteries, apparently purchased by Iran from Israel to use against Iraq. But the other facts about McFarlane's journey to the heart of darkness were too specific to ignore, especially when two of his traveling companions were identified as employees of the **Reagan** National Security Council: Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and Howard J. Teicher. They were accompanied by two CIA operatives, one of whom spoke Farsi. The complete roster suggested that Admiral Poindexter and William J. Casey, the CIA director, must have authorized the trip, if not Ronald **Reagan** himself. Such august names, and the staring fact that **Reagan's** former national security adviser was doing some kind of military business with a terrorist state, aroused an instant moral uproar.

The President lost no time in taking a defiantly righteous stance, declaring on November 6 that the stories about McFarlane's trip had no foundation. The United States had no mercenary interest in Iran, whose responsibility for the kidnapping and murder of American hostages in Lebanon was a matter of international notoriety. We will never pay off terrorists, because that only encourages more

of it.

But what was it? More terrorism, or more trade? And what price moral resolution, when the price of David Jacobsen turned out to be 500 TOW antitank missiles, delivered just five days before his release? Even if the TOWs were (like the Hawks) obsolescent equipment that Israel no longer needed, the U.S. Treasury seemed to have been defrauded. Congress, after all, had supplied the missiles to Israel in the first place as aid, not merchandise. While **Reagan** denied that there was any secret arms-for-hostages deal, 500 brand-new TOWs were en route to Israel via a CIA proprietary airline, courtesy of the American taxpayer.

The Iran Initiative, so called by McFarlane (perhaps in the hope that it would attain the prestige of the Strategic Defense Initiative), has been pretty universally accepted as a violation of American and moral law. Ronald **Reagan** authorized it almost sixteen months before its consequences broke upon him. He did so in a moment of weakness, as he lay recovering from cancer surgery in Bethesda Naval Hospital:

Thursday July 18, 1985

What a morning--the Dr. took the metal clips out of my incision--what an improvement that made... he told me he'd take the feeding tubes out before lunch and he did. Such a feeling of freedom....

Nancy and I had lunch, I find that I can only eat a few mouthfuls. A lot of cards and messages to look at. Then around 4:30 p.m. a wave out of the window to the press and down to X-Ray.

Bud came by--it seems 2 members of the Iranian govt. want to establish talks with us. I'm sending Bud to meet them in a neutral country.

Gorbachev has passed the word he'd like to establish a private channel of communications....

I watched a TV press round table on their handling of my illness. I detected an effort on the part of some... to use the term--The President has cancer. My Dr's said use of the present tense is a mis-statement. The President had cancer--it has been removed.

Let us in fairness consider this diary entry of a half-deaf man who has, only five days before, been hacked open from pubis to breastbone, and, seventy-two hours before, received about the most terrifying news that doctors can deliver: a positive biopsy. He has been awake since 5:15 a.m., and is trying without much success to get his shocked and shortened intestinal system back into action. At 10:22 a.m. (the diary's paragraph arrangement is misleading), an expressionless little man comes in and drones something about wanting to meet with some reform-minded Iranians. Even Donald Regan, who monitors the briefing, hears nothing but a general mention of hostages still in captivity. If there is any implication that McFarlane's foreign contacts might be helpful, one day, in springing them, it is vague enough not to alarm the famously reactive Chief of Staff. **Reagan**, like Regan, hears nothing about hostages worth recording. He hears only the encouraging words want and talks and neutral applied to two Iranian government officials, together with what sounds like a request for travel. He says yes, and the little man is gone by 10:45.

The rest of the day is occupied with medical matters. Dr. Steven Rosenberg, who gave the President his cancer confirmation on Monday, may say privately that Ronald **Reagan** is in the top one percentile of patients exhibiting self-control at le moment critique. But major surgery is an insult to both body and mind, no matter how strong the former or how determined the latter. The primary instinct of every cell and circuit is to recuperate. Hence the characteristic abstraction of convalescents. They are otherwise engaged; they take in only a minimum of what the healthy try to tell them.

Reagan's July 18 diary entry is terse, but historically important. It was written at the time, whereas his and McFarlane's and Regan's later versions of the conversation (ten, by one count) vary. Did McFarlane indeed tell him that representatives of the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, had

relayed a message from representatives of Iran's Speaker of Parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, to the effect that certain authoritative Iranians wanted to develop a dialogue with the West? And did McFarlane add that his Iranian contacts were confident that they could achieve the release of the seven Americans now held hostage in Lebanon? Again, did McFarlane drop the name of Manucher Ghorbanifar as a classic Middle Eastern volunteer middleman, who naturally felt that the Iranians should show some gain in any hostage transaction?

One can almost hear, in a quiet corner of the Vier Jahreszeiten Hotel in Hamburg, the soft rubbing of Manucher Ghorbanifar's finger and thumb as he talked of a few hundred TOWs from Israel to spring the first hostage. Ghorbanifar was a Persian carpet dealer, a former secret policeman to the Shah, a rumored Israeli spy... but he flourishes in other books. The question this one asks is, did Ronald **Reagan** hear any such soft rubbing, in his hospital room on July 18, 1985? McFarlane insists that he did.

The obfuscation began at a pre-brief (dress rehearsal) before **Reagan's** disastrous press conference of November 19, 1986. He was capable of white lies when he thought his mother's ghost would approve--primarily to avoid hurting people or breaching confidences--and whoppers if he had read them in conservative magazines, but, as both pre-brief and press conference showed, he was terrible at concealing what he knew to be true.

I attended the former meeting, to the extreme consternation of Peter Wallison, the White House counsel, and found Dutch querulously dependent on Admiral Poindexter for basic facts. (Regan, his normal prompter, was out of town.) He fumbled the first question about Iran's terrorist record--What answer have we got on that?--and could not manage the details of the next, about the specifics of the arms transfer.

Not quite accurate, Mr. President, Poindexter said calmly. I recommend you say all shipments out of the United States or by third parties could be placed in one aircraft.

It would have to have been a prodigious aircraft, given the fact that Iran had received, in aggregate, 2,004 TOWs, eighteen Hawks, and more than two hundred Hawk spare parts. But few of us knew that on November 19, 1986, and if Dutch did--having authorized all the shipments--he was very willing to forget. Poindexter also made sure that the word Israel slipped his memory. If asked whether the United States had authorized the Peres government to ship arms to Iran--arms we ourselves provided, bought, and paid for--the President should talk only vaguely of a third country.

Dutch did not like this. He kept trying to say third country, but his mental phonograph replayed it as Israel. Perhaps, he said unhappily, I will just say I won't answer questions on how the arms were delivered.

He did better when asked about the possible illegality of his authorizations under the Arms Export Control Act, which required him to report foreign military sales to Congress. I am granted certain rights and waivers as President... I felt it was in the interests of the national security to go forward with this initiative.... I was within my rights to notify Congress at a time that I should choose. Now Wallison looked unhappy, feeling that he had given the right answer to the wrong question. Dutch agreed to say only that he had relied throughout on the counsel of Attorney General Edwin Meese.

The atmosphere in the White House theater, already apprehensive, became near-desperate when he guessed that the total value of the shipments might be one billion dollars (Much less, Mr. President! Poindexter groaned. Don't get into specifics!), and stated that CIA representatives were not engaged in the Initiative (Yes, sir, they were!).

Predictably, he floundered at the press conference that night, avoiding the I word with such obvious clumsiness that viewers actually sympathized with him. The White House was forced to issue a presidential clarification twenty minutes after he stepped down from the podium.

They were out for blood, he wrote in his diary, but took comfort in the flattery of a few sympathetic

aides. Our gang seems to feel 'I done good'.

Attorney General Meese came to see the Chief on the morning of Monday, November 24, to say that, after reviewing documents to do with the Iran Initiative not yet shredded by Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North, he had found evidence of what looked like a diversion of funds to the Nicaraguan contras.

I knew something had gone seriously wrong when I was barred from the President's regular issues lunch with senior staff. At three that afternoon, I waylaid Pat Buchanan and asked what had been discussed.

Oh, a new set of economic figures the President is taken with.

But what about Iran?

Nothing. Hardly touched on it.

I found this hard to believe, and stared at him. He looked back as he had done once before, long and searchingly.

The music's stopped playing, he said.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: The beginning of the end: After his 1984 re-election triumph, the president authorized the Iran Initiative'--from the hospital, as he was recovering from a cancer operation ; PHOTO: The reckoning: An anguished **Reagan** receives a report from John Tower and Edmund Muskie saying it was in fact an arms-for-hostages deal

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 40**LENGTH:** 793 words**HEADLINE:** The Gipper's 'Long Goodbye'**HIGHLIGHT:**

In the twilight, the former president, a victim of Alzheimer's, slips away

BODY:

In Los Angeles on December 9, 1994, I braced myself and went to see Dutch in his skyscraper suite. When I entered his office, he was sitting in the same quiet pose he always assumed during personal time at the White House: glossy head tilted forward, jacket sleeves half on his desk, white cuffs protruding exactly one inch, his black Parker lying ready on its own polished leather reflection. He rose with his usual air of gentle surprise, but I got the feeling that if I had come in through the window he would have reacted no differently. As I made desperate small talk, he held on to the edge of his desk.

Mr. President, those lead soldiers make a great display with all your books! Like when you were sick with pneumonia in 1915, and played with armies on the counterpane? He smiled faintly, not remembering, and I noticed something unimaginable before: a patch of silvery stubble on his chin. It glowed incandescently as a sunbeam slanted across his face.

Uh, the fellow who made them, he--uh, came...

Came here and presented them to you?

Yes. He--we--we had to make space, uh--for them. Move those trees. Mystified, I followed his gaze, and saw only a set of Papers of the Presidents: Ronald **Reagan**, relegated to the shelf beneath the soldiers. Well, if Keats could liken stacked volumes to garner's of grain, I guessed Dutch could call his collected works trees, if he wanted. They did after all bear fruit, in a dry sort of way. And how he had always loved to prune speech drafts and proclamations, just as he pruned the live oaks and madronas at Rancho del Cielo!

Courteous as ever, he took me to see something framed on the far wall... a pleasant riverside watercolor study presented itself. I recognized every curve of the oak trees and the long grassy slope of the meadow. This, Dutch breathed, is where I was a lifeguard for seven [sic] summers. I saved 77 lives. And you know, none of 'em ever thanked me!

I freed myself as soon as I could, and before going downstairs asked his secretary if I could see the original manuscript of the Alzheimer's letter he wrote the nation in November 1994. It had the simplicity of genius, or at least the simplicity of a fundamentally religious nature accepting the

inevitable: I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life...

And as if on cue, Dutch wandered in, not seeing me, going from entrance door to exit door. A young woman ran after him. No, Mr. President, you don't want to walk that way! Shortly afterward, I saw him being escorted to the elevator for his limousine ride home, surrounded by bored-looking Secret Service agents.

Finally, **Edmund Morris** muses on the last lines of Goethe's Faust, invoking Ewig-weibliche, The Eternal Feminine, who now comforts the ailing president.

Ronald **Reagan**, God knows, never had much time for poetry or music, but I like to think that those lines would have resonated with him, had he been coaxed to listen to them before he lost his mind. They compressed just about all of his simple philosophy: that permanent truths apply, that prayers are answered, that the common man is wise, and that life with a loving Ewig-weibliche is the nearest thing to Heaven.

Nancy **Reagan**, God knows further, is no Gretchen. Yet Dutch is lucky to have been loved by her so passionately and exclusively for nearly fifty years. His children would argue that her monomania cramped his emotions and made him overly dependent on her. Less querulous observers might counter that by freeing him of family cares, she enabled him to father the **Reagan** Revolution.

At any rate, the doctor's daughter has made his long good-bye as comforting as possible. At the time of writing, hers is the only face he still recognizes. He still has his slow, unstoppable energy. He will rake leaves from the pool for hours, not understanding that they are being surreptitiously replenished by his Secret Service men. Perplexities crowd upon him. Why do these printed shapes beneath his moving finger not form themselves into words, as they used to when Nelle read to him? Who is this big brown-suited man in the television documentary, saluting and smiling? Why does the light go dim when clouds drift together? Why are the fellows so uncooperative at three in the morning, when he dresses for an urgent appointment? Why do magnolia blossoms, pristine on the tree, darken when they fall? And what is this pale ceramic object on the sandy floor of his fish tank at Fox Plaza? A miniature white house, with tall classical columns, hauntingly familiar. He takes it home, clenched wet in his fist: This is... something to do with me... I'm not sure what.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Into the sunset: Courteous and brave as always, **Reagan** is under Nancy's care

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 30**LENGTH:** 613 words**HEADLINE:** A Mystery About the First Marriage**BODY:**

Both Ronald **Reagan** and Jane Wyman have maintained an inflexible public silence about their eight-year marriage, which ended in divorce in 1948. Morris's attempts to interview Wyman were unavailing. What follows is an excerpt, which begins in screenplay form, detailing a conversation between Morris and Nancy **Reagan** about that marriage.

It took half a century, but I was eventually told how Jane made an honest man out of Dutch. My informant was her successor:

PATIO RESTAURANT OF BEL-AIR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES--DAY.

SFX: a quiet splash of fountains, clinking of heavy silver on Villeroy Bosch plates. Down by the pond, a swan stretches his wings and gapes, silently roaring. Author is buying lunch--if Bibb lettuce and Pellegrino water counts as such--for a Former First Lady.

EM:(recounting biographical gossip)... so when Clare found out about Harry and Jeanne, she threatened suicide and--

FFL: (interrupting, her eyes hard as the VB) That's just what Jane did to Ronnie.

EM: Excuse me?

FFL: Said she would kill herself if he didn't marry her.

EM: (reaching furtively for his notebook) You've got to be kidding. (She stares at him) No, you're not.

FFL: Ronnie, of course, didn't... uh... want to marry, he was too... much too young, he was, uh, just playing around. So she sent him a suicide note and swallowed a whole, uh, lot of pills, and got herself taken to the hospital.

EM: Good God.

FFL: As soon as he got the note, he rushed... rushed down there, while they were, uh, pumping her out, and said, Of course I'll marry you! You know how soft... softhearted he is.

EM: Good God.

FFL: (bitterly) She knew which of his buttons to press.

Second wives are, of course, notorious prosecution witnesses. When I told Mrs. **Reagan's** story to Joy Hodges [**Reagan's** singer friend from Des Moines days] she refused to believe it. Dutch was so crazy about her, and Janey about him. But I thought of the nervous breakdown story in Variety, after Dutch's arrival at Warner Bros., and the abrupt split with Mr. Futterman, and the large cruel hands, and investigated Jane's studio work records. Sure enough, a memo dated Oct. 4, 1939, had Wyman hospitalized with a sudden stomach disorder. I spoke to some more people. The Hollywood oral historian Douglas Bell said he had heard Jane tried to kill herself over **Reagan**, but knew no details; Owen Crump was evasive; and Eddie Albert growled, I think I'd better not get into that. Finally, I turned to [MGM story editor] Sam Marx, the ultimate authority on pre-war Hollywood.

At 84, he was at work on a book about the Paul Bern/Jean Harlow murder case, and had useful contacts in the Los Angeles Police Department. He made a few calls on my behalf, without result. There are no records of a medical emergency involving Jane Wyman at the time you say, he told me. I'd be surprised if there were.

Well, I said, she was taken violently ill just as she and Ronnie began to shoot 'Brother Rat and a Baby.' And they did get engaged in the hospital.

Hollywood Receiving Hospital?

The file doesn't say. Why?

There was a young doctor there, known as 'stomach pumper to the stars'.

Why would you be surprised if there were a police report?

Because as I know from the Bern-Harlow case, studios were very good at keeping that sort of thing secret. Warners would have had several cops on the take, ready to go in and erase records. Then again, Nancy might be lying.

When she reacts as quickly as that?

Marx fell into a close-lidded rumination. Well, all I can say is, Ronnie got lucky. Janey was a nice young lady.

From DUTCH: A MEMOIR OF RONALD **REAGAN**. #169; 1999 by **Edmund Morris**. To be published by Random House, Inc.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Ancient history: Did Wyman attempt suicide in order to get **Reagan** to marry her?

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Newsweek**October 4, 1999, U.S. Edition****SECTION:** SPECIAL REPORT; Pg. 38**LENGTH:** 355 words**HEADLINE:** Were the Bushes Just 'the Help'?**BODY:**

Christmas Eve 1988:

I go round to the President-elect's house to interview him. Barbara sits in, knitting dangerously a la Madame Defarge. They clearly have something to get off their collective chest about their eight years as the help, but Bush's preppy politeness keeps moderating her fury.

Gotta tellya, I really love that guy, he's such a terrific fellow. Only one thing kinda bothered me, whichistersay, just never been able to understand--guy never seemed to need anybody.

Except Nancy, says BB, needles accelerando.

Off to Camp David every weekend, never took their kids with 'em! Bar and me, the VP allows, we'd go crazy if we found ourselves up there without a whole bunch of family runnin' around.

Anything else about the President bother you?

Listen, he was a prince of a feller, I'd never say anything against him. Nancy neither... There is a pause as the Bushes exchange glances. Well, sometimes, he says reluctantly, I kinda wished they'd shown-- y'know, a little appreciation. Didn't seem to want us upstairs in the White House.

We would always thank them for their gifts, BB says pointedly.

Guess they didn't always thank us, he goes on. Gave him, oh such a neat present for his 75th birthday, took a whole lot of trouble customizing it to the right measurements, borrowed his boots so it would stand up real pretty--

He notices my perplexity and stands up, a huge, hurt, lovable, distressingly ordinary man. Lemme show you. We had a duplicate made.

He escorts me to a bathroom upstairs, outside of which stands the single most terrifying piece of kitsch I have ever seen. It would not be out of place at Auschwitz. There, standing booted and spurred, are Dutch's feet and lower legs, supporting, like some flattened dwarfish torso, an embroidered seat, with the presidential seal au centre.

While I marvel, as so often before, at the aesthetic perversity of wellborn WASPs, Bush shakes his

head and says in the same hurt voice, Not a word of thanks.--Author's Diary, December 24, 1988

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GRAPHIC: PHOTO: 'Not a word of thanks': The **Reagans**, Bush said, didn't seem to want us upstairs in the White House'

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 6, 2000**

Hillary, Chelsea and I want to join all Americans in wishing Ronald Reagan a very happy 89th birthday.

Mr. President, your optimism, patriotism and determination have served as an inspiration to all Americans, including me. Today, we honor more than another year in your rich and wonderful life. We honor an idea that was at the heart of your leadership: that America's best days are always ahead of us. With your quiet courage, you continue to remind us of that fundamental truth.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us." President Reagan, ~~you have spent your life giving - to your family, to your country, and to all those who love freedom around the world.~~ And for that, all Americans owe you our deepest gratitude. *in the spirit of R you have given much more.*

Mr. President, Hillary and I wish you and Nancy all the best on this very special day. Happy birthday.

Draft 02/04/00 8pm
Josh Gottheimer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 6, 2000**

Hillary, Chelsea and I want to join all Americans in wishing Ronald Reagan a very happy 98th birthday.

Mr. President, your confidence, patriotism and determination has served an inspiration to all Americans, and, I know, will always be an inspiration to every president. Today, we honor more than another year in your rich and wonderful life. We are honoring America itself, and the lasting idea that America's best days are indeed ahead of us. With your quite courage, you continue to remind us of this fundamental virtue.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us." President Reagan, you have spent a life giving – to your family, to your country, and to all those who love freedom around the world. And for that, all Americans owe you our deepest gratitude.

Mr. President, Hillary and I wish you and Nancy all the best on this very special day.

Draft 02/04/00 8pm
Josh Gottheimer

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 6, 2000

89th Hillary, Chelsea and I want to join all Americans in wishing Ronald Reagan a very happy
99th birthday.

Mr. President, your confidence, patriotism and determination ^{optimism} ~~has~~ ^{have} served an inspiration to all Americans, ~~and, I know, will always be an inspiration to every president.~~ ^{including me} Today, we honor more than another year in your rich and wonderful life. We ~~are honoring~~ ^{are} America itself, ~~and the~~ ^{an idea that} ~~lasting idea~~ ^{always} that America's best days are indeed ahead of us. With your ^{truth.} ~~quite~~ ^{quiet} courage, you continue to remind us of this fundamental virtue. ^{that} ^{at the heart of your leadership.}

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us." President Reagan, you have spent ^{your} a life giving – to your family, to your country, and to all those who love freedom around the world. And for that, all Americans owe you our deepest gratitude.

Mr. President, Hillary and I wish you and Nancy all the best on this very special day.
Happy birthday.

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CNN LARRY KING LIVE, February 6, 1997

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CNN

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TYPE: SHOW**SECTION:** News; Domestic**LENGTH:** 10414 words**HEADLINE:** Ronald **Reagan's** Birthday Show**GUESTS:** Michael **Reagan**, Maureen **Reagan**, Ron **Reagan**, Charlton Heston, Mike Deaver, Howard Baker, James Baker, Alexander Haig, Marlin Fitzwater, Caspar Weinberger, George Shultz**BYLINE:** Larry King**HIGHLIGHT:**Larry and his guests salute Ronald **Reagan** on his **birthday**.**BODY:****LARRY KING, HOST:** It's happy 86th **birthday** for the 40th president of the United States. We salute Ronald **Reagan** next on **LARRY KING** LIVE.**ANNOUNCER:** Now, live from Los Angeles, here's **Larry King**.

KING: Welcome, and happy **birthday**, Ronald **Reagan**. We have got lots of guests and greetings to share. Here to begin the celebration are three **Reagans** -- Michael **Reagan** here in Los Angeles, Ron **Reagan**, who joins us from Seattle -- good to see Ron again -- and Maureen **Reagan** who joins us on the telephone. We understand that both Ronald **Reagan** the 40th president of the United States on his 86th **birthday** and his wife Nancy are watching at home. We wish them all the good wishes of everyone here at CNN and all of their fellow countrymen and the people around the world who are watching tonight as well. Maureen is not with us. You're a little under the weather, Maureen?

MAUREEN **REAGAN**, RONALD **REAGAN'S** DAUGHTER: Oh, I have the flu, Larry, temperature of about 103, you know, nothing really serious.

KING: So you didn't see your dad today?

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: No, no I didn't. I live in northern California.

KING: Maureen, thank you. You're with us on the phone. Ron **Reagan** is in Seattle. Why, Seattle, Ron? What are you doing there?

RON **REAGAN**, RONALD **REAGAN'S** SON: Well, I live in Seattle, Larry, and I had that flu, too. Maureen, I know exactly how you're feeling. It's a horrible thing.

KING: It's called the **Reagan** flu.

RON **REAGAN**: No, no. It comes from China, I think.

KING: How are you, Michael?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**, RONALD **REAGAN'S** SON: I am fine. I had the flu months ago. Months ago. We already went through our family.

KING: See your dad today?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: Didn't see my dad today. I just got back from Washington, D.C. We're going to have lunch with him Sunday. But my dad would say this really is the 47th anniversary of his 39th **birthday**.

KING: He went to the office today, did he not?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: He goes to the office every day. He's there every single day, and he's really great at the office. I love having lunch with him at the office. We go up on Saturdays or Sundays and see him with the family, but when you see him at the office, he is really vibrant. He loves walking around with all those windows and pointing out what's going on on the shoreline. And the history that's within his office is unbelievable.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: Larry, today he had a visit from a Brownie troop, and they had **birthday** cake. And as I am sure you remember, he is one of the great dessert people of all times.

KING: The great.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: So today, he got two **birthday** cakes, one at lunchtime and one again this evening. So we're missing out on bigtime **birthday** cake today.

KING: He would destroy **birthday** -- he would destroy desserts at lunch. I had lunch with him at the Bel Air Hotel once. He destroyed like three desserts.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: Big dessert person. I must say I came by my sweet tooth honestly.

KING: Ron, when was the last time you saw dad?

RON **REAGAN**: Actually, it has been a while. I haven't been able to get down there. I talked to him this morning though, and he seemed very chipper. And I asked him about cake, too, so I'm glad that he is getting a couple of them. You have never seen an unhappier person than dad when he's

on a diet and having to eat like, you know, broiled grapefruit or something.

MICHAEL REAGAN: There's a great story that Maureen will remember. We were on the plane flying down, 1992, to Houston, Texas, and he was kind of on a diet, getting ready for that big speech before the convention. Nancy had left the room, and what we did while Nancy was gone is we took all of our cake, took a bite out of it, or out of our pie, and then we put it at the table in front of dad at the table where he was sitting, and put a fork in his hand. And when Nancy came out, here was dad with this fork with all of this cake and all this pie in front of him. And he was just smiling saying, hi, dear, how are you? I mean, he is -- he has a sweet tooth. And Maureen teases him, because when he isn't one, she always shoves him a cookie or two.

MAUREEN REAGAN: Well, in fact, when we went to Washington for -- when and he received the medal of freedom from President Bush.

KING: I was there that day.

MAUREEN REAGAN: Yes, I remember. On the plane coming back to California, nobody could find him and he was out there having a little chat with the pilots and swapping sea stories and eating two very large chocolate chip cookies, and I walked up towards the front of the plane and I said -- he said, you're not going to tell on me, are you?

I said, no. I am here to guard you in case somebody who is trying to get you to not eat so many cookies comes along.

KING: Ronnie has lived to this incredibly ripe old age of 86. He appears, except for the Alzheimer's, to be in wonderful health. Is that correct?

RON REAGAN: Yeah, he seems to be. Physically, he's always been a horse. And you're right, he's had an extraordinary, long life. I was thinking this morning that when he was born the Titanic was in dry dock being constructed. World War I was still years away. Not only the length of his life, of course, but what he did with it. I mean, going from small town Midwest, you know, pre-World War I, really in the 19th century in a sense.

KING: Sure.

RON REAGAN: Before he was 20 years old, he'd saved 77 people from drowning in a river. He then goes on to radio and then Hollywood in its Golden age, and then at the age of nearly 70 becomes president of the United States and really sees the century through to its close. I mean, this being a sort of aforeshortened century. Most people consider it to have ended with the demise of the Soviet Union. And of course, he had a big part in that.

KING: If this were fiction, Michael, it would be hard pressed to say that this is the story of one life.

MICHAEL REAGAN: Oh, yeah, very much so. I mean, dad, the life he's led in the time -- through all that, remember, he also had time for a family and to raise a family.

KING: Most guys would be happy just to be a baseball announcer. That ain't a bad life.

MICHAEL REAGAN: Absolutely.

KING: He had that when he was a kid.

MICHAEL REAGAN: He had a great life. The stories he tells. He's told you the stories about the baseball and the ticker tape going dead and having to play that whole thing out fouling off 11 pitches, and of course how he got into radio. Back then, you know, you had to make up a lot of things that were going on. And to get that job there at W.O.C. in the quad cities was interesting because when he walked through the door to get the job, the person who owned the station said,

well, go into the booth and do a football game for me. And dad just went into a booth and ended up doing a football game between, of course, his alma mater back there, Eureka College, and another team that had just played a few weeks before that he had been at, and described the whole thing. And as he got done and was walking out the door, the owner of the station walked up to him and said, you know, you done right, you good old S.O.B.

KING: Maureen, you have been with him the longest, you're the oldest of the children.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: Yes.

KING: What kind of father is Ronald **Reagan**?

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: What kind of father is Ronald **Reagan**? Oh, the best. A teacher, a storyteller, a friend, and I think a person who has-- who wears better as years go on, even more so than than -- I remember as a very little girl, he used to recite Robert Service poetry, and his favorite was "Dangerous Dan McGrew," and I was very little and I used to love to hear him recite this particular poem. And so, one day he did it and of course acted the whole thing out and fell dead on the floor at the end of this poem and then just lay there. And I was beating on his chest screaming, dad get up, you know? And so I -- I learned very quickly what a good actor he was.

KING: What kind of father, Ron?

RON **REAGAN**: Well, you know, the word that comes to mind for me is gentleman, really. People teach you by example, and my father once told me that a gentleman -- that's not a word that you hear that often anymore, but a gentleman always does the kind thing, and I think he really -- he didn't just talk the talk with that, he walked the walk. And the example I always think of when I think of him is one of -- I guess of some subtlety and complexity. It was after the Challenger disaster, I believe, or it might have been some other event that caused loss of life, but he was at the funeral and it was after the service, and he was walking along the line of the families, the mourners there, and he approached a young woman who was obviously in great distress, and she obviously needed a shoulder to cry on. But instead of simply going to her and grabbing her and giving her a big hug, he paused and his body language said to her, look, this isn't about me, this is about you. It's about your grief. It's your tragedy, and respect for your dignity requires that I allow you to make this decision. My shoulder is here, cry on it if you want, but I am not going to force you. And that to me is an extraordinary sensitivity at that moment.

KING: Beautifully described. Nonhostile, right, Michael?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: Oh, nonhostile. I'm glad you asked me that because that's the one thing I think about when I think about the family.

KING: Not a hostile person.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: Not a hostile person at all. He was an easy touch. I mean, as kids, he really was an easy touch. Maureen and I -- I go back to a story, and Maureen will remember this, dad out at the ranch, the one in Malibu, we used to have these Nubian goats. And of course Maureen had one and I had one, I always wanted to bring mine home. And we used to always try to put it in the station wagon to bring it home, and dad would say, you can't take the goat home. And so finally, he gave in one day. And he knew we were doing something because whenever we were in the car before he was, he knew there was something going on. And so I got the Nubian goat into this -- into the station wagon, and Maureen and I were in the back seat, and finally dad just caved in and said OK. So he drives us back to

Beverly Hills, to where were living, and he, of course, he drops us off, the goat off, the goat runs in the house, and there's my mom sitting in the living room. The goats looking at my mom, and dad's gone, not to be seen; he is gone.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: And the goat embarrassed us forever on the white carpet.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: Yes, and of course Maureen and I were smart enough to tie it up under mom's window the rest of the night.

KING: Ron and Michael are going to be with us all the way. Maureen, thanks so much for joining us.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: You're welcome, Larry. And happy **birthday**, Dad.

KING: That's so nice. The **Reagans** are watching at home, not far from where we sit. Charlton Heston's going to... Before we go to break, we'd like to share this unforgettable moment from the Republican National Convention in August.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NANCY **REAGAN**, FMR. FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES: In the last speech four years ago, he said, "Whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears, to your confidence, rather than your doubts, and may all of you as Americans never forget your heroic origins, never fail to seek divine guidance, and never, never lose your natural God-given optimism."

Ronny's optimism, like America's still shines very brightly. May God bless him, and from both of us, God bless America.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REV. BILLY GRAHAM: Ron, this is Billy Graham, and of course, we have been together for so many years and known each other I suppose for at least 40 years, and I love you very much. I love Nancy for the way she takes care of you, and you are one of the most remarkable, most wonderful men I have ever known, and I thank God that in the presidency there was one day a man by the name of Ronald **Reagan**. God bless you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Words of love and appreciation from the Reverend Billy Graham. We're back celebrating Ronald **Reagan's** 86th **birthday** with Michael **Reagan** here in Los Angeles, Ron **Reagan** in Seattle, and now Charlton Heston, Academy Award winner, great actor, and a long-time friend of the family, Always good to welcome Chuck to **LARRY KING LIVE**. How far back do you go with the president?

CHARLTON HESTON, ACTOR: Well, I am proud to be able, in addition to wishing the president a happy **birthday**, to remind everybody that he was my president before he was yours.

KING: That's right, Screen Actors' Guild.

HESTON: Screen Actors' Guild.

KING: You held the same job.

HESTON: Yeah, but this was a little bit before that. In his last year as president, he was going to leave to go on to the wider world, of course, but he had promised to stay on to negotiate the settlement of the first strike the Screen Actors' Guild had ever had, and he appointed me to the

board and then appointed me to the negotiating committee, and I'll never forget that this -- I was pretty green at this then, and I don't know if you have ever sat through negotiations. They go on, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning, you know, and you have got your shoes off. You're trying to get sleep in between and drink cold coffee and all of that, and I got home about -- and he was so good at it. He never made anybody mad. Nothing ever upset him, you know. He'd say, well, that's a good point, but Larry, let me tell you this...

KING: He didn't hate?

HESTON: No, never did. So I got home about 5:00 in the morning, and I woke my wife up getting into bed, and she said, How did it go, Charlie? And I said, well, I don't know. We got a lot of work to do, but I tell you one thing, we got a leader. We saw it first.

KING: Were you friends from the get-go?

HESTON: From, you know, I -- I always hesitate to exaggerate the importance of friendships with great men. And I don't like to do that, but from that time, I was a supporter. Then not long after that, he left the Guild, and -- but I supported him as governor, and of course, in his campaigns for the presidency.

KING: Both of you were Democrats. He was a Truman Democrat. You were a Stevenson Democrat.

HESTON: That's right. Then I was with Jack Kennedy. And -- but we changed our minds. Actually, I don't think we did. And I think the president would say that, too. I didn't change. The Democratic Party did, in my opinion.

KING: What was his -- party aside, politics aside, what's his greatness?

HESTON: I think his capacity -- which indeed president Clinton shares, an enormous capacity to communicate, to -- I think...

KING: No small ability.

HESTON: No small ability. People -- when -- when President **Reagan** was elected, some people said, why do you want an actor as a

president? To be the leader of the country is in large part, performance. Of course it's performance. You -- do you think Winston Churchill gave that speech about "we shall fight them on the beaches" just off the top of his head? He wrote it, he rehearsed it, he gave it three times. And Ronald **Reagan**, President **Reagan**, was, I think the best speaker of our time.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: The communication I think was one thing. I mean, that's an important thing, as Chuck says, but the other side, his humility. I mean, you never hear the word "I." How long have you known my dad?

KING: A long time.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: You never heard the word, I did this. I did that.

KING: Never.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: He always tries to let you take the credit for the things you accomplish. Let me give you an example.

KING: He doesn't like taking it.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: When he was sworn in and everybody remembers when the hostages came

home. You know who he sent to greet those hostages? Jimmy Carter.

KING: Yes.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: He made Air Force One available to Jimmy Carter because of the work that Jimmy Carter had done to try the release those hostages. Even though he could have taken the credit, he said, Jimmy Carter, you take Air Force One. You go greet him.

KING: Chuck, he's handling this with all the class he had in his life, the letter he released to the people.

HESTON: I think that was his -- one of the his greatest acts, to write that letter in his own hand and present it to the people.

KING: And tell them what was wrong.

HESTON: His final service to the country.

KING: Have you seen him?

HESTON: Not in a few months I was -- I was -- we were talking earlier. I may stop by next week because apparently he's doing very well.

KING: Ron, he is extraordinarily well physically, isn't he?

RON **REAGAN**: Yeah, he still gets out on the golf course as far as I know. He loves to get into the pool and swim. He also likes to pick leaves out of the pool apparently. He's sort of obsessive compulsive that way. But just to pick up on something that Mr. Heston

said, I think he's right, his ability to communicate was extraordinary, and his ability the move people. I mean, you listen to some of those speeches that he made and no matter how many times you have heard them and even being related to him, it's hard not to have a tear coming to your eye.

KING: The **Reagans** are watching, Chuck, we thank you for giving us this time. Anything you'd like to say to the president?

HESTON: Just Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President, and along with the country and the world, I thank you for winning the cold war.

KING: Many more memories and celebrants ahead as we break **birthday** wishes from the one who knows how to throw a party, Merv Griffin.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MERV GRIFFIN: Well, Mr. President, here we go again, another **birthday** and haven't we had some great celebrations in the past? The big ones and even the small **birthdays**, but you never liked "Happy **Birthday**." You always said, it's my anniversary. So today Mr. President, it's your 47th anniversary of your 39th **birthday**. Happy anniversary to you!

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SAM DONALDSON, ABC NEWS: President **Reagan**, I miss you. Since you left town, no one has been here to put me down properly, and my career has suffered because of it. I noticed in the poll last November that the American people said that if you'd been running on the ballot, you would

have been re-elected president by a 56 percent margin. I wish it had happened. Happy **birthday**.

KING: We continue our **birthday** tribute to Ronald **Reagan** with Michael **Reagan** and Ron **Reagan**. We're also joined now by a few former **Reagan** cabinet members. We have former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger, author of a new book by the way, "The Next War." Former secretary of state, Gen. Alexander Haig in Washington. Also with us, former secretary of state, George Shultz in Stanford, California. We thank you all for being with us. Let's start with Cap Weinberger in Washington. What's your immediate feeling about Ronald **Reagan** being 86? What's the number one thing that pops into your mind?

CASPAR WEINBERGER, FMR. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: First thing that pops into my mind is he was one of our greatest presidents. We were lucky to have him. I was extraordinarily lucky to be able to work with him for something like 35 years. And I think it was an extraordinarily good thing for the country. I think history will be very kind to him, and as the years roll on, he looks better and better.

KING: George Shultz, you didn't always agree with everything, no one does, what was his -- and he's still with us, let's not forget that -- greatness?

GEORGE SHULTZ, FMR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Well, I think reflecting on what Charlton Heston was talking about earlier on your show is his capacity to communicate certainly was a gift the that he had. But it seems to me that the really important thing was what he communicated. He had ideas. He had content. He had convictions. He believed in a strong America, and with Cap Weinberger he built our strength. He believed in freedom deeply, and he spoke eloquently about it. So I would emphasize not just the communication skills, which were formidable -- or are formidable, but it's -- it's what he communicated that meant so much to me.

KING: Al, to you, what was special about Ron **Reagan**?

ALEXANDER HAIG, FMR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Well, I agree with everything said thus far, but also, I think he had an internal strength and fortitude that serves him very, very well. I recall nearing the hostage crisis, the previous administration asked us repeatedly to give the Iranians more time, and Ronald **Reagan** knew in his heart of hearts that they had already had too much time. And the message was, no, you will release those prisoners by the time of my inauguration, or it will be a whole new ballgame. Let me tell you, I was a nervous secretary of state when I was there preparing to swear him in. But sure enough, they were released in time.

KING: Michael?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: It's enough on that day, to follow up on what Alexander Haig was just saying, on the day of his inauguration, we got a running commentary the whole day of where those hostages were. Dad would stop, tell everybody this is where the hostages were, we haven't cleared the airspace yet. After he was sworn in, we got that at the luncheon and during the course of the parade that day. So we knew all day long where those hostages were because he was the commentator. It's like he was more than a president, he was also doing commentary where the hostages were.

KING: Cap, we haven't seen him in a while, everyone knows why. He's suffering from a terrible illness. He's handling it with a great deal of class, though, right? We discussed that letter he wrote.

WEINBERGER: Yes, that's what he did with everything.

KING: Not surprising.

WEINBERGER: No, not surprising at all. He was a man who had an enormous respect and admiration for the military, and I still think his very greatest achievement -- he had a whole lifetime of achievements -- was to let America regain its military strength to win the Cold War, and to take our rightful place in the world as our responsibilities require. And he did that at precisely the right time and in just the right way. It was an enormous privilege to be able to work with him.

KING: We have asked the sons and daughter what kind of father he was. George, what kind of boss was he?

SHULTZ: He was a wonderful guy to work for because you could count on him. If he decided this was going to be our position on something and you went out there and it was controversial, he was there right with you. So he was a very reliable guy. But he also had a wonderful sense of humor. I remember one time we were in a long trip to South America, we came to the end of the trip. I was tired. I got on Air Force One, had a little something to eat, had a drink. I tilted my head back and I went absolutely sound asleep. And he came back unbeknownst to me, and he got the photographer and he posed in front of me in an imploring style, and the picture was taken. I was totally unaware of it, and a couple of days later there arrived from the White House this picture of the president imploring me and on it, he had written, "George, wake up! The Russians are coming!" So we had a little fun.

KING: What kind of boss was he to you, Haig? Mr. Governor, General Haig. You're everything. You threw the helmet into the ring, and we still love you, Al.

HAIG: Big Al is better. I think it's important to remember that he also had a temper. You didn't see it very, very often, but once in a while it snuck out, and I remember the cabinet meeting where -- in June of '82 Stockman showed nothing but red ink, and the president went around the table asking everyone what they should do, and he finally got to me. I was last on the pecking order and had the black jelly beans about that time. He said, what would you do, Al? And I said, well, Mr. President, you better think about additional revenues. I can tell you, he slammed the table, got up and walked back into his office, and I think that was the last cabinet meeting I attended.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: As a family, we never saw him lose his temper. And when he got into the election process, everybody goes back to 1980, to the great debate in Manchester, New Hampshire.

KING: "It's my microphone."

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: "It's my microphone. I paid for this microphone." We all cheered and said, where has that been? He needed to do that. That helped him, I think, get through that process.

KING: Ron, did you ever see his temper?

RON **REAGAN**: Yeah, I've seen him lose his temper before, but usually it's when he's more disgusted with people. He once came home -- once came home -- I was quite young at the time, and you could just tell he was upset, and he finally told me what it was. And he had heard from somebody that a certain senator who is still in the Senate and shall remain nameless here had a penchant for drinking and when he had had a few apparently began physically intimidating his staff, pushing people around and stuff. And he was so disgusted that somebody who had the advantages that this man obviously had, not only of physical size, but of position, would pick on somebody who couldn't push back. And the lesson was: You don't pick on people who are smaller than you.

KING: We're running short on time, and I want to get a **birthday** greeting from each of the guests. Michael, will you describe how the **Reagans** are sitting right now watching this?

MICHAEL REAGAN: If you go into the house, they're in a den, which is a walk-through den. Nancy is curled up on the couch at the far end of the couch with her big glasses on watching this, smiling, and dad is sitting in a chair -- upright in a chair. So he's looking directly at the TV right now. It's a great moment because whenever you go through there to see them, that's how you see them, and it's wonderful to watch.

KING: Cap Weinberger, what would you like to say to the president now?

WEINBERGER: Obviously wish him a happy **birthday**. What I'd like to remind him of the time he was first elected and we had, in the Pentagon, a recommendation for a Congressional medal of honor letter that had been been awarded but not presented. Of course, the (unintelligible) didn't want to remind the people of the Vietnam War, but this was a record of extraordinary heroism, and I took it into the president, and I said, I'd like to present them now, if you could participate in the ceremony it would be wonderful. He said, of course I will, what do I do? I said, well, what you normally do is you have somebody with trained voice who reads a citation, which is an enormously brave citation, then you drape the medal over the soldier's shoulders. He said, who reads the citation? I said, well, we have a soldier with trained voice who does that. He looked at me for a minute, and said I have a trained voice. Finally, I got it, and for the first time, the president of the United States read the citation in that wonderful voice of his, and that showed the respect he had for the military, and it was a great moment in our history.

KING: We're short on time, do you want to just say Happy **Birthday**, Al Haig and George Shultz?

HAIG: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President.

SHULTZ: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. You have my great love and tremendous respect for all you have done for us.

KING: More to come, and more surprises as well. Don't go away. Happy **Birthday!**

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: We're back with our **birthday** salute to Ronald **Reagan**, his 86th **birthday**. Our guests are Michael **Reagan**, here in Los Angeles, and Ronald **Reagan**. Ron **Reagan** is with us from Seattle. And one who gave information to one who tried to get information during the **Reagan** administration, former Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, on the right, and UPI White House Bureau Chief Helen Thomas on the left. On his 86th **birthday**, first thought that pops into your mind, Marlin.

MARLINE FITZWATER, FMR. PRESS SECRETARY: A great rapport between the president and the press. I recall the president was in Moscow in 1988 for his walk in Red Square, and the president and Mrs. **Reagan** went for a walk in a little commercial area, and people started tumbling out of buildings and windows and everyplace they could find as the word spread they were out there. The KGB lost control and

started grabbing people and pushing them to the ground, among them, Helen Thomas. And President and Mrs. **Reagan** turned around and said, no, she's with us, and Mrs. **Reagan** went back and grabbed Helen and carried her all the way to the embassy. I think it was the closest moment between the **Reagans** and the White House Press Corps.

KING: Helen, you've known them all. What is special about president **Reagan**?

HELEN THOMAS, UPI WHITE HOUSE BUREAU CHIEF: I think his deep convictions. I think he really turned the country to the right, and I think, you know, the conservatism still prevails. I think he knew what he thought. I loved the plaque on his desk which said that there was no limit to where a man could go or how far if he didn't care who got the credit. And I think this is what always struck me about him was his lack of ego. He always deferred really to his staff. They always

thought they were smarter than him, but I knew better.

KING: Did you like him, Helen?

THOMAS: Oh, you could not not like President **Reagan**. everybody...

KING: Even though you gave him a bad time sometimes.

THOMAS: Of course. Everybody liked him very much, but, you know, I mean, you feel that you have to ask the tough questions, and I don't think he ever resented it. And I must say, he always treated me with great kindness.

KING: Marlin, we've asked this others who worked for him, as a boss?

FITZWATER: He was great to work for because he was a man without guile, and I think the press knew that. He was honest and straight forward, and you may not agree with what he said or what he did, but you knew he was telling it straight. And I think he got along pretty well with the press in that sense. And Mrs. **Reagan** as well. After the initial period there, and then she did the performance of second hand rose, and began getting a good press. I must say that Mrs. **Reagan** was always very concerned about the president's schedule and about his health and his reputation. And it's kind of ironic that today she's taking care him full-time, and I think there's a quality of truly heroic caring in what she's going through at this point.

KING: Marlin, did he like Helen?

FITZWATER: He loved Helen , but he'd say things like, what in the world is Helen yelling at me about? What's that all about? And I would tell him, and he'd say, oh, don't worry about that, she'll get over it.

THOMAS: He was great with one-liners. When the Sandinistas fired at a press helicopter at the Honduran border, he said, there's some good in everyone.

KING: That's a great line. Did he ever complain about the press, Ron, to you?

RON **REAGAN**: Yeah, all the time. But he couldn't hold a grudge. I mean, he could stay mad for about three minutes. That was tops.

KING: Michael, true?

MICHAEL REGAN: Yeah. Absolutely. Probably Nancy complained more about the press than dad complained about the press. Dad was hard to control sometimes. Because when Sam Donaldson or anybody would say, "Mr. President..." -- I mean, if he was three quarters the way into the car, he'd back out of the car to answer the question. You had to push him back in and say no.

KING: Marlin, did you keep the helicopter going deliberately so he wouldn't have to answer the question when he'd always do this?

FITZWATER: I'm sorry, I have nothing for you on that.

THOMAS: We know he did.

KING: That was deliberate. We know that was a Fitzwater angle there.

FITZWATER: I claim innocence all the way.

KING: They're watching, and we have other guests to come, anything you'd like to say, Marlin, to the president of the United States?

FITZWATER: Just, Mr. President, I'd be glad to set up another press conference for you. I'm all ready. Happy **Birthday**.

KING: And, Helen, anything you'd like to say?

THOMAS: I'd say, we miss the **Reagans**. We miss the president and Mrs. **Reagan**, and I wish him a very happy **birthday**, and a long, long life.

KING: We hope you know how loved you are, no matter what politics. Politics is apart now. This is the 86th **birthday** of our 40th president. The first lady is there with him. We'll return in a moment, but first this greeting from one **birthday** boy to another.

TOM BROKAW, NBC NEWS: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. I always feel a special kinship with you on this day because, after all, we share those roots in the Midwest, and I covered your first campaign for governor way back in 1966 when I was just a pup at NBC News. And then, of course, we also share this day, for February 6th is also my **birthday**. I remember vividly one February 6th in the White House when you had a lunch for all the news anchors, and Dan Rather led everyone in singing happy **birthday** to you, but at the end of the last chorus, you pointed out he had just also sung happy **birthday** to me, and we had a great laugh. Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JACK KEMP: Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President. Lots of love to you and Nancy from all the Kemp family. The greatest tribute that has been paid to Ronald **Reagan** and your presidency is not only that the Republicans talk like you, but now even Democrats talk like Ronald **Reagan**. And were it not for you, we would not be going into the 21st century with democracy and freedom and free enterprise capturing the imagination of people all over the globe. Thanks, Mr. President.

KING: Thank you, Jack Kemp, for being a part of this special occasion. Here with us live to share in the festivities are Michael **Reagan**, Ron **Reagan**, and now, former Secretary of State Jim Baker, who joins us from Houston, which is his home. Jim, your thoughts on the 86th **birthday** of your former boss?

JIM BAKER, FMR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Well, I'm just delighted to be able to welcome the president Happy **Birthday** or wish the president Happy **Birthday**, Larry. And you know -- you asked someone earlier in the program a question along the lines of what his legacy was, and let me tell you, I think that President **Reagan's** infectious optimism made us all feel good about ourselves again at a time when this nation desperately needed it. And I would think that his legacy really is that he restored America's pride and confidence in itself. We are -- we became respected again by our allies, and we became feared by our adversaries, something that I think was desperately lacking before that.

KING: What was he like to work for?

BAKER: Well, he was terrific to work for. Somebody earlier in the program said he was totally without guile, and that was absolutely true. What you saw is what you got with Ronald **Reagan**. He was not the least bit duplicitous. He was slow to anger. He could get angry, as Al Haig said earlier, but he was a terrific president to work for. And you know, I can remember many, many very divisive meetings where people would be articulating or arguing their particular point of view, very, very strongly held views, the president would have to rule in one way or another, and he would rule, and everybody would leave that room feeling good because he always did it in a way that made the loser feel good.

KING: When you switched jobs and came and told him, the story was that you told him and he

acquiesced. Was it as simple as that?

BAKER: No, that's not the way it happened. We talked about it for quite a while beforehand. We talked about it with both the president and Mrs. **Reagan**. Mike Deaver and I, and Don Regan, and it was talked about for a period of time before he said OK. The fact of the matter is, I think he thought that would be a very good idea. I'm not so sure he thought it was afterward, but we thought it was, and I'd been there for four years, and when the president asked me to be chief of staff back there in late 1980, I'd been in Washington before, and I said, Mr. President, I think these jobs are best handled in two- year increments. You run out of chips quickly in that job, and -- probably for you and your chief of staff. And he said he felt the same way, but somehow, we were still there together four years later. I hope I served him well as treasury secretary. I think I did.

KING: Michael?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: He was really able to -- he was able to laugh at himself and take bad situations and really turn them into good situations. This thing what Jim is saying about the optimism of him. I go back to the time when he was shot, the assassination attempt. We all got on a plane and flew back to Washington, D.C., and we got in the next day to see him -- because he got there very early in the morning -- walked in the hospital room, and here's dad all hooked up to everything, and he looks up to me and says, Michael, (unintelligible) he says, Michael, if you're ever going to get shot, don't be wearing a suit. I said what? He says, you know, the last time I saw the suit I was wearing, it was cut in pieces in the corner. He says, that was the first time I had worn that suit. It was a brand-new blue suit. He says, tell me something, Michael. He says, I understand the young man who shot me that his parents are in the oil business in Denver, Colorado. Is that right? I said, yes. He says, do you think they'd get me a new suit?

KING: That's a great way to look at things.

BAKER: Hey, Michael, you remember what he said when Meese and Deaver and I walked in his hospital room there before they took him to surgery? He looked up at us, he said, who's minding the store? And he said to the doctors, I hope somebody in this room is a Republican, before they operated on him.

KING: Jim, they are watching. Nancy is on the couch, and Ron is in the chair, anything you'd like to say to President **Reagan**?

BAKER: I'd just like to say, Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President. We really miss you. I'd like to also tell you, Larry, that 16 years ago today we had a surprise **birthday** party for the president in my office in the White House. The president had only been there two weeks and had not, at that point, explored the west wing fully. And he walked in my office and looked around and said, wow, he said, this is a big office. And then he said, but it isn't round.

KING: Thanks, Jim.

BAKER: Thank you, **Larry**.

KING: Time for a break. And Ken Duberstein, President **Reagan's** last chief of staff, gets the last word before the commercials begin. Ken?

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KEN DUBERSTEIN, FMR. WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF: Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President. And love to Nancy as well. You know, you started out to change our country, and you wound out changing the world. You restored the pride here in America, and you rebuilt the world's confidence in the United States and our leadership. You restored dignity and pride to the Oval Office, to the presidency. We love you, we're grateful, and God bless. God bless you, Mr. President, and to you, Nancy, as well. Thank you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GERALD FORD, FMR. PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Ron, Betty and I congratulate you on your 86th **birthday** anniversary. This gives me an opportunity to congratulate you for working together with the Ford administration to achieve peace through strength. The **Reagan** and Ford administrations built up the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and Marines so that we could win the Cold War against the soviet union and the Warsaw Pact nations. Congratulations, Ron.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Giving credit where credit is due, President Gerald Ford. We're back on **LARRY KING LIVE** celebrating former President **Reagan**, on his 86th **birthday**. Our guests are Michael **Reagan** and Ron **Reagan**, plus, now, two former White House confidants. The **Reagan** Chief of Staff Howard Baker joins us from Huntsville, Alabama, and former Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver in Washington. In time limitations and constraints here, Howard, what kind of boss was he?

HOWARD BAKER, FMR. WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF: He was a great boss, Larry, he really was. He was a great friend. I knew him from the time he was elected governor of California in 1966, which was the same year I was elected to the U.S. Senate from Tennessee. But I really have to say that he is an historic figure. I've thought a lot about why and what makes him so great, and one thing that comes to mind and that sticks with me is that Ronald **Reagan** understood who he was. He was genuine, he was real. There wasn't a false bone in his body, and that carried through into everything he did.

KING: Mike Deaver, what was he like as a boss? And Nancy as well?

MICHAEL DEAVER, FMR. DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF: Right. I think, you know, David McColick (ph) said about Truman, there was nobody in the world he'd rather be. I think that was in spades for Ronald **Reagan**. He was the only human being I've ever met who was totally comfortable with who he was. And down deep inside of him, there was never any question about where he was going, or to looking back at where he'd been.

KING: The only human being you've ever met totally comfortable with where he was?

DEAVER: That's right.

KING: Howard, isn't that pretty apt?

H. BAKER: I think that's exactly right. I said a moment ago he understood who he was, and he also understood what he believed. He had a strong central core of convictions that drove everything he did, but that made for a very comfortable president and a very comfortable personality. I must say, he appeared to be always -- always calm and

tranquil and easy going, but on occasion, and I think Mike Deaver would agree that, when somebody crossed that central core of conviction, he could really be a tiger. He was absolutely determined to follow the courses of action that he'd laid down for himself in his own mind, and that's what made his presidency so constant and so great.

KING: We're going to get a break and come back with the remaining moments. Time goes fast. We have to take this break. And though it's not a matter of national security, Frank Carlucci who served as secretary of defense, Mr. President, has a few words to share before we go.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FRANK CARLUCCI, FMR. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Mr. President, it's a great honor for me to join millions of other Americans in paying tribute to you on the occasion of your 86th **birthday**. You were a wonderful man to work for, a leader, a visionary, and a warm and compassionate boss. My wife and I wish you a wonderful day and the best of health.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: We have a time constraint. We're back with our final moments of this **birthday** celebration. Michael Deaver, anything you want to say to the president?

DEAVER: Happy **Birthday**, Mr. President, and especially to you, Nancy. You know, that is a partnership, and one of the great ones of all time, between you and President **Reagan**. And most of us don't stop and think about what the care giver has to do in a situation like you're in right now. So this is -- I know it's tough, but it's also your finest hour, too.

KING: Howard? Thank you, Michael.

H. BAKER: Mr. President, I wish you a happy **birthday**. You're a great man, you're a great friend and a great American. And, Nancy, you are absolutely extraordinary. And I admire you both more than I can say.

KING: Ron Regan? Ron **Reagan**?

RON **REAGAN**: Dad, Dory and I want to wish you a happy **birthday**. We send all our love. You're a tremendous human being, and I have nothing but admiration for you. Happy **Birthday**.

KING: And, Michael Deaver, there is a foundation, is there not?

DEAVER: There is the Ronald and Nancy **Reagan** Foundation for Alzheimer's Victims, yes, sir.

KING: And people who want more information can contact you in Washington?

DEAVER: They could, or then can contact his office in Los Angeles.

KING: Ronald **Reagan's** office in Century City?

DEAVER: That's right.

KING: Any quick message from you, Michael?

MICHAEL **REAGAN**: My daughter Ashley said it all when she found out the story about her grandpa. She says, you know something, mom and dad, I'm going to love my grandpa even if he doesn't know who I am.

KING: We thank all of our guests for taking part in this heartfelt presentation to President and Mrs. **Reagan**. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you. Before we say good night, one more fine citizen would like to express a **birthday** wish.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

WILLIAM J. Clinton, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: President **Reagan**, your boundless

1997

optimism and hope for the future of our country is an inspiration to all Americans, and it will always be an inspiration to every president. I join with your fellow Americans to thank you for your immeasurable contribution to more than life, and wish you a happy 86th **birthday**. Hillary and I wish you and Nancy all the best on this very special day.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

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Pres. Ronald **Reagan's** 85th **Birthday** Celebration

LARRY KING: [voice-over] Happy **birthday** to an American icon. Ronald Wilson **Reagan**. He's packed a couple of lifetimes in the past 85 years: husband, father, movie actor and TV star, the 40th President of the United States. At ease in the Oval Office, on the international stage, even down home in the saddle. We could take a week to celebrate Ronald **Reagan's birthday**, but we've only got an hour.

Joining us with greetings for the Gipper: his daughter Maureen, and his daughter Patty, friends and political colleagues, Howard Baker and Paul Laxalt, former Presidential Press Secretary, Marlon Fitzwater, newsman Sam Donaldson, entertainer and show business entrepreneur, Merv Griffin, and Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. Plus, we've got some surprises in store.

This is your day, Mr. President, and this broadcast is for you.

ANNOUNCER: Now, live from Washington here's **Larry King**.

LARRY KING: Good evening and welcome to a very special program in honor of Ronald **Reagan**. Those who have known him as father, friend, president and private citizen, are gathering at the legendary Chasen's Restaurant in Los Angeles, for an 85th **birthday** celebration. Although President **Reagan** won't be able to join them in person, we're told that he is at home right now, watching with Nancy. Mr. President we've got a heck of a show planned so you just sit back and relax.

Our first guest is one of your oldest friends and trusted political advisers, the former Governor and former Nevada Senator, Paul Laxalt, who joins us from Captiva Island, Florida. Thank you very much for being with us Paul. Tell us how this friendship began.

PAUL LAXALT, former Senator & Governor of Nevada: [From Captiva Island, Florida]: Well, I think it probably began in 1964, when President **Reagan** and I were out campaigning for a fellow by the name of Barry Goldwater.

LARRY KING: That's- you met on the campaign trail?

PAUL LAXALT: Yes, we did, and then thereafter, Larry, in 1966, we each decided to run for governors of our respective states. We were adjoining states, Nevada and California, so our friendship grew during those years as well.

LARRY KING: And after a while, you became politically his best friend did you not?

PAUL LAXALT: Well, I was one of the-

LARRY KING: I mean, the two of you were very close.

PAUL LAXALT: We were good friends, yes.

LARRY KING: Were you often in the White House, often consulted?

PAUL LAXALT: Well, during my years in the Senate, when the **Reagan's** were in the White House, I felt literally that I had one foot in the White House and one on Capitol Hill, which is an interesting thing because on Capitol Hill I'd be hearing constantly what a bunch of idiots they were in the White House and then I'd go to the White House and vice versa.

LARRY KING: Tell me- there's never been a political story like this. Give us you read on what- what makes him so special.

PAUL LAXALT: Well, I- you can always cite an awful lot of international policy achievements, like the Berlin Wall, like opening up negotiations with Gorbachev. I've always felt that Ronald **Reagan** was the first politician to effectively tell the American people what a threat to their individual liberties a great and too-big federal government can be. And he combined that with the wonderful civility that he had. I never heard him tear anybody down. He would differ on issues, but he was always a sensitive, caring man. And believe me, these days, we could - should be able - we should very quickly restore ourselves to the time when that degree of civility was once enjoyed.

LARRY KING: In other words he showed us you could succeed in politics without meanness?

PAUL LAXALT: Well, it showed me and several others that nice guys can win and they can win even the presidency of the United States.

LARRY KING: Therefore was what you see what you got? Was he- was he as- as nice as he appeared he was, offscreen as well?

PAUL LAXALT: Well, Larry, you know him as well as I. I didn't see Ronald **Reagan** change one iota from the first time that I met him way back in 1964, until he left the presidency and thereafter. He had such self confidence, he was so assured of himself. No ego - no ego trips. So, he was just a wonderful human being.

LARRY KING: Yeah, no guile, right?

PAUL LAXALT: No what?

LARRY KING: Guile?

PAUL LAXALT: No. No. As you said, what you saw, you got in Ronald **Reagan**.

LARRY KING: What- if you were to list his negatives. What- what about - nobody's perfect - what about him bothered you, if anything.

PAUL LAXALT: Nothing really. We had no disagreements, no problems in all the years we were associated together. I suppose some would say that he was too kind and gentle for modern brawling room politics. I never sensed that. But some would conceive that to be a weakness in him, that he was so trusting-

LARRY KING: Yeah.

PAUL LAXALT: -that he couldn't make the tough calls, particularly when it came to people.

LARRY KING: The two of you never argued, though.

PAUL LAXALT: We never had any arguments whatsoever.

LARRY KING: Paul, we have about 30 seconds left and we know the President the President is watching and we will do this with all of our guests: anything you would like to say to Ronald **Reagan**? Go ahead.

PAUL LAXALT: Well, I just wish you a very happy 85th my friend. I hope it won't be too long before we are on the golf course together. When we are, I assure you that I won't be sinking any 40 foot putts like George Bush did to you.

LARRY KING: Ha, ha. Thank you, former Senator Paul Laxalt. Thanks so much for being with us on this very special occasion.

Coming up daughters Maureen **Reagan** and Patty Davis. But first, the **Reagan** boys will get a few words in.

RON **REAGAN**, Jr., Ronald **Reagan's** Son: Well, I guess the cat's out of the bag. As we've discussed, I've been telling people you were 39 years old. I know, it was a hard sell, especially when people found out I was your son and I'm 37. Hey, 85 is good, 85 is great. We love you dad, we're up here in Seattle and we're sending big beams of love your way, Dory and I. So take care, and happy **birthday**.

MICHAEL **REAGAN**, Ronald **Reagan's** Son: Dad, I said this to you on your 80th **birthday**, interestingly enough it, too, was at Chasens. And I just want to repeat it to you now on the occasion of your 85th - 50 years ago, which is my age, you wanted to bring a small child into your family to join it. Maureen was your daughter at the time, your only daughter and you went out and you adopted me into your family and allowed me to become a **Reagan**. And I just want to tell you I have never forgotten that day and I haven't forgotten it for all these 50 years. And everyday that I go to work and do my radio show, I just try to keep that **Reagan** flame, that memory, that **Reagan** revolution, I want to keep that flame burning. And that's my **birthday** present to you, to keep the **Reagan** name alive and keep it burning forever. I love you, dad. Thank you.

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: After closing its famed doors at the end of last year Chasens Restaurant has opened them once more for Ronald **Reagan's** 85th **birthday** party. Joining us from the very booth where President Ronald **Reagan** proposed to Nancy are Maureen **Reagan** and Patty Davis, Maureen and Patty on the right. That's the booth at Chasens.

Maureen, I know you are the first born of Ronald **Reagan**, the daughter of Jane Wyman, Patty is the daughter of Nancy **Reagan**. What is the feeling like there tonight? They're getting ready for the party. Be a reporter for us Maureen, what's going on?

MAUREEN REAGAN, Ronald **Reagan's** Daughter: It is so fun to be here in Chasens, it is as though it never closed. Larry, you would absolutely love it. It feels exactly the same, it's just wonderful.

LARRY KING: They have it all set - is it being catered? It has to be catered, right? The restaurant's not open.

MAUREEN REAGAN: Well, that's true, but it's being catered Chasens style.

LARRY KING: So the people who ran Chasens are running this tonight?

MAUREEN REAGAN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

LARRY KING: Patty, what's the feeling like for you, because your mom was proposed to right where you are sitting.

PATTY DAVIS, Ronald **Reagan's** Daughter: I think it's kind of - you know, it's a bit of a bittersweet event, obviously it is acknowledging my father's **birthday** and honoring it, but he's not able to be here. So it's- it's a bit bittersweet and moving on that level.

LARRY KING: Isn't that a little ominous sitting in that booth?

PATTY DAVIS: Ominous?

LARRY KING: Well, for want of a better term? I mean, it's a weird feeling isn't it. It would be to me.

MAUREEN REAGAN: Larry, I promise I am not going to propose to her tonight.

PATTY DAVIS: Well, I think ominous means that something is going to happen like an omen, you know?

LARRY KING: Yeah, well, maybe something-

PATTY DAVIS: I haven't gotten that feeling yet, I will let you know if I do.

LARRY KING: No one has come over to the booth yet, right, Patty?

PATTY DAVIS: What?

LARRY KING: No.

PATTY DAVIS: And no one has proposed to me yet, Larry. But hey, you know, if you'd like to get married for the 17th time- you can propose to me right now.

LARRY KING: Keep it up, Patty, keep it up.

PATTY DAVIS: I'm sorry but you gave me such an opening. I- I'm sorry. Sorry.

LARRY KING: All right, Maureen?

MAUREEN REAGAN: Yes, **Larry**.

LARRY KING: What kind of dad is he?

MAUREEN REAGAN: What kind of dad is he? Oh, he's a great dad. We were looking - there is wonderful pictures all around the restaurant, everybody went through the files and they found some great photos all the way back and some pictures of him. I remember when I was a little kid

and I am sure he did the same thing to you because he would not change in this - this, those gorgeous golden Madonnas that used to hang out at the swimming pool and every once in a while he would push you in with his hip just to be sure that you knew how to swim. And that's - those are my earliest memories.

LARRY KING: Patty, what are yours?

PATTY DAVIS: Oh, I think probably horseback riding with my father. You know, he communicated his life lessons, his lessons about life, rather, through things like horseback riding and learning to body surf in the ocean. And he taught me to not be afraid of a horse, that a horse would know when I was afraid, to always get back on after I fell off, he taught me how to be a good horsewoman, but he also, at the same time, taught me in that way how to live my life.

LARRY KING: You were separated for a time-

PATTY DAVIS: Mm-hm.

LARRY KING: -what was it like to come back to the fold? And by the way, you've written a terrific book dedicated to your dad, a wonderful read-

PATTY DAVIS: Thank you.

LARRY KING: -what was it like to come back?

PATTY DAVIS: It was like finding - it was like having an appendage that had been amputated reattached, sort of. And I didn't realize that until- until I came back. I think- I think to the degree that we cut ourselves off from our parents, we- we amputate a very vital part of ourselves.

LARRY KING: Are you closer now than ever?

PATTY DAVIS: Yes, absolutely.

LARRY KING: With mom and dad, right?

PATTY DAVIS: Yes, absolutely, definitely.

LARRY KING: Maureen, everyone is interested and I know Nancy will be coming a little later, how is your father?

MAUREEN REAGAN: He's wonderful. Patty and I were there last night, we all had **birthday** cake. Always celebrate with a man with who loves **birthday** cake, it's the best way to do it. And the moon came up, just as we finished dinner, this golden, full moon just hung in the sky and we told him it was there for his **birthday** and he laughed and said, 'Well, it looks like a **birthday** moon to me.' And then, today, he got to play golf and I wished him as a **birthday** gift, his best game of golf ever, and I think he had it.

LARRY KING: We saw the pictures the other day, he looks remarkably well. How is he doing in other phases? Everyone is concerned.

MAUREEN REAGAN: He's doing great. He's doing wonderful. This disease is horrible, but he's doing wonderful.

LARRY KING: Patty, what is your read?

PATTY DAVIS: My- my read is that he has maintained the same spiritual attitude toward life that he always had. This is another turn that his life has taken. I think it was made very clear in the letter that he wrote to America. This is something that God has handed him and he's taking it and

accepting it and, you know, giving in to that- to that experience. And I think that - that is all that any of us can hope for in ourselves. I take it as a great lesson, actually.

LARRY KING: Both Maureen and Patty will be back later this hour with some other special **birthday** guests in Hollywood. When we come back some good wishes from the nation's capitol.

But first Mr. President some greetings from some friends, old and new.

Sen. ROBERT DOLE: Mr. President, happy **birthday**. We just passed a resolution with 100 senators voting to support a Happy **birthday** for Ronald **Reagan**. I appreciate the many times you invited me to the White House when you were president of the United States. I appreciated your hospitality and Nancy's. I hope to be able to reciprocate after the 1996 election. Thanks a lot, and happy **birthday**.

Sen. BARRY GOLDWATER: Ronnie, I wish for you many many years of life, many, many years of happiness. A long good life, continuing. Your contributions to everyone who lives on this earth. And I thank God that he allowed me to live with you. Thank you.

BRIAN MULRONEY, former Canadian Prime Minister: As a fellow Irishman, I will always remember the times that we spent together, with admiration and affection. And so, today, on your 85th **birthday** I just want to tell you that we in Canada are thinking of you and wishing you well, and saying to you and to Nancy and your guests, Godspeed.

Capt. SCOTT O'GRADY, U.S. Air Force: Hello, President **Reagan**, this is Captain Scott O'Grady. I wanted to wish you a happy **birthday**. I know that I speak on behalf of all of those who have served in the military, by saying that we admire you and respect you greatly, for everything you have done for this country and this world, to make this a more peaceful place. And for all of those who have and who are defending freedom, we salute you.

[Commercial break]

[Breaking News]

LARRY KING: Welcome back. Now with us are one who reported to the President, one who reported to the press and one who reported to the people during the **Reagan** era.

Former chief of staff and Senator from Tennessee, Howard Baker, former Press Secretary for both Presidents **Reagan** and Bush, Marlon Fitzwater, and ABC newsman, Sam Donaldson, on this the occasion of the President's 85th **birthday**. He is watching at his home in Bel Air, California.

What are your thoughts tonight, Howard?

Sen. HOWARD BAKER, former White House Chief of Staff: Well, first of all I would say happy **birthday**. Ronald **Reagan** is perhaps as presidential as any person I know of, or ever met. He is not only a serious political personality and historic one in this country, but he's also a genuine human being. He had a wonderful sense of humor and he was a delight to work with.

LARRY KING: Sam, you remember him as - you had tough times with Ronald **Reagan**, didn't you?

SAM DONALDSON, ABC News: Look, I've got to say to him tonight, 'Where are you when we need you?' I mean-

LARRY KING: You miss him don't you?

SAM DONALDSON: -what Washington might do- Oh, he was larger than life-

LARRY KING: He is alive-

SAM DONALDSON: -as everyone remembers.

LARRY KING: -we keep saying 'was' here.

SAM DONALDSON: Yeah, but as president I mean-

LARRY KING: Right.

SAM DONALDSON: -and the humor particularly stood out. Everybody loved to cover him. We may chew on him for his policies, but you couldn't chew on him as an individual. Larry, I remember one time, an early press conference, he called on me and I drew myself up to my full pomposity and I said, 'Now, Mr. President, you've blamed this continuing recession on mistakes of the past and on Congress. Does any of the blame belong to you.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I was once a Democrat.' It brought the house down.

LARRY KING: What was he like to work for?

MARLON FITZWATER, former **Reagan** Press Secretary: Well, he had a great sense of dignity and strength about him and was a delight in a human way. As Press Secretary it was great because he could let a lot of the criticism roll off his back. When Sam used to yell at him in the Rose Garden and the President- we'd walk into the Oval Office and he would say 'Now, what's Sam yelling about?' And I said, 'Sir, he just doesn't think what we're doing is right.' And he said, 'Well, I don't know why he would think that way,' and go right on about his business. He never got mad or angry.

LARRY KING: Was Paul Laxalt right about no guile, no meanness?

MARLON FITZWATER: He was - he was just not a person to be vindictive or to try to connive or to fool people and he would always give you a straight answer. That was also great for me, because you would walk into the Oval Office and ask a question, he would tell you exactly what he thought and you knew he was going to think that for the rest of his life.

LARRY KING: As President, Howard, details were not his strength, right?

HOWARD BAKER: No, details were not his strength. And I look back on that and I- sometimes I am just astonished at the discretion that he gave to his - to his staff and to me. But, you know, that is part of what I think of as an ideal presidential personality because he had a central core of conviction. He knew who he was, and he knew what he believed and he knew what he wanted to do. But he didn't want to mess around with the details. And that's not bad, you know. This man is president of the United States, he is head of state and as long as you performed according to his fundamental tenets it was great. But, if you ever got off base - I remember one day when I was really going hammer and tong at a point that I was trying to make and I sensed that he wasn't agreeing with and he stopped me and said, 'Howard - Howard, just remember, I am president and you're not.'

LARRY KING: Ha, ha. What do you say to that? He frustrated you a lot, though, didn't he Sam? Or you would appear on camera to be frustrated a lot.

SAM DONALDSON: Well, you know we would ask him questions and we'd think that we would get an answer that was based on the numbers and the lines in the budget and all that, and we'd get some anecdote and that was very frustrating.

LARRY KING: How about his use of the helicopter blades?

SAM DONALDSON: Well, I want to - can I set the record straight now?

LARRY KING: Yes.

SAM DONALDSON: And Ronald **Reagan** will back me up on this. It is said that we yelled at him over the helicopter blades. They didn't have those blades going. What? To decapitate the President of the United States? Are you kidding? The engines-

LARRY KING: So then what-

SAM DONALDSON: -the engines might be on. But I want to say this, he would cup his head 'What? What?' If he'd hear a question he wanted to answer, he heard it, he'd come right over and answer. But the questions he didn't want to answer, it would be 'What, Sam? What?' And into the helicopter he'd go.

LARRY KING: From a Press Secretary's standpoint, easy, delightful, or problemsome?

MARLON FITZWATER: He was easy and delightful. Once - another thing was, he liked to make decisions in writing. He liked to give papers and have the options on them and make the choices. He'd come in in the morning and say 'This is what I've decided.' And you could read those and know exactly what he was thinking, what he felt were the right reasons.

SAM DONALDSON: You mean, Marlon, he would not come in-

MARLON FITZWATER: And-

SAM DONALDSON: -and put his finger up to the wind and say-

MARLON FITZWATER: No-

SAM DONALDSON: -what should I decide?

LARRY KING: What are you implying, Sam?

SAM DONALDSON: Nothing.

MARLON FITZWATER: Well, the press would say 'What did he mean to say by that?' and the President would say 'Well, I meant just what- pretty much what I said.'

LARRY KING: Our guests will be with us the rest of the way. We've got lots of surprises coming and please don't leave us, we have a- an end of the show tonight that is going to flip you.

Stay right there gentlemen, we will be back with more after a commercial break and these happy **birthday** greetings from others who have had the pleasure of working with you, Ronald **Reagan**.

Gen. ALEXANDER HAIG: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President from your former colleagues here in our nation's Capitol. I want to tell you that over time, your reign here, as President of the United States is looked at with considerable nostalgia.

CASPER WEINBERGER, former Defense Secretary: Mr. President, it is certainly a great delight to have the opportunity to wish you a very, very happy **birthday** this way. And to thank you for the many happy, not only **birthdays**, but the many happy days you gave the United States and the world, during your eight years as President.

JEANNE KIRKPATRICK, former Ambassador to the United Nations: Representing the United Nations in your Cabinet, was about the greatest privilege of my life. And a very wonderful warm memory working with you was a very special honor and everyone here misses you.

JAMES BRADY, former White House Press Secretary: I want to wish the happiest of **birthdays** to former President Ronald **Reagan**, the man who truly restored my faith in all of the good that can be accomplished in Washington. Congratulations on reaching this milestone.

DON REGAN, former Chief of Staff: Happy **birthday**, boss, and many more to come. This is a time for you to relax and enjoy life knowing that you've done well by our country.

GEORGE SCHULTZ, former Secretary of State: You've always said 'God bless America.' So on your **birthday**, Mr. President, I say to you with all my heart, 'God bless Ronald **Reagan**.'

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: We have been told that President Ronald **Reagan** and his wife Nancy are watching this tribute at their home in Bel Air. Nancy will be going over to the party later, which is scheduled to start a half hour from now. Just ahead, more from Washington and Hollywood. But first Mr. President, a very special greeting from the school children of the Ronald **Reagan** Middle School in Dixon, Illinois.

CHILDREN of the Ronald **Reagan** Middle School, Ronald **Reagan**: From the Ronald **Reagan** Middle School in Dixon, Illinois, Happy **Birthday**, President **Reagan**.

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: Welcome back. We're saluting former President Ronald **Reagan** on his 85th **birthday**. With us once again from Chasens Restaurant in Hollywood, are Maureen **Reagan** and Patty Davis and the man who started a revolution of his own. On the left, the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. He's not used to being on the left.

Thank you for being with us Mr. Speaker. We have with us here in the studio, Howard Baker and Sam Donaldson and Marlon Fitzwater. This is a very festive and joyous evening. What did Ronald **Reagan** mean in your life?

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH, Speaker of the House: Well, he meant more things than we can get into in a short time, Larry. Let me just say that this is really his revolution. I felt, sitting at the State of the Union the other night, like the first third of that speech was really President **Reagan's** speech. I think he has changed history permanently. He's certainly changed my life permanently. He brought the Republican party a sense of hope and optimism in understanding that America is a great country full of good people, and that our job was to reach out to all Americans and to extend freedom. And when you look at what he did around the world, he didn't just mean a lot to America. The **Reagan** presidency changed the history of the entire human race. And because of it, there is no Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union no longer exists. So, I think all of us here tonight have a lot to celebrate and a lot to be grateful for and Ronald **Reagan** really created the world that we're trying to now expand and build upon. So, this is his revolution, I am just perched on his shoulder as it is.

LARRY KING: What is the feeling like there, now?

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: Oh, the people who have gotten here so far are very excited. The crowd got to be so big, they originally were going to have just a few hundred people in the restaurant, then it overflowed into a tent, then overflowed into an even bigger tent. Then they finally had to say no more folks can come out here. It's a huge overflow crowd of people celebrating a man who they loved and who they know really helped Americans and really helped people everywhere get back in touch with freedom and with what freedom really means.

LARRY KING: Is it a legacy you miss? I mean, are there any-

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: Oh, sure.

LARRY KING: -Ronald **Reagan's** around?

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: No, there- I mean, you only see a Ronald **Reagan** once in a generation, or two generations. I- I think he was the most effective president since Franklin Roosevelt, if you look at the totality of what he changed and how he impacted. And I think you don't see those very often. And obviously, you know, you'd love to have been able somehow to be able to have had him for a third, fourth, fifth, sixth term, but that's frankly not the way the system works, and it's probably good to force us to go on on our own and for our generation to now learn how to apply his speeches and to learn how to lead and do the best we can, learning the lessons that he taught us.

LARRY KING: Maureen **Reagan**, there- the people who are coming tonight, are paying and that is going for a charitable effort is it not?

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** It is, it's to the Presidential Library. It's for an annuity which will continue the work of the Library on into the future beyond us. And, it's very important. You know, there are a lot of people out there around the country, who don't - who can't come here, or who don't have lots of money to give and we've always been a small donor group ourselves. So at the risk of sounding like a commercial, Larry, the Library does have an 800 number if any of your- your viewers seeing us tonight would like to participate, to send their greetings-

LARRY KING: Sure.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** -or to make a small contribution. It is 1-800-85-4GIPPER.

LARRY KING: 1-800-85 4-GIPPER.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** Yeah.

LARRY KING: I toured that library with your mother, Patty, I imagine you have been through it many times. It maybe is the best of the libraries. It's a historical special place. Have you been through it a lot.

PATTY DAVIS: No, I haven't actually.

LARRY KING: You haven't been to the Library yet? Patty.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** Oh, dear. It's okay.

LARRY KING: Maureen, take your sister.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** I am going to take my sister to the Library. You are absolutely right, Larry.

PATTY DAVIS: I'm just coming back, Larry. Not too long ago.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** She lives in New York, Larry. She doesn't live out here. But we're going to-

PATTY DAVIS: We're getting to all of this stuff, you know?

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** -we will get there. No, there is a great sense of celebration about the Library.

PATTY DAVIS: I am the prodigal daughter. You know the prodigal son-

LARRY KING: The prodigal daughter has come back, yes.

PATTY DAVIS: Yes. Ask me something else.

LARRY KING: Newt, have you been - Newt - Mr. Speaker have you been to that library?

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: I sure have, Larry and that is part of the reason that I was so excited about being able to help tonight, because I really think that it is a very historic library, I think it is a library that really brings you in touch with the human side of Ronald and Nancy **Reagan**. It reminds you of the degree to which the presidency is more than just a set of speeches. It's human beings doing things that really matter in a way that really changes history. And let me say that not just the president's contribution. When you look at what Nancy **Reagan** did with her Just Say No campaign, the impact that had on teenage drug use and what happened once we got away from that is that drug use began to go back up. You can see that there really are contributions that are really important. And when people do visit the library I think they get a renewed sense of history and a renewed sense of how important it is, to have leaders who believe and who have the courage to live out their beliefs.

MAUREEN **REAGAN**: Well, Larry can I just say one thing and that is that I don't know if you guys know this story but I think it is very telling about this. That, you know, you raise money, from a lot of people, and you build a library and nobody realizes that you then have to have this annuity to continue it. But when President **Reagan** was president, Caroline and John Kennedy came to see him one day and they explained to him that they needed to build an annuity for their father's library and they hoped that he would help them. And he did an event for them which raised almost all their money. And he said to me, I remember when he came upstairs that night, 'Those are really nice kids, of course, I am going to help them.' So now we're kind of doing it for him.

LARRY KING: That's a great story, we've got lots more and a very special surprise ahead. Before we break Mr. President, a few words of inspiration.

Rev. BILLY GRAHAM: Happy **birthday**, Ron. I wish I could be there in person to help you celebrate it. You have been a wonderful friend to us and you have been an inspiration to the world. You have a philosophy that was based on the Bible and faith in God and you never changed and that made you great. And I pray that these latter years that God will give you great joy and great peace and may this be a great and wonderful day for you as you celebrate your 85th **birthday**. God bless you and Nancy and the family.

LOU HOLTZ, Head Coach, Notre Dame University: Happy **birthday**, President **Reagan**. On behalf of the Notre Dame football team and myself, we not only want to wish you a very happy **birthday** but also thanks for the many things you've done. We hope we will have the opportunity to extend these **birthday** wishes to you, personally, for many years to come.

MARVIN HAMLISCH, Composer: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. Memories light the corners of our minds and I cannot help but remember the good times we had at the White House with the television shows that we all did. And I still remember the First Lady singing to you 'Our Love Is Here To Stay', as one of the highlights of my life, I must say, watching all of that. That love between the two of you has been one of the wonderful things to watch. And I congratulate you on your fantastic and wonderful **birthday**.

CHARLTON HESTON, Actor: Mr. President, happy **birthday**. One of the most distinguished of your predecessors, Thomas Jefferson, said 'America is man's last, best hope on earth.' I know that was your philosophy when you said that to the American people, they believed you, thank God. God bless you, sir.

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: By the way, if occasionally our guests refer to the President in the past tense, they are referring to him as president and the questions asked and answered dealt with him as president, and that's the reason for saying 'was.' Ronald **Reagan** is very much with us and is watching this program tonight.

Our **birthday** celebration in honor of Ronald **Reagan's birthday** is now in full swing and with us

from Hollywood are **Reagan's** daughters Maureen **Reagan** and Patty Davis, along with White House Speaker - with House Speaker, Newt Gingrich - I'm jumping ahead, but based on Louisiana he may be thinking that way. We will ask Newt about that in a while.

Dropping in at the Chasens party, long time **Reagan** friend Merv Griffin and here in Washington, former **Reagan** Chief of Staff, Howard Baker, former Press Secretary Marlon Fitzwater and ABC News' Sam Donaldson.

Merv, tell us the history of Merv Griffin and Ronald **Reagan**.

MERV GRIFFIN, Entertainer: Well, have you noticed that Newt copied my hair.

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: He's right, you know. I said, 'Finally, the secret is out, Merv, I watched you one night and I thought 'this is the color of the future.'

MERV GRIFFIN: It's terrific.

LARRY KING: We have our lookalikes.

MERV GRIFFIN: Tell you the what? The secrets of Ronald **Reagan**?

LARRY KING: No, how far you and he go back.

MERV GRIFFIN: We do. We go back to Warner Brothers. So it's pretty close to 40 years. Wonderful fella. A great sense of humor. You're looking at a hero to me. If you look at his life. I know, sitting around one night, I kidded him, he had said he was a lifeguard. And I said, I don't remember Illinois being near the ocean. And he said, 'No, no, no. I was a lifeguard in the river.' I said, 'Lifeguard in a river? I've never heard of a lifeguard in a river.' 'Oh, yeah,' he said, 'there's a big current there.' You don't think- you don't think of lifeguards in a river.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** It's a big river, Merv. A big river.

MERV GRIFFIN: So I said, 'Did a lot of people need your help?' He said, 'Oh, constantly. I was out there saving lives.' And I said, 'Female?' And he said, 'Oh, yeah. Yeah. The river was rough on them.' And I said, 'Did you keep - keep score?' And he said, 'Yeah, there's a tree with little notches.' So all of us have been searching for that tree. We want to count the notches.

LARRY KING: Merv - you're - you're going to emcee this party tonight, right?

MERV GRIFFIN: Yeah.

LARRY KING: Can you tell us what is going to happen?

MERV GRIFFIN: Well, you know, with Newt cutting the budget we have cut out the orchestra, so I am the orchestra. I'm the orchestra, I'm the emcee, I will be taking Patty to the library later tonight. Let me see, I am playing - I am playing the piano and Johnny Mathis is going to sing.

LARRY KING: Oh, Johnny's - I thought you were going to get Marlon to sing.

MERV GRIFFIN: No, no. We want a guy with a hit record. Sorry, Marlon. Marlon and Mervyn.

LARRY KING: Marlon and Mervyn. And I know Nancy is a close friend of yours-

MERV GRIFFIN: Yep.

LARRY KING: -and she will be coming by later. Have you seen the President recently? He looked so good the other day in those pictures.

MERV GRIFFIN: He does look good and you know, it's very funny, today a lot of people called, like [unintelligible] called from Chicago -

LARRY KING: Yeah.

MERV GRIFFIN: -and said, 'Merv, he looks great. Why is he not coming.'

LARRY KING: That is the - now it's among all the press - they are all asking, he plays golf, and he goes to the office, but why isn't he coming?

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** It's his choice. He doesn't-

LARRY KING: Maureen?

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** -he doesn't choose to be in large groups of people and he made that choice well over a year ago.

MERV GRIFFIN: And I think the nature of the illness keeps somebody from going into a large crowd that it can be very confining to them and-

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** Larry, it was just a decision that he made some time back and that-

MERV GRIFFIN: Right.

LARRY KING: And he sticks to it.

MERV GRIFFIN: Right.

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** -and we kept to it. Yeah.

LARRY KING: Newt, before we take a break and bring our panel from Washington back in, I'd be remiss, it is after all he was a great politician, in not asking you what you make of Buchanan in Louisiana tonight.

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: I don't have a clue, because I don't know what Buchanan did.

LARRY KING: We've called him a win- CNN has called him a winner.

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: Well, I think that first of all Pat would be thrilled if he were here tonight, to tell you a lot of stories about-

LARRY KING: Oh, yeah, he would.

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: -what he learned working for Ronald **Reagan**. And how much his speeches, you know, have grown out of his experience with **Reagan**. So, in a sense, Phil Gramm was converted from Democrat to Republican by **Reagan**, Bob Dole was the head of the Senate Finance Committee passing the **Reagan** tax cuts, Lamar Alexander as Governor was a strong ally of **Reagan**. I think all of them would be glad to explain to you how close they are to Ronald **Reagan**. I think that tells you something in the Republican party, about Ronald **Reagan's** strength tonight. That every one of them would be proud. And Steve Forbes editorialized in favor of Ronald **Reagan** for his entire career.

So all of them would be glad, I think, to show up and tell you that each of them in their own way, is part of the Ronald **Reagan** tradition.

SAM DONALDSON: What about Bob Dornan? I mean he's- Dornan and Keyes-

LARRY KING: So **Reagan** won tonight in Louisiana.

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: That's right. Keyes was named by **Reagan** to UN and B-1 Bob Dornan was one of **Reagan's** earliest supporters when **Reagan** began running back here for the presidency in 1980.

LARRY KING: I think that clean sweeps it, Newt. Well, Mr. President we have to take a quick break. But first, a few of those reporters who are always looking for a scoop, have something to say to you.

HELEN THOMAS, UPI: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. We really miss you and your prime time conferences, we are still wearing red in your honor. And we think this is a wonderful occasion and we wish you all the best on your **birthday**.

LESLIE STAHL, CBS News: You may be off the front pages, every day, Mr. President, but make no mistake about it, you are still the hottest property in the GOP. A very sincere happy **birthday** and all the very best.

TOM BROKAW, NBC News: Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. You know I've always felt privileged to share this **birthday** with you, February 6th.

ANDREA MITCHELL, NBC News: Mr. President we do miss you here in Washington. We miss your sense of humor and your kindness and your gentle spirit. So have a very happy **birthday** from all of us in Washington. We wish you well.

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: We're back for a few more moments with our special guests and then a surprise at the end, here all tonight to celebrate **Reagan's birthday**. So we'd like to have each say whatever they wish to the President who is watching.

We will start with Senator Baker.

HOWARD BAKER: Well, Mr. President, we miss you and I think the country misses you and indeed, I believe the entire world misses you because you set such an example of strength. And the symbolism for the strength of America that is was unmistakable. And we're still benefiting from that. I think the presidency benefited from it, as did the country, the economy and I think your contribution to the ending of the cold war will be recorded as one of the great historical achievements of our era.

LARRY KING: Patty Davis what would you like to say to your father?

PATTY DAVIS: Well, anything that I want to say to my father directly, I will say to him personally. But I would like to say that I- my wish for any child who is watching their parent at the end of their life is that they hold to the most precious memories of their lives together and the gifts that were given to them. And I am very grateful that I think a lot of gifts were given to me.

LARRY KING: Maureen **Reagan** what would you like to say to Pop?

MAUREEN **REAGAN:** Well, I already wished him the best golf game of his life and I think he had that today, but I'd just say I love you dad and happy **birthday** and let's do it again next year.

LARRY KING: To Marlon Fitzwater, what would you like to say to Ronald **Reagan**?

MARLON FITZWATER: Well, Mr. President I think so many people love you today still because you always loved us. You trusted us and you knew we were good folks and we all miss you.

LARRY KING: Merv Griffin, what would you like to say to President **Reagan**?

MERV GRIFFIN: Well, Mr. President you gave us a lot to be proud of in this country and a lot to aspire to. And I don't know if you can ever be topped, that show business word, in the presidency you are simply the best one we've ever had.

LARRY KING: Sam Donaldson?

SAM DONALDSON: Well, Mr. President, we miss you.

LARRY KING: I know you are very touched this night, you've been very moved this evening.

SAM DONALDSON: I think he's a great guy. And we reporters miss you as a campaigner. We always knew where you stood, destroy the communists, cut the taxes. You always had a sense of humor, the meanest thing you said about your opponents was 'Oh, there he goes again.' And you had a sense of humor that carried forward. When Andrea Mitchell asked you in 1984, 'What about Mondale's charges?' Your reply: 'He ought to pay them,' will go down in political annals. And Mr. President if you would come out of retirement, if we can get rid of this pernicious 22nd Amendment, I know you agree with me now, I will come out of retirement to cover a campaign once again, together again.

LARRY KING: Newt, we have 30 seconds, what would you like to say to President **Reagan** who is watching?

Rep. NEWT GINGRICH: President **Reagan** as you watch us on C-Span and as you watch us on CNN, I want you to know that every day the House Republicans think of you, talk about you and ask what we can learn from your skills and your beliefs and how we can grow through your courage. And we all wish you a wonderful happy **birthday**.

LARRY KING: Thanks to everyone who is joining us this evening to make this a very special **birthday**. Thanks to Mr. Fitzwater and Mr. Donaldson and Senator Baker and thanks in LA to Maureen **Reagan** and Patty Davis and to of course Merv Griffin and Newt Gingrich and earlier Senator Laxalt.

A very special surprise is ahead, just for you Mr. President.

[Commercial break]

LARRY KING: This has been an incredible night and I want to personally salute our production staff for putting together this wonderful program. Before this celebration ends, President **Reagan**, there a few more well wishes we have saved just for now, just for you.

Pres. BILL CLINTON: Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to join in the 50th anniversary celebration of your 35th **birthday**. I would like to think that we are honoring more than the beginning of another year in your rich and wonderful life. We are honoring America itself, its optimism, its sense of hopefulness, the belief that every one of us can make the most of his or her God given capabilities. You continue to remind us of these, our fundamental virtues. And for that, all of us will always be grateful.

Growing up on the prairie, I guess you learned that in this nation there are always new and brighter horizons ahead. So, Mr. President, Hillary and Chelsea and I, join all the rest of your fellow Americans in wishing you the very happiest of **birthdays**, with many more to come.

Pres. GEORGE BUSH: Barbara and I are in London as this great event unfolds. But we're pleased to join you in this manner, in sending our warmest wishes to Ronald **Reagan** as he celebrates his 85th **birthday**, which President **Reagan** no doubt would refer to as the 46th anniversary of his

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39th **birthday**. This program tonight demonstrates something that Barbara and I already knew: that Ronald **Reagan** touched the lives of countless Americans and people around the world. He did so always with decency, always with honor. History will surely note that he was a great president and leader. That the outpouring of affection on this special occasion shows he was also a thoroughly decent man and a great friend. And Barbara and I just want to get in the long line of Ronald **Reagan's** friends and admirers, to wish him and Nancy and his family, wish them well, and to thank him for all he has done to make this a better world. Ron, I miss you very much. Good luck, sir.

BARBARA BUSH: God bless you, Mr. President.

Pres. GERALD FORD: Congratulations, Ron, on your 85th **birthday** anniversary which is another milestone in a terrific career in the political arena and in the private sector. Our friendship goes back over 30 years and I am proud of it. I recall as a member of Congress quite a few years ago, when you switched from Democrat to Republican and became the Governor of the great state of California. I also remember, as I am sure you do, 1976, when we had a little friendly contest for the Republican nomination for the presidency. I also recall, very distinctly, when you asked me to be your running mate in 1980, as vice president. I couldn't accept, but I was pleased to campaign for you in the 1980 election, when you won over President Carter. I also have the best memories of the fine job you did as President of the United States. On this occasion, Betty and I extend to you and Nancy, our prayers and best wishes, God bless you both.

LADY BIRD JOHNSON: Happy **birthday**, President **Reagan**. You know you are one of America's most well-loved presidents. Once you cheered us with your optimism and faith. And now, you inspire us with your courage. I send affectionate greetings to you and Nancy.

LARRY KING: And from former President Jimmy Carter: Roselynn joins me in sending you our congratulations on this milestone anniversary of your birth. Although we cannot be with you this evening, we are delighted to have our friend, **Larry King**, deliver our **birthday** message to you. And I am honored to do so.

We hope you enjoyed this salute. Happy **birthday**, Mr. President. From all of us at CNN, good night.

The preceding text has been professionally transcribed. However, although the text has been checked against an audio track, in order to meet rigid distribution and transmission deadlines, it has not yet been proofread against videotape.

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Final 02/04/00 12:50 pm
Josh Gottheimer

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 6, 2000

Hillary, Chelsea and I want to join all Americans in wishing Ronald Reagan a very happy 89th birthday.

Mr. President, your optimism, patriotism and determination have served as an inspiration to all Americans, including me. Today, we honor more than another year in your rich and wonderful life. We honor an idea that was at the heart of your leadership: that America's best days are always ahead of us. With your quiet courage, you continue to remind us of that fundamental truth.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us." President Reagan, you have spent your life giving – to your family, to your country, and to all those who love freedom around the world. And for that, all Americans owe you our deepest gratitude.

Mr. President, Hillary and I wish you and Nancy all the best on this very special day. Happy birthday.

Josh Gottheimer
Draft 1/11/99 10:45pm

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 6, 1999**

Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to join you on what you like to call the anniversary of your 38th birthday -- in this case, the 50th anniversary. You may be 88 -- but remember, in Celsius, that's only 31. [this is a direct reference to a joke RR made on his 75th birthday]

President Reagan, your boundless optimism has always lifted our spirits and reminded us that America's best days are indeed ahead of us. Your quiet courage and belief in the America's fundamental goodness to inspire us.

Mr. President -- Hillary, Chelsea and I join the rest of America in wishing you the happiest of birthdays.

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BIRTHDAY
February 2, 1998**

Hillary and I want to join all Americans in wishing Ronald Reagan a happy birthday. President Reagan, your optimism, your patriotism, and your determination to spread America's vision of freedom throughout the world represent the best our nation has to offer. With courage -- and with your trademark sense of humor -- you helped restore all Americans' confidence in America. Happy birthday, Mr. President.