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a vulnerable person. There was an article in
the Washington Star ^{during} in the 1980 campaign. It
was a cheap shot. That woman was devastated
for weeks. People talk about her being tough.
They talk about her being involved in the
process. Those things are all true, but she's
also a vulnerable, sweet little person. A lot
of her personal friends see that, but people
in the political arena don't ~~see~~ it.

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Donnie Radcliffe: Donnie Radcliffe is
a Washington Post
reporter who has
covered the Reagan
White House for
several years.

There is an element of the unapproachable
about her. I would have hoped that after four
years, with this particular press corps who is
following her every move, that there would be
some feeling of a rapport that has developed
with us. I don't have that ^{sense} ~~feeling~~. I still
feel that we can have our differences and
still have an understanding.

I mean, we might encounter her in a
situation where she is walking towards a group

of press she knows, and there is not a glimmer of recognition in her eye about who we are. The president isn't that way. Sometimes he'll give you a little lift of the eyebrow, or a little wink. It doesn't mean that we've crossed each other's lines or we've succumbed to each other's charms, but it does mean that there is a human quality there that, with Mrs. Reagan, is missing.

I think she thinks that she's been burned by the press and therefore she's wary. I don't know if she is really scared and I do not necessarily subscribe to the view that she is timid and shy. I don't see Mrs. Reagan as that at all. I think she's more aloof and controlled about what the outer Nancy Reagan is.

I would like to like her. I really don't know whether I like her or not. I don't dislike her. I don't know that I would think of her as a close friend. ~~I just don't know how I would say that.~~ I feel that there's a certain detachment about her that makes it sort of difficult to feel a closeness to her. Now, she may be wonderful with her staff, but that's the sort of thing I don't know ever comes through to ordinary mortals. I still feel there's a curtain there.

I would like to feel that she is a warm, caring person, that I could go to and talk about substantial things or concerns, but I don't know how that would ever be possible.

~~If you sit down with the president you do feel that at least for the moment you and he are having a friendly discussion, whether you are disagreeing or not. With her I feel that there is so much superficiality, there's nothing there that goes very deep.~~

James Rosebush: James Rosebush was Mrs. Reagan's East Wing chief of staff.

You certainly don't have a person here who's changed herself to fit the occasion, but the experience of the past years has had an impact on her.

I think she was always willing to take risks--accept challenge--but I think now she does it with greater confidence. I think she takes all of the public acclaim now with a knock-on-wood attitude because she's no one to rest on those laurels. In the political world, they can evaporate. So I think she wants to work hard to keep the public confidence.

The First Lady is
~~I think~~ she's bright, she's hardworking, and she's good to work for in the sense that she knows what's going on. She's alert, and so you can work well with her because of that, because she knows what's going on. She's very demanding of herself. You want to do your best for her. That's the way I respond to her. I want to do my best for her because she's demanding of herself and ~~I think~~ she expects good work out of people.

She likes to use the phone a lot more than I do. I've never been one to enjoy talking on the telephone but that's her way of communicating with people. She's up there on the second floor of the White House and you or I might get up and walk down to the office at the end of the hall to chew the fat with someone, but her way of communicating is on the telephone.

She has never ^{ONCE} said to me ~~once~~, "Jim, you've overscheduled me. You've given me too much. You've made me climb too many flights of stairs." She's got boundless energy.

Dr. Richard Davis:

Nancy came to Washington prepared, by parents, a good home, a fine education, and

wonderful friends. Sometimes we forget that she was "First Lady of California" for eight years. So she did have experience when she arrived in Washington. I think the first two or three years in the White House got her off stride. The first thing that did was some unfortunate press.

The second was the wounding of the president in March, 1981. I remember that, of course, vividly. I had come down on several occasions and three or four nights after his operation I came ^{STET} ~~here~~ to the White House. Nancy had had a really dreadful day. Things were perhaps touch and go. We got back here and she seemed to shift gears. She actually took me on a little guided tour. We talked about different things and finally the tour, so to speak, ended in a beautiful room on the third floor called the solarium. It has a bay window and looks out over the monument.

That night, though, it was under renovation and there weren't any lights in the room. It was early spring and the window boxes were filled with daffodils. Here we were standing in this darkness and there were these dancing yellow flowers which represented to us, I guess, a hopeful future. We discussed a

number of things. She expressed her gratitude about all the care the president received and the doctors and nurses. And then she turned to me and said, "Now Dick, my job this week is to really go over this room and renovate it so the president can recover here. It will make him feel like he's outside once again and, you know, we want to keep all that sunshine and happiness in his life."

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And I thought that really was quite a remarkable thing. She showed no self pity. She was thinking of a life probably more dear to her than her very own.

~~(END CHAPTER TWO; END THE REAL NANCY)~~

Husband and Wife
CHAPTER THREE: ~~Nancy and Ren~~

Nancy Reagan:

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I can't talk for anyone else. I can talk for me, what makes me happy, what makes my husband happy, what makes our marriage happy. For me, my husband, my family, come first. And that makes me happy. I assume it makes them happy.

I think it's easier if you have a definite philosophy that you've held for a long time. I have a feeling that perhaps in the past, there've been some people who maybe haven't made up their minds clearly what their positions are. And I think that can age you pretty quickly. But if you have a pretty definite philosophy of what you want to do, then it makes things a lot easier.

It's what he feels. He has his own instincts about what's right and what's wrong.

Do we ever fight? We disagree. We don't fight. Fight to me means throwing plates and all of that. There's nobody that you're going to agree with all the time, even your husband.

I'm often asked about thirty three years of marriage, which today sounds like a long time. It doesn't seem like a long time,

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though. I got to thinking about it and, you're always reluctant to give anybody advice about marriage or how to have a long marriage or whatever, but I've really been very lucky because most men or women, when they get married, like to feel that their husband or wife, if put to the test, if put under tremendous pressure, would act in a certain way, would act with great strength and ~~would~~ make you very proud of them. You like to feel that. But very seldom does the average person have a chance to really see that husband or wife under those kinds of circumstances. I've been very lucky in that, because I've seen my husband under very pressured conditions, I know he's never failed. Never failed me. He's always stuck to principles. He's never done anything for political reasons. You go back to the assassination attempt. I don't know of many men who would have handled it that way.

President Reagan:

How do you explain it? We're happy. I don't know how to answer it. From a man's

standpoint, I could say what I think Clark Gable once said to someone, "There's nothing more important than approaching your own doorstep and knowing that someone on the other side of the door is listening for the sound of your footsteps."

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I know that during the day, even before this job, whatever I was doing, something would happen in a day and the first thing that would go through my mind was picturing myself telling her about it when I got home.

We talk about everything. Sometimes, we disagree on someone or their particular qualifications or something, but never very seriously. It's good to talk about it and have other input. I feel better always knowing that we're in agreement.

Michael Reagan:

I don't think she advises him on ~~things,~~ decisions he makes as president. But it's important that dad have her because she is a sounding board just for family feelings. She's an important part of his life. I've always said that, without her, dad probably wouldn't be president of the United States. She gives him inner strength, that he really needs and that keeps him going every day, knowing that

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at the end of the day, he has her to go home to.

She sees the people around dad and she wants them to be in the same mold they're in. I think that's what happens. She may voice an opinion on a person or whether they're doing the job and are looking the part they should play or if they're not. She probably discusses that with dad. But the ultimate decision is always up to dad on who he's going to have working with him.

I think he values very much all the advice that she gives him. Dad's just a stronger man because of Nancy Reagan, ^{and} She's been a very supportive force. Without her support, he would not have run for governor, he would not have run for president.

I think what pulled them through into the 1980s was that dad and the people around dad wanted him to run. I don't know if Nancy did. All of us were hurt after he lost to Ford at the end of '76. It was, what do you do, do you start this, do you do that? ~~I think everybody was pretty hurt that dad didn't get it.~~ I think dad's the one that pulled up his boots and said, no, we're going on. And then everybody supported ^{him} dad.

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You make a bad remark against Ronald Reagan and Nancy's not going to be friendly to you. ~~There are a lot of people who won't.~~ Her life really is ^{centered} around Ronald Reagan. She will do whatever is necessary to insulate him and keep him happy. And she goes off. She does her thing helping with the kids, with the grandparent program and the drug program, which are important to her. But, really, the most important thing to her is Ronald Reagan. So if you consider everything ~~in that~~, on that basis, then she isn't that complicated.

They do need each other. They both dance to the other one's ^{tune} side. I mean, dad is Nancy's strength in his way and Nancy is his strength in the home life. I think they could live all by themselves and be perfectly happy. That's not to say that they don't want the kids or anything of that nature. But the fact is that now the kids are grown and gone, and their relationship hasn't changed in 30 years. They are the same people ^{who} ~~that~~ met back in the fifties and got married in 1952. They haven't changed.

William F. Buckley:

I would say that, at one level, Nancy Reagan has total influence over her husband. that is to say I could not imagine his doing something which forfeited her loyalty or her devotion to him. ^{But} It would be very hard to imagine such a thing even in the abstract.

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They are in every sense of the word companions. They share their thoughts, they share their peeves, they share their enthusiasms. And when something is brewing, it is coterminously communicated. It isn't something that he sort of announces. So there's never a situation in which all of a sudden he accosts her at noon and says something's been cooking in my mind for three months. This is it. They just don't have that kind of relationship.

Suppose he asked Jimmy Carter to be special Mideast fixit man. Something like that, he'd almost certainly would discuss with her because of the bizarre character of it. I can't believe that he would discuss with her in any detail recommendations of who should be the new head of the Federal Reserve Board.

I think she has a very important role in the sense that he would never want to disappoint her nor would he ever want to

surprise her. If, somewhere along the line, he decided to end the agriculture embargo, he'd know that doing so would at least annoy and, in some senses, outrage the hard anti-communist part of his constituency. In a situation like that, it would be perfectly normal for him to discuss the consequences of an impending decision. It is very unlikely that she would weigh in during that discussion in such a way as to cause him to change his mind.

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It's hard to say how good her instincts are because we don't ~~really~~ often talk politics. We talk people. Take the whole matter of whether he would run in 1968. In *that year* 1968, there was an understanding more or less that if Nixon failed in the primaries in New Hampshire and Indiana, Reagan would come in rather than let Nelson Rockefeller have it. Of course, Nixon didn't fail in those primaries, but meanwhile a movement had developed. She was at once anxious for him to succeed in any enterprise and terribly afraid that he might be hurt. He didn't declare his candidacy until after he arrived in Miami and at the time I was quite certain the reason he had finally entered the race wasn't because he thought there was any chance of winning it, but

because he didn't want to let down people who had expended that much of an effort. She, in that situation, almost certainly urged him not to think so much about the people who had supported him as about himself.

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They grew up in their early married life fighting communists in Hollywood. It was a shared experience, ^{one} ~~and it~~ was an experience that continues to be extremely strong in Reagan. And it ^{helped} ~~formed~~ her opinions also.

There's a sense in which she's not that much of a hard liner. He's a very hard liner in his rhetoric, but less in his actions. He's been softer on the Soviet Union in respect of Poland and Afghanistan than Carter was. I can't imagine a situation in which she would say to him, notwithstanding how he feels about the Soviet Union, "We have got to entertain Gorbachev when he comes over here." It's much more likely that he simply would accept the institutional requirements that he has as chief of state and simply swing with it.

She thinks he's absolutely unique. She probably thinks he belongs on Mount Rushmore. And any failure of the public to recognize this is a failure of them to recognize that which is obvious to her. In that sense, she is

more ambitious for him but only because of her distinctive appreciation of him. Now is that the same kind of ambition tht Lady MacBeth had or is it something completely different? I think it's different. It's kind of a healicentric relationship.

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Bonita Granville Wrather:

Nancy and Ronald Reagan are a team. They're devoted to one another, very much in love, and they work as a team and they always have. I understand it. Some people may not because they may not have husbands. My husband, until he passed away, was a partner of mine. We talked about everything. I can't say whether she gives him advice, but I think they discuss everything and they advise each other. When I hear people say, well, she's his advisor, that's not so. They, ^{just} discuss things together.

I know that the president thinks that his wife is a good judge of character. I know that he values her opinion on everything, whether it's raising children or politics. It doesn't matter. He values her opinion. As, by the way, do all of her friends.

C. Z. Wick:

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What I know well of their relationship is that she had excellent judgement and, like any husband and wife, there's interest in what the other does. He knows he can rely on very solid judgement, but I think that the character of that is his recognizing a smart person who is there for him and who's solid as a rock when you need some good advice.

She has terrific instincts for people's motives and their sort of personal agendas. She's micro and he's macro. He's the big picture in terms of the whole country. She's very good with the people ^{who} ~~that~~ are very close to him.

Ron Reagan:

She's got great instincts, not so much about what will play well to the country-- that's where he comes in, that's where he's very good--but as to how he plays best, just himself. How he comes off best, under what circumstances, and in what surroundings.

I can't say whether he discusses things

that are classified with her. I would guess he probably wouldn't want to. But they talk about everything else. They're very close. What don't you talk about with your wife?

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Maureen Reagan:

They have the ultimate relationship. They are each other's best friends. We all want to have that kind of relationship. They try things out on each other. They use each other as sounding boards. There's a difference between being an advisor and being somebody's best friend. He refines things that he's thinking about by saying them out loud and talking to her. She refines things that she's thinking about in the same way, and they give each other advice in that way. They have always done that. They will always do that. They are absolutely a team. You do not get one without the other, ever.

They're always two parts to everything--the ideas, the ambition, the ability to do it. Then there's the rest of us behind the scenes that sort of make it all come together and make it all work. She has created an environment in their lives that allowed him a lot of freedom to go out and

explore things that he might not have under other circumstances. But I don't call that a driving force.

My initial reaction is that he would be president no matter what right now because I have a feeling of destiny in this particular enterprise. I think it all became possible because of the relationship they have, and because they both had a great deal of freedom and because they have this incredible friendship that allows them to talk about things.

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Nancy Reynolds:

Nancy Reagan's only interest is what's good for the president. She has no hidden agenda, ~~she has~~ no other worries or concerns. She feels that if there are people who have other agendas, and in politics there are always such people, they are definitely working at some sort of disadvantage to the president and she's going to speak up.

They certainly fulfill each other's needs and perhaps that's the basis for a really successful marriage. They communicate with one another extremely well. And they have

such mutual admiration and respect for one another. Based on those two things, they agree on most issues. ~~The prominence of the family and the kinds of things that they like to do together,~~ ⁴⁹ They share so many things in common, but mostly they fulfill each other's needs, most of the personal needs we all have. He loves and respects her very much and vice versa. Like most marriages, no one is ever giving fifty fifty. At one time or another someone has done the eighty twenty bit or ninety ten. And they've each had opportunity to be in that position, as all good relationships do. And I think they have ~~the~~ bond, a personal bond, of all the things they've gone through together. It has only strengthened over the years.

Sheila Tate:

First of all, if you know Nancy and Ronald Reagan, you know that he's not going to every consider her a liability. She's his biggest asset, emotionally, and we knew we could get that story out.

To some degree, I think she was a convenient lightning rod, and when you have a

popular president, it's hard to attack the president. His wife is vulnerable. People took shots at her. ~~There was some of that.~~

They're inextricably bound, but she's certainly carved out an independent niche for herself that she could be proud of in her own right. I think she's probably teased the president about the fact that her rating is a little higher than his.

Do I feel she's a little competitive with the president? Only on the friendliest basis. We'd say, "We were the lead story on the network news," and she'd say, "I can't wait to tell Ronnie."

She was probably the best person to address that ~~age~~ ^{of the president's age} issue. She'd been through it before. She's the closest person there is to the president and she knew that it was not an issue. We were out campaigning and she took that issue head on. She walked over the rope lines when we'd get to an airport and invite reporters' questions and she would welcome that particular ^{one} ~~question~~. She had a very good sense that she could address that question in a way probably no one else could.

Lyn Nofziger:

Nancy's a perfectly normal human being. When things go wrong with her husband, and she thinks somebody's at fault, she gets upset. She gets over it. She's protective of him and that's a good thing. I'm sure all she's concerned about is that the people who work for him serve him well. That's what she's concerned about.

She's more interested in public relations and the president's popularity than she is, let's say, in his sticking to conservative doctrine. Apparently people want it both ways. Nancy goes with what is best for Ronald Reagan, and certainly part of that is, does he adhere to his principles. We all of us look at the public relations side of it. That's part of it. But I don't think that she does that to the exclusion of principle.

She is a very important woman. I don't think she's uncomfortable. I think she feels very strongly that her husband is the president and that he's the man who ought to be taking the credit. He's the person who ought to be out in front. To that degree, she has put herself somewhat behind, but that's not an unusual thing for a woman to do.

Ed Rollins: Ed Rollins served as
President Reagan's White
House political advisor.

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I think she is ^{or} the constant advisor. She is without question his closest friend. She certainly doesn't try and get involved in the day to day policy decisions, but I think there's no question when he wants someone whose advice he trusts, he goes to her.

He certainly likes it when she reinforces him. When she disagrees with him, he probably really ponders very much whether he's going in the right direction or not. So I would certainly say he heeds her advice.

She has as much clout as she wants to. If she wants to weigh in on something, it certainly becomes the focus on his agenda, and can certainly become the focus of a lot of other attention around the White House.

Ronald Reagan is to a certain extent a very solitary man. He's ~~very~~ unique. He has no ego. He has no need for friends or advisors or what have you. He's just a very comfortable man with himself. And there's one person in that inner circle, day in and day out, ~~There's~~ one person who's a constant,

whose judgement he values above all. I think that makes her an extremely important part of the team.

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I think the president's toughness is totally underestimated. ~~I think~~ He has a real inner toughness. That when it comes down to things that are really crucial and important, he's there on the line. It's easier for her to make judgements because she's not dealing face-to-face with people as he is. When a staff person is not serving the president well, the president may still like the person. She's in a little more of an abstract situation. She can make judgements based on performance, where sometimes other factors enter into the president's judgment.

She can be very tough, no question about it.

I don't think he can rely on her any more than he does. He relies on her so much today. The president has had a career--not just his political career but his movie career--in which there have been a lot of people in and out. Making movies, he's had different directors, different costars. But for twenty five years, the one constant in his life has been her. Ronald Reagan would be very

happy on his mountain top, all alone, with one exception, and that's that he'd like to have her with him.

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Richard Allen: Richard Allen was President Reagan's first national security advisor. His White House tenure was marked by controversy when he arranged an interview with Mrs. Reagan for a Japanese publication which responded with gifts.

The president is the kind of man who, by my observation, in dealing with this able and strong willed wife, recognizes that she's on his side all the time. He's able to listen carefully and maybe it influences his point of view and maybe it doesn't. He doesn't always give an expression of whether he approves of what you're doing, saying, or how you're behaving. It's a very interesting feature of the man.

To see Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan in

circumstances of difficulty, as I have seen them in the pre-campaign days and campaign days when things looked pretty dark at one point, and to watch them operate at the White House, one sees a reflection of a relationship that is clearly, in the first instance, grounded in love and caring about each other. The fact of the matter is that the president misses her if she's away twenty four ~~hours~~ or forty eight hours. It's almost an unbreakable team effort.

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There are lots of things that a husband will not want to do in which a wife can help out without her work carrying the connotation of dirty work. I think that's very helpful. I'm pushed frequently by my wife and I think he is pushed frequently by his wife to do things or not to do things.

~~I think~~ she steps into a role that he probably at least subconsciously invites her to fill. I think that's very interesting. Every couple that is married knows about those limits on either side. Most husbands invite their wives in. ^{Others} ~~Many~~ do not and live to regret the day. I think President Reagan has invited Nancy Reagan into that realm. She knows what the margin is, the boundary so to speak, and

she operates freely up to that boundary.

Michael Deaver:

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Nancy will fight to her dying day to protect Ronald Reagan whether he's actor, governor, private citizen, or president. She'd want to know, is he getting out on the patio for lunch to get some of that sunshine? What's he having for lunch today? Don't you give him some time in the morning? Give him some time in the afternoon so that he can sit at his desk and think a little bit himself. She is not the kind of person ^{who} ~~that~~ would call up and say, you know, I think the SALT talks ought to begin February 2nd. Her primary concern would be his personal needs.

I'm married. Sometimes I win, sometimes Carolyn wins. The same is true of the Reagan household as it is in most households. Sometimes they argue and she'll prevail and sometimes he'll prevail, but it's the most incredible love relationship I've ever seen in my life between a couple.

I suppose anybody who's here wants to leave something of themselves as far as their own mark and I'm sure that's probably true of Nancy. I've said this before. If Ronald Reagan

had owned a shoe store, she'd be out there pushing shoes.

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Dr. Barbara Kellerman: Dr. Barbara Kellerman is a professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University and an authority on American First Ladies.

Nancy Reagan's greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses have the considerable charm of being one and the same. Her greatest strength is that she is so tied to her husband that she provides him with the kind of emotional support ~~that~~ all of us wish we had. Her greatest weakness is that she is so tied to her husband and she provides him with so much emotional support that I think she is relatively ill-equipped to stand back and say, "You're doing this wrong. You might want to take another look at this."

Don't look to Nancy Reagan to provide Ronald Reagan with a critical perspective. On the other hand, do look to Nancy Reagan for this enduring emotional support.

If we had access to the living quarters, even if we were a fly on the wall of the Reagan apartment in the White House, I think it would be very hard for us to understand fully what goes on. I think in the relationship between two people one doesn't see orders being given. It's a dynamic, the way all relationships are dynamic. I don't for a moment think Nancy Reagan orders her husband to do this or do that. I think she makes her opinions felt in certain ways, the way all women and men do in the context of long marriages and long relationships. Those opinions, in a good marriage, in a good relationship, will be taken very seriously by the other person. It's that kind of power: power that's private; power that's abstract, if you will; power that's articulated much more through interpersonal influence than it is through the usual kinds of authority relationships that we associate with the word power.

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~~(END CHAPTER THREE, END "NANCY AND RON")~~

Incorporate into
Ch. 4.

✓ ✓ ✓
CHAPTER ~~5~~ ^{four}: Meeting with the Pope

Nancy Reagan:

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My meeting with the Pope was I think one of the most moving, wonderful experiences I've ever had. I've met with him twice before but this was the first time alone.

What was so special? Being alone. Talking about something that concerns me very much and concerns him, and hearing his views on it--and his comments about what I'm doing.

Yes, he thought what we're doing is important. You can't ask for anything more. How could you not be moved?

We discussed the seriousness of it. I believe very strongly in the family, getting parents' groups and families involved. He believes just as strongly that it's necessary for these young people who are trying to work their way back, which is a very difficult thing for them to do, to have some kind of spiritual help, religious help.

He's such a marvelous man. Number one, a very strong man, but he has a gentleness at the same time. The attempted assassinations, they came very closely together, so I feel a

special affinity with him.

I just hope whatever I say or do can be of help to people. It's special to be here on my own, but on those terms--only on those terms. That I can be of help.

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(~~END CHAPTER EIGHT, END "Meeting with the Pope"~~)

CHAPTER FOUR: First Lady

Nancy Reagan:

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I hope people like me. I think it's been a process of getting to know me, and that took a long time. Probably some of it was my fault, some theirs. It was so new to me. I didn't know quite what to do, and there's no training for this job. When something is new to me, and I'm a little shy about doing something, then I tend to hold back.

The first year was a bad year for lots of reasons. I had all these personal problems that were on my mind and I was holding back.

There wasn't a deliberate sitting down and saying, "Now I've got to turn this around." It wasn't that. I'm no different than I ever was. But as time went on, I got more used to the job, and more used to being here. I got past the first year.

I always knew I wanted to be involved in the drug problem, and then I had more time. I was more ready for it, and it just evolved.

There isn't any clearly defined role for the First Lady. You make of it what you want. I see my role as what I'm doing. I didn't

realize that you had such a tremendous platform, if you were interested in one particular thing, to try to advance it and inform people and get your feelings across. I've chosen that way. But then, everybody has their own way. ~~I don't mean to criticize anybody else.~~

The term, "the right image." That seems to me such a phony kind of staged thing--I'm going to carve out this image and that's what I'll be. Now, whatever kind of image that conjures up in peoples' minds, I don't know. But all I can do is be myself. I'm not going to be like anybody else. I'm going to be Nancy Reagan. So I'll push the things that I'm interested in. That's the way it's been all through history. Every First Lady has her own particular style or her own particular individuality and gets her own particular criticism.

Is it true I can be "relentless?" I think I know what I want. But actually I would think that if I were working for somebody, I would rather work for somebody who knew what they wanted. The other would be very confusing to me. I wouldn't know if this is what she wanted or if that's what she wanted. I don't

^{have}
~~leave~~ any doubts, but isn't that easier? We
have a lot of laughs. If I'm upset about
about something that somebody's done, I tend
to just pull back. A curtain comes down. Now I
don't know whether that's good or bad, but
that's always been so. I don't yell and shout
and throw things, I just pull back.

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Everybody who's been here knows the
job's tough. I would never criticize another
First Lady. I never knew that Mary Lincoln
was criticized so terribly. Well she was.
Across the hall, there's a painting of Mrs.
Coolidge. It's a beautiful painting, her
standing with the dog. She was criticized
because supposedly there were people who said
that her dress was really shorter than it was.
It was really kind of a flapper style. And
that she had had it painted on and added to
and it was not the dress at the Smithsonian.
There was a whole big flap about this. Mrs.
Lincoln was criticized for spending \$2,000 on
her inaugural gown.

I don't think I'm getting all that bad a
press now. I think ~~people~~, as things have
settled down and ^{people have} ~~they've~~ gotten to know me
more, know that a lot of things were not true.

I hear a lot of times, "Well, Nancy
Reagan wants this or Nancy Reagan wants that,"

when I've never said anything about it and I don't know what they're talking about.

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Does the president sometimes say "no" to me? Sure. Does his "no" always end it? Not always. I'll wait a little while; then I'll come back at him again.

It really reaches a point where something's gone much too far, in my opinion. So it seems to me, sometimes, that if you can catch it before it reaches that point where a lot of people are maybe hurt, then it's easier to stop it right in the beginning, rather than let it build up a head of steam.

I don't have as much "clout" as they say I do. I don't get involved in how to balance the budget or how to reduce the deficit or foreign affairs or whatever. I think I get involved in people issues. I think I'm aware of people who are trying to take advantage of my husband, who are trying to end run him.

Sometimes he'll want to talk about problems and sometimes he won't. Sometimes his mind is so busy and so occupied, he just wants to go right to those papers as soon as he gets his dinner. And then, there's not much conversation about it. Other times, he does want to talk about it.

I didn't think it was fair when I'd pick up the paper and I'd read that he was a warmonger, that he was ready to go to war and so on. I know that that's simply untrue. He's trying to do everything he can to avert war and bring about peace. That did concern me. I was in favor of a meeting with Gromyko. I thought that was a good idea. I'm glad he came.

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He and my husband had been over at the Oval Office alone, and having dismissed everybody else, I was asked to come down to the Red Room and be there when they got back, be there to greet them, which I was. They came in and we said hello, and they came around with the trays. He took some tomato juice or something and I took a Perrier and he toasted me and I toasted him and then it was just sort of small talk. I think we were talking about the metric system. He turned and looked at me and said, "Is your husband in favor of peace or war?" And I said, "Peace." And he said, "Are you sure?" And I said, "I'm sure." And he said, "Well, then, you whisper 'Peace' in his ear every night." And I said, "I will. I'll also whisper it into your ear."

I haven't much time to be lonely. We plunged into so many things right away. There

isn't time ~~to be lonely.~~

When we went to church one Sunday, ~~my~~ ⁶⁴ ~~husband~~ said, "Look at this schedule. It used to be so simple just to go to church. All we're doing is going to church and look at all these people ^{who} that are involved ⁱⁿ ~~with going to~~ church." Or, if we go to Camp David, he'll say, "What are all those helicopters doing out there?" You know, he still can't get over ^{it} that ^{is} it takes ^{so} ~~that~~ many people around you.

I think he's happy. ~~I think he~~ enjoys ~~it. I think he~~ enjoys being in the position of being able to try to do the things he feels very strongly about and has for a long time. Yes, I think he's happy.

^{Sometimes} It's very hard. At this particular time, with what's happening world wide and certainly in this country, with inflation and so on. Tremendous.

~~I think~~ Being governor of California was a very good training ground for this job, particularly because, as he said often during the campaign, he came in as governor when the state was in almost the same position as the country. It was broke financially and so on. You just multiply that by I don't know how many times. Of course, California didn't have

a foreign policy.

It's more work than I thought it would be, for me. I can't speak for him. He brings back stacks of papers that he reads every night, in his study or the living room, whatever, until he falls asleep at night, ^{at} ~~till~~ 11:30 ^{or} ~~p.m.~~ midnight.

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He gets frustrated by the entrenched bureaucracy--because it's an entrenched bureaucracy.

I have moments of accepting it that my husband is president and then moments of thinking I'm not really here. I was interested when Prime Minister Thatcher was here. She said somewhat the same thing to my husband. She said, "Do you ever have times when you think of other heads of state and you think, oh, they must be so brilliant, so marvelous, and so extra special? And then you realize that you're a head of state, and you think, I'm just an ordinary person."

There was a tremendous emotional upheaval that I didn't count on--at leaving our home and our children. I'm sure you saw the picture of Pattie and some at the house crying. And my crying. There was all this extra in it that I really hadn't counted on. All of it together did get me down for a

while.

But I'm enjoying it. Yes, I am enjoying it.

66

Letitia Baldrige: Etiquette authority
Letitia Baldrige
served as White
House social
secretary for First
Lady Jacqueline
Kennedy.

The First Lady belongs to the people. She has thousands of letters addressed to her every month, asking for advice, consolation, help. What she does is reflected throughout the entire United States. If she has good posture, mothers say to their daughters, "Stand up straight. Don't you see Mrs. Reagan has good posture?" If she has a good figure, everyone wants to look like her. If she has a beautiful home and has good taste, everyone wants to have the same apricot color living room that she has, and banana yellow on the walls. Everyone wants to copy the First Lady.

Therefore, if she is intelligent and if she has style and grace, it's pretty nice to

copy someone like that. She also is a wonderful helpmate to her husband, She's a ^{true} wonderful partner. And although she doesn't make policy decisions, the mere fact that she is the ultimate sympathetic listening ear at night when the president of the United States returns to his private quarters is very important.

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It's impossible to please all the public. But things straighten out through the years and various First Ladies have been criticized for being overly involved in White House affairs. People forget that and remember them for their intelligence. I think Mrs. Reagan is making a very classic, wonderful path, being a supportive ear to her husband but not even pretending to interfere in public policy.

I don't think there's a man alive who is in love with his wife and doesn't trust her intuition. She sees a lot on her own, I'm sure, that the president doesn't see. I think it's good to have that kind of advice.

I think she will go down in history as one of the very finest First Ladies because she has gone through bad publicity and surmounted it so beautifully. She has done such wonderful things with her drug program,

Clarify?

her foster children program, therapeutic riding. She's been involved in a lot of things. She is working hard on the drug program at a time when drug and alcohol abuse are really a very serious problem in this country. She's right on target. And what she does is very effective. She has influence. She works hard at it. I think she also derives great satisfaction from seeing the good that she does. ~~It's kind of nice, too.~~

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There's a growth process in every First Lady. I've seen it in every single one of them. Mrs. Ford went through great personal problems and rose to surmount them. Roslynn Carter and Lady Bird Johnson, wow, I mean Lady Bird does things to this day. She has power and influence in the whole field of world wildlife and preservation that she never would have had if she hadn't been First Lady and if it hadn't evolved during her years as First Lady.

Mrs. Reagan has evolved, too. If they are smart, intelligent women, if they have their eyes and ears open, and they don't succumb to prejudices, ^{First Ladies} they all evolve and become greater people. If nothing else, they don't get any money out of it and as they get

a lot of grief out of it, they also develop inwardly and store up a tremendous amount of knowledge. It must effect their whole lives forever and ever. Once you're out of the White House, ^{or} the First Lady has to be very changed and has to be very involved in what's going on around her. Just think of all the newspapers they suddenly start to read.

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When you're that busy, you don't have time to give into grief. You just keep plowing ahead. That's one of the perks of the job. You've so many things you have to do. There's this enormous schedule laid out for you. You just don't have time to dwell on grief or sadness or fear. You just ^{push} ~~plow~~ ahead and do your job. And I think that's what she's done.

I think that First Ladies have to realize that when they come into the job-- Claire Luce had a marvelous expression--"no good deed goes unpunished." They keep doing good deeds for the White House, for their country, and they're constantly criticized for it. But you have to go ahead and keep on anyway.

Both Mrs. Reagan and Mrs. Kennedy are remarkably good looking, remarkably kind and motherly in many ways. The two of them can be compared a great deal. What makes Mrs. Reagan

so unique is the wonderful love affair that she has with her husband. They're like young lovers. It's wonderful to see them walk down the hall hand in hand. I keep reminding my husband that we never hold hands. The Reagans hold hands all the time. And I think America loves that. It's a great, great symbol of marriage.

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It's very hard when you're working just your utmost to do the right thing in your job, and you're giving it your all, to see it put across in the headlines of the papers as something negative. It's very frustrating. Of course she was hurt and frustrated in the beginning and, intelligent woman that she is, she learned to accept it, to expect it, and not to be bothered by it. You have a choice in the White House: you either have a complete nervous breakdown or you learn to forget it. And that's what she has done.

Mrs. Johnson came along in history at just the right moment because the youth started to revolt and the women's movement ^{began} ~~started~~. And women started leaving the home in droves to go to work. She was such an executive, the women related to her and were inspired by her and encouraged by her. When

Mrs. Reagan came into the White House there was a tremendous need for the whole subject of husband and wife to be seen in a new light. People were putting each other down and the new young woman executive was perhaps too aggressive. All of a sudden, here was an old fashioned family coming back into the White House. It was a great moment for that to happen because not only was she a fantastic wife but she also developed these programs of her own. The whole idea of husband and wife plus the woman who does not work but involves herself in the non-profit sector in a very meaningful way, it all came along in the right time in history. The First Lady is always a role model for women whether she likes it or not, and whether they like it or not, they look up to her. And what she does is very important to all the young women who are getting their MBA's and to women who are trying to save their marriages, and all of this. It's of tremendous sociological importance.

I think there were more women who applauded her, coming back with some of the old-fashioned, more conservative values at a time when we needed them. America's feminist movement has taken such great strides and has gone forward so fast that the whole subject of

having children and being married needed paying attention to. And she's done it.

Nancy Reynolds:

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Nothing prepares you for being First Lady, nothing. Basically, Washington is not a city that wishes you well. So I think you come in here really unprepared for the onslaught of personal and press criticism. Mother Theresa could be in the White House and within six months there would be some sort of expose story about something she had done.

In Nancy Reagan's case, she is a woman who always takes things a day at a time. She concentrates entirely on one project, and her own personal concerns about the president's welfare come at the top of the list. Getting settled in the White House, making it a home, not just a public house, was a very important thing for her. So she concentrated on getting the house the way she wanted it and making it a comfortable, warm and welcoming place for the president at the end of the day.

She's always been like that. I think she was just totally unprepared for the fact that people expected, as they often do

unrealistically, a kind of First Lady who was going to leap into a project immediately and become something they felt she should be. Now Nancy Reagan has always had a couple of projects in the years I've known her. The foster grandparent program and drug abuse have been the two things that she's always been interested in, always put time in on. When she got to Washington, she wanted to continue with the foster grandparent program because she knew it, she felt comfortable in it, she had really put her mark on it all those years, and had done extraordinary things for the program.

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What happens in Washington is that people try to push projects on you. Nancy Reagan has her own best instincts about what she wants to do, how it's going to work for her, and the kind of time she's going to give it. ~~I think she~~ felt that, except for the foster grandparent program and her interest in the drug program, she wanted to take a little time and see what was ahead. I think she became buried in the details and interests of what to do in the White House, managing a ^{large} staff, which she had ~~never had in her life~~. She had never been a manager before. All of her staff were new people--from her press secretary to social secretay--people she had just met. I think it

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was kind of overwhelming at first. So she was unprepared for good old Washington and the immediate criticism that comes to you if you're not conforming to Washington's rules of how they think the First Lady should behave.

Her performance at that Gridiron dinner changed her image, most certainly the president's near death did. The assassination attempt had a tremendous effect on her. And her own father's death. All of these things coming in the first year. All of them were traumatic, although the Gridiron was fun.

People always say, has Nancy Reagan changed? She really has not ~~changed~~. What has changed is the perception of her. For years and years and years, we had all been saying, there's this wonderful, witty, funny, caring, loyal, intensely dedicated woman, but no one ever wanted to hear it. I attended thousands of press briefings and listened to hundreds of press woman interviewing her over the years. In the sixties, in Sacramento, you were dealing with young sixties reporters, most of them ardent feminists who came in with a chip on their shoulder, already making up their minds and with a very cynical view of a First Lady who cared about her family first and

foremost.

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She is not someone who likes to make speeches or ~~make~~ public appearances unless it's on behalf of her particular interests. I think she was a nervous wreck, appearing before the Gridiron. You never know how it's going to come off. But it showed the side of her that we've all known for years. You could feel the differences in the audience. You could feel people judging her very differently than this woman they had made ^{Casual} assumptions about. She turned out to be something quite different. ⁴ She's a very complex person sometimes. She has many sides to her and this was a side no one had ever seen. And when she did the encore, you knew she was having fun. You can sense when people approve of what you're doing. The applause was tremendous. That one incident showed she basically has excellent instincts about herself and what she feels will be good and what will be natural for her. She never extends those boundaries by trying to do something that isn't natural, that isn't something she would do in ordinary life. I think poking fun at herself at the Gridiron dinner was her way of perhaps saying, well, if I got off to a rocky start, let's have a few laughs about it because I'm going

to be around for a little while. I think that was the turning point. There's no question about it.

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I don't think on substance that you can say Nancy Reagan has influenced policy. She expresses herself as we all do to him when we have the opportunity. ~~Some of us feel sometimes one way and~~ the president always listens very intently. Of course, he adores Nancy. Many times she's right and he's not right. At least we feel that way. But sometimes he will asscede if he feels that it's something he hasn't thought about. It's more style than substance. She never claims to be an expert. She certainly is knowledgeable and understanding about a lot of things but Nancy Reagan is a back to basics person.

I think she sees her husband as a man of peace. He is a man of peace. To that end, I think she will always offer up solutions and ideas and comments as we all do anytime we're asked, and even sometimes when we're not, ~~asked.~~

But Ronald Reagan is his own man. I think she has influence in the general sense but any wife of all those years is going to have an opinion. And his daughter Maureen, who

spends a great deal of time at the White House, most certainly has a lot of influence. And ~~he~~ doesn't always agree with her, either. That's what makes it such an interesting family.

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When I first met Nancy Reagan, she was a housewife in her forties who had never been on the campaign trail before. Ronald Reagan had done all of the campaigning for Senator Goldwater and she had stayed home as most wives do, and loved ~~staying home~~ ^{being} ~~in a~~ ^{that} rather protected environment. To be thrust all of a sudden into Sacramento and be asked to live in an old mansion that was a fire trap and not near any schools. That was a big story in those days, that Nancy Reagan said the governor's mansion wasn't good enough for her. In fact, it wasn't safe enough. The fire department said there was no way they'd ever get off that second floor if a fire came along. The wood was rotting. It was in an awful neighborhood. Now it's a museum.

So she insisted on moving to a suburb. That sounds a little silly now, but in those days, it was pretty courageous. She took a lot of flack from the press on that. She wanted a normal life for her children, especially for her young son, and in a neighborhood, in a

house that looked just like all the other houses. That was what she wanted. Ultimately, ⁺ ~~that~~ was the best thing. But you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. I think she found out the hard way. These things all made sense to her. She really couldn't understand that anybody wouldn't agree that this was a sensible thing to do.

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Nancy Reagan never held a press conference the whole time she was in Sacramento. She felt it was presumptuous. There were a few incidents where she had press in or something, but she never really called a press conference except one time. That was when a man who was this leader of the opposition in California publicly criticized her for trying to solicit furniture for a governor's mansion that wasn't even built. She was trying to get people to donate antiques or old California pieces. And there was a big critical piece in the paper. She called a press conference the next day and just absolutely let him have it. It was the best time, and the only time I ever saw her do that. She had her dander up and she felt that they had gone far enough. That was the end of the criticism. There was never another article