

Bill --

I am flattered that Mr. Wemple spends an inordinate amount of time reading and writing about *Killing Reagan*, but I am left to ponder his true motivations. No doubt the focus of his reportage is either directed by, or an attempt to pander to, Frederick Ryan, publisher of his newspaper, The Washington Post. "The Honorable" Frederick Ryan, as his own bio refers to him, is the Chairman of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, a body dedicated to the veneration of Ronald Reagan. The Foundation's website further states that: Mr. Ryan is the editor of *Ronald Reagan: The Wisdom and Humor of The Great Communicator*, published by Harper Collins in 1995, and *Ronald Reagan: The Great Communicator*, published by Harper Collins in 2001. He was Executive Producer of the highly acclaimed video of the Reagan Presidency, entitled "The Reagan Years."

Mr. Ryan is also a former Reagan White House staffer: "From 1982 to 1989, Mr. Ryan served on the White House Staff, and was Assistant to the President of the United States, one of the youngest people ever to serve in such a position. His responsibilities in the White House included directing Presidential Appointments and Scheduling, where he was responsible for long-range strategic planning and communications strategy for the White House. He served on the 1984 Reagan/Bush re-election team."

Thus, Mr. Ryan's motivations and Mr. Wemple's writing are hardly what anyone might consider objective journalism.

Rather, it is a smear campaign meant to attack you and the Reagan book. The thesis of *Killing Reagan* is that President Reagan's mental faculties were impaired after the assassination attempt by John Hinckley, Jr. Though the Reagan acolytes take exception to this, *Killing Reagan* provides ample evidence that this is true.

Two glaring instances of Reagan's frailty -- one in the White House, one on camera -- were documented in the book. The White House incident is the James Cannon memo of March 1, 1987, in which it is suggested that new White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker invoked the 25th Amendment to remove Reagan from office for his increasing mental frailty.

The on-camera incident, and the moment in the book to which Mr. Wemple's recent email refers, took place at the Reagan ranch just north of Santa Barbara.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JTtI3D6lqk>

The date is August 1, 1984. President Reagan clearly stumbles when trying to formulate an answer to a diplomatic question. In fact, he appears lost. Nancy Reagan steps in and whispers a response, which the president immediately parrots. Mrs. Reagan's words are clearly distinguishable on the video, as is the look of befuddlement on the president's face.

To be clear: This incident occurred. I am not sure if Mr. Wemple is trying to prove President Reagan did not have a slip, or that the moment never took place, but the video is irrefutable proof.

As to the line of questioning, it was hardly benign. It was direct, focused and aggressive.

Q: Mr. President, the Soviets say that your position has made it impossible to meet in Vienna next September.

Reagan: Well, you've had a press conference on that and have heard what my statement was.

Q: What do you have to say about it? What do you tell them?

Reagan: No, I'm not going to take any questions on that at a photo opportunity.

Q: Is there anything you can do to get them there?

Reagan: What?

Q: Is there anything you can do to get them to Vienna?

*Reagan is lost. He has no answer.*

Nancy Reagan (whispering to her husband): We're doing everything we can.

Reagan: We're doing everything we can.

As for who asked the questions, I take full responsibility for naming Sam Donaldson as the interviewer. My source is a well known veteran journalist. I will not drag this individual into this, knowing Mr. Wemple will only utilize that to further pursue an attack on *Killing Reagan* that is trivial at best, and at least a year past its expiration date.

To say that the voice on the video sounds exactly like Donaldson is not enough, nor that the recollections of my source about an incident that took place thirty-two years ago may have been blurred by time. Mr. Wemple himself admits that Donaldson was following the president that day.

The truth of the matter is that: 1) President Reagan became befuddled during a line of simple journalistic questioning; 2) The First Lady had to help the President of the United States formulate a response because he was unable to do so; and, 3) President Reagan repeated her words verbatim.

Attempts to rewrite history all they want, no amount of attacks by Mr. Ryan, Mr. Wemple or any of the Reagan apologists who have come out of the woodwork to attack *Killing Reagan* can reverse the fact that this incident occurred. What's next, asserting that Reagan didn't die of Alzheimer's Disease?

All the best,

Marty