



# Riding with Reagan: From the White House to the Ranch

*John R. Barletta*

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It is an image etched in the minds of a generation: Ronald Reagan perched atop his horse, riding through the dusty trails and canyons of his California ranch with his beloved wife, Nancy, at his side. But what most of us did not see was the man who always rode just a few steps away.

John Barletta was a Vietnam veteran and Secret Service agent who spent over a decade with the Reagans, poised to give his own life at any moment to save the 40th president of the United States. His superior riding skills made Barletta the perfect choice to protect Reagan during his frequent visits to the ranch. Over time, he got to know Reagan as few others did. But what did these two men talk about during their long solitary hours on horseback--and how did they become the unlikeliest of friends and confidants?

In *Riding With Reagan*, John Barletta shares his one-of-a-kind memories of the President, painting a picture of a relaxed Reagan at his very best. Through his eyes, we see a rugged man who thrived outdoors, deeply loved his wife and children, and was a prankster at heart. Barletta recalls watching Reagan take pleasure in clearing the brush from the grounds, spending quiet time with Nancy, and entertaining world figures like Mikhail Gorbachev and Queen Elizabeth, both of whom were surprised by the spare simplicity of the Reagan ranch.

Barletta also recalls the sad times: watching a once-robust Reagan fade into the dark shadows of Alzheimer's disease, and the painful moment when he had to tell the former president that his days of horseback riding had come to an end.

Poignant and candid, *Riding With Reagan* is an intimate portrait of the man who remains one of the most popular presidents in our nation's history. A stirring ode to friendship, brotherhood, and the great outdoors, it celebrates a true hero whose life and spirit are the embodiment of what it means to be an American.

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