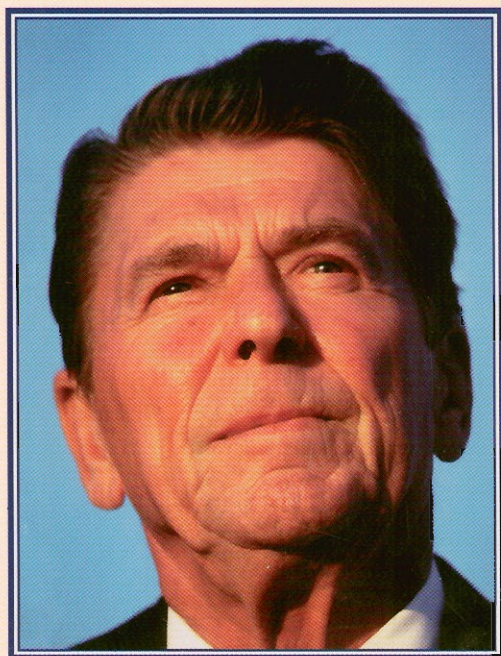


**“Finally . . . a terrific book on Reagan and his uncanny  
and important ability to lead.” —WARREN BENNIS**

# REAGAN

ON

# LEADERSHIP



**EXECUTIVE LESSONS FROM  
THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR**

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J A M E S M S T R O C K

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# INTRODUCTION

JANUARY 20, 1981

THE EARLY MORNING hours were cloudy and cold. All across Washington, preparations for the transfer of power to the president-elect, Ronald Reagan, were busily under way. Following an evening of preinaugural celebrations, the city was bracing for inaugural ceremonies of a style—critics would say lavishness—recalling an earlier time, particularly the Hollywood-influenced extravaganza for John F. Kennedy in 1961.

No one was busier than the outgoing president, Jimmy Carter. He had been in his office all day and all night over the prior 48 hours. He wore the familiar cardigan sweater, which he had offered as an example of how to save energy in a televised address to the nation earlier in his term. The president's extraordinary hands-on approach had a cost: "I needed to be constantly alert, but there were periods when I realized I was not at my best." Nonetheless, Carter hoped that his final burst of bustle would allow him to leave office on a high note:

bringing home the 52 American hostages held in Iran since November 4, 1979.

Keeping meticulous handwritten notes on a pad, beginning at 1:50 A.M. on Tuesday morning, President Carter recorded every detail of the progress and setbacks in his final day of office. The "big grandfather clock by the door" of the Oval Office moved with remorseless, heedless speed and finality. Finally, at 6:35 A.M., Carter received a telephone call from his primary negotiator, notifying him that final arrangements for the release of the hostages had been signed moments before.

At last Carter could grasp the chance of redemption from his decline in public estimation during his single term of office. His hard work, his ceaseless personal attention to the details of the lives, families, and well-being of the hostages—even to the doomed military rescue attempt that ended tragically with American airpower splayed in the desert—would be rewarded. His speechwriters went to work preparing a televised address that Carter planned to deliver before the inauguration ceremonies later in the morning.

Shortly before 7:00 A.M., President Carter placed a telephone call to President-Elect Reagan. Reagan, as is customary, was staying across Pennsylvania Avenue, in shouting distance from the White House, at the official guest house, Blair House.

Reagan was not available.

An aide reported to Carter that the call was intercepted by Reagan staff, who explained that the one-time actor "had had a long night, was sleeping, and was not to be disturbed."

"You're kidding," an incredulous Carter replied.

"No, sir, I'm not."

Like a punctilious grade-school student making notes for a teacher, Carter took pen to paper, evidently anxious that history not miss this outrageous incident. "I place a call to Governor Reagan to give him the good news, and am informed that he prefers not to be disturbed, but that he may call