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**Rawhide Down: The Near Assassination of President Reagan. By  
Del Quentin Wilber (New York, NY, Henry Holt and Company, 2011)**

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**Rawhide Down: The Near Assassination of President Reagan.  
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***Rawhide Down: The Near Assassination of President Reagan.* By Del Quentin Wilber. New York, NY, Henry Holt and Company, 2011. ISBN: 978-08050-9346-9. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Pp 305. \$27.00**

Del Quentin Wilber, a biographer of President Ronald Reagan, has written a detailed narrative of the attempt to assassinate him on March 30, 1981, as he walked out of the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. The author is an award-winning reporter for *The Washington Post* and has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. He's spent most of his career covering sensitive security and law-enforcement issues.

Four U. S. presidents have been shot to death: Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley, and John F. Kennedy. President Reagan came close to being the fifth. This is a very readable account of that attempt, which occurred just two months into his first term. In addition to the president, Press Secretary James Brady, Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy, and Metropolitan Police Officer Thomas Delahanty were shot.

*Rawhide Down* is the result of more than 125 interviews and an examination of documentary evidence, including FBI and Secret Service reports, confidential court records, trial transcripts, audiotapes, and diaries. The book reminds us of how close the president came to dying and gives credit to the Secret Service for saving his life. It also covers Jerry Parr, the Secret Service detail leader assigned to President Reagan on the day of the shooting, and the surgeries performed on both the president and Press Secretary Brady at George Washington Hospital. Wilbur obtained information on the operations from more than thirty interviews with doctors and nurses involved.

Anyone interested in the art of executive protection may benefit from reading about the ever-present threats and unexpected problems that can arise on such a detail. The book may be especially helpful to students and others interested in historical assassination attempts. Security practitioners can benefit from the many lessons learned from them.

The author discusses John W. Hinckley, the shooter, and his actions leading up to the attempt to assassinate President Reagan, including his infatuation with the actress Jodie Foster. One of the book's most interesting

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topics is the Secret Service's preparation for the visit to the hotel, consisting of advance work, intelligence gathering, and coordination between law-enforcement agencies.

For those unfamiliar with President Reagan, Wilbur gives an unforgettable portrait of a man with stamina, dedication, interpersonal skills, and a sense of humor even when he believed he might die. As a former Secret Service agent and member of the security detail covering President Reagan in his presidential campaign, I was acquainted with most of the people mentioned in Wilbur's book. As a former instructor at the Secret Service Academy, I was especially interested in the evaluation of the response to the incident and how it related to agent training. In other words, I had a personal interest in the book.

The author supports his work with nearly fifty pages of source notes and twelve pages of bibliography. His book likely will grab your attention no matter what your interests, and may be one you will finish in a day.

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