# “Dutch” Treat

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*Edmund Morris’ official biography– turned–murky “memoir” of Ronald Reagan,* Dutch*, perplexed everyone with its use of fantasies, fictions and selective forgetfulness to rival The Gipper’s own. But HIVers were likely even more bewildered by details like the following—excerpted from the “Author’s Notes” of a May 4, 1987, Oval Office meeting—which reveal the petty, pathetic reality behind the “genocide” of “Reagangate.”*

“‘Issues lunch’ in the Cabinet Room. Ronald Reagan’s eyes turn flinty and his jaw sets when the subject of AIDS comes up—as it does too often these days for his comfort. (On April 1, he agreed, after considerable prodding, to declare it Public Health Enemy No. 1.) ‘Why is this disease different from any other?’

His hearing aid whistles, and he fiddles with it painfully.

‘I saw a TV show on AIDS in Africa the other day—they spread it there like the common cold.’

However, he waves aside a domestic-policy memo on the subject of compulsory sequestration of AIDS patients as too draconian and too expensive. ‘No, not unless the problem gets to be really important.’

Howard Baker is relieved. ‘If it ever got out that this Administration is considering quarantine…!’ Vice President Bush approvingly quotes Phyllis Schlafly: ‘This is the only virus that has come down the road with civil rights.’”

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