

Reagan's Hindsight

New York

Ronald Reagan, narrowly defeated by Gerald Ford in the battle for the Republican presidential nomination, said yesterday he still thinks it "probable" he could have led the GOP to victory over Democrat Jimmy Carter.

"I said during the primaries that I thought I could (defeat Carter), and I still believe I could have," Reagan said.

The former California governor speculated he could have broken into Carter's domination of the "Solid South," saying: "I think there were states there — Texas, Mississippi, possibly others — that I would have taken."

"But," he said, "I believe the main point we found in the polls since (the election), the major issue in the campaign was Watergate. That would not have been an issue had I been the candidate."

Reagan was interviewed by Mike Wallace on CBS-TV's "60 Minutes." The interview was taped in California last Thursday and broadcast yesterday.

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