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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 6:25 P.M. CDT

SEPTEMBER 30, 1975

TUESDAY

(Chicago, Illinois)

MR. NESSEN: The entrance into the hotel was from Wabash Avenue. This was the planned arrival before we left Washington, and it shows the President's limousine arriving at Wabash Avenue, so there was no last-minute change or anything. It arrived here. It was supposed to arrive on Wabash Street. (Nessen indicated on map of the area.)

He got off at the street level, on the street, as a matter of fact, across this sidewalk, through this door, up a half flight of steps and directly into the ballroom. The International Ballroom is immediately inside that entrance.

Q Were there many people there?

MR. NESSEN: A few, not many.

Q Was that the side?

MR. NESSEN: Since the main entrance is on Michigan and Wabash is on the parallel side, I think you would have to call that the rear entrance.

Q Were there many people there?

MR. NESSEN: A few across the street, but not on that side of the street.

Q How many?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I didn't count, actually.

We do have some folks who are not used to a White House briefing. There shouldn't be any filing until we finish whatever we are going to do here.

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So, that explains the entrance.

Now, there were some questions about the stop on the highway coming in from O'Hare. By some accident which I don't exactly know, one of the entrances to the freeway was not blocked to keep traffic from entering the freeway ahead of the motorcade.

When this was discovered, it was decided to stop for a few moments while those cars -- I am not sure whether they were told to leave at the next exit or whether they were simply allowed to get far enough ahead of the President's motorcade, but that explains the President's stop on the freeway.

Riding in with the President from the airport were Senator Percy, Congressman Michel and Congressman Anderson, all of Illinois.

Q Ron, was it by intention that an entranceway was set up in front that looked awfully like the President might come in that way?

MR. NESSEN: Mort, I frankly don't know. I noticed that when we came by, and I would have to agree with you. As I say, the chart or diagram prepared for the arrival before leaving Washington shows clearly he intended to go in the Wabash entrance.

Q Where is he now, and what is he doing?

MR. NESSEN: The President went directly to the reception, after walking up that half flight of stairs, and the schedule calls for him to go to the ballroom. Then it calls for him to go to another room together with the other head table guests. That is where he is.

Your poolers are there. In fact, Steve Bell came back with me. He saw the President enter the reception and perhaps can answer some of these questions about crowds on the street.

Q The other question is, did the President ask what was happening when the motorcade stopped? Did someone tell him?

MR. NESSEN: I wasn't in the car with him. Steve has checked that out.

Q Who wrote the insert in the President's speech? Was that something the President dictated or something Hartmann wrote?

MR. NESSEN: Hartmann went over it with the President. I wouldn't call this an insert, Walt. What we put out initially were excerpts from the speech and there was some material written after that by the President and by Hartmann later in the afternoon and I got it just before we left the White House and we Xeroxed some on the plane.

Q Two questions: One, he went into the Wabash Street entrance. Did he wave to the crowd? Was there no handshaking?

MR. NESSEN: We just don't know.

MR. BELL: He was out of the car and into the building very quickly and by the time we got around the corner 20 yards or so he was inside.

Q Has the White House been advised about a woman who was stopped on the street about two or three blocks from the hotel, with a gun?

MR. NESSEN: There was a woman who was on the street and I don't know exactly how far away, Jim. Let me back up and say there is a woman who is being interviewed now by the Secret Service and the local police. I don't have her name but she works in a local money changing or cash checking office where a lot of money is handled and she has a permit to own a gun. She was on the street and --

Q What street?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry. I don't know what street right now.

Apparently, local policemen -- a local policeman felt that he ought to ask her some questions, and I don't know why, at which time she readily admitted she had a gun in her purse and she had a permit to own it. As I say, she is being interviewed by the local police and the Secret Service. At the moment, just based on a very brief period of having talked to her, the feeling is that she was standing directly outside the place where she worked, incidentally, but I don't know the location. It is nearby.

Q Anywhere near the hotel?

MR. NESSEN: Relatively near the hotel is the way it was described to me, but I don't know the exact address.

Q Where did you get this information?

MR. NESSEN: I just got this very briefly as I passed through the reception, Phil.

Q Was it on the President's route where she was standing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know where she was standing so I don't know.

Q You said right now the feeling is --

MR. NESSEN: Right now the feeling is, or it was the feeling when I went through the reception, that it does not appear to be any sort of threat to the President.

Q Do you have anything further to add?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I have told you everything I know at the moment.

Q Do you know why she was questioned?

MR. NESSEN: It was expressed to me that a local policeman for some reason felt that he ought to ask her a couple of questions.

Q Ron, can you find out if they questioned her because this metal detector noticed something?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to get all the answers, Ted.

Q Was it because of Secret Service security or local security that the President used that Wabash Street entrance?

MR. NESSEN: I can't tell you that, John, because I am not involved in making these specific arrangements as to what entrance he goes in. All I know is it was not a last minute thing; it had been scheduled for some time.

Q Can you find out later?

MR. NESSEN: I will ask.

Q Ron, can we break down to file about the woman?

MR. NESSEN: I have nothing else.

Wait a minute, Jim. This is a minor announcement that one press bus will go with the motorcade out to Skokie and the second press bus will stay behind after the speech for those who want to file, and then go to Skokie.

Q Can Steve tell us about the crowd while these people are filing?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 6:35 P.M. CDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 7:06 P.M. CDT

SEPTEMBER 30, 1975

TUESDAY

(Chicago, Illinois)

MR. NESSEN: Let's stop filing now momentarily and we will clean this up in five minutes, I think.

Q Standard briefing? No audio?

MR. NESSEN: No audio and no filing.

About 20 to 30 minutes before the President arrived, at the corner of 8th and Wabash --

Q Is that on the route?

MR. NESSEN: Let me explain where that is. It is behind the hotel, and it is where the cars turn right to enter Wabash.

Q How many blocks away, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: It is on the corner of where he arrived.

A woman who had just left her job -- I don't mean left her job, had finished her day's work at the Security Exchange Building -- asked a policeman whether it would be all right for her to stand and watch the arrival of the President. This was a Chicago detective.

The detective said, "If you do, I will have to check your purse." The woman said, "I don't mind, but you will find a gun in there." (Laughter) Lo and behold, he found a 25 caliber automatic, loaded.

Q A 25 caliber revolver, or what?

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MR. NESSEN: A 25 caliber automatic, which was loaded. The woman explained that she carried this gun for protection, working in the place where she handled a great deal of money. She had a State registration card to own the gun. She did not have a permit to carry the gun.

Q A form?

MR. NESSEN: It is called a registration card, which she showed the detective, but no permit to carry the gun. She was taken to the First Precinct. I am sorry, I am not sure what the sequence was or whether she was taken to the First Precinct house of the Chicago Police and interviewed there or whether she was interviewed on the spot and then taken to the First Precinct. That is something I didn't nail down.

She was charged there with carrying a loaded weapon in the city. That is apparently a charge here in Chicago, carrying a loaded weapon in the city, and I think that implies without a permit.

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Q Is she still in custody?

MR. NESSEN: She was released and will go to court in the morning.

Q Did they give her her gun back?

MR. NESSEN: Let me finish this.

The Secret Service says that this woman is -- having explored her story -- of no interest to the Secret Service and the episode has been judged to have nothing to do with the President's visit.

Q They said that before.

MR. NESSEN: So the Secret Service is now out of the case. It is a city police case and I think really what we have to do now is to turn all this over to those who want to pursue it at the First Precinct.

Q Do you have the name?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have her name or the detective's name.

Q Is there anything true to the report that her husband was also arrested and is being held on an open charge?

MR. NESSEN: I did not hear that.

Q She works where there is money. Is that the idea?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, in the Security Exchange Building. Precisely what her job is, I don't know, but it was described as handling money -- currency exchange.

Q Did the police keep the gun?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q From the account given by the commander of the First Precinct, he said the gun was found in the purse rather than the woman saying she had a gun in the purse.

MR. NESSEN: My account -- I should say this -- was given to me by the Chief of the Secret Service intelligence operation for this trip and however it may differ, I don't know how we will manage to sort that out, but this is the version --

Q What was the question, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I am told this version differs somewhat from what this gentleman says was told to him at the First Precinct.

Q What does that mean when you say the Secret Service says the woman is of no interest? Does that mean she is no threat to the President?

MR. NESSEN: She is not considered a threat and this episode is not considered to have been a threat to the President.

Q Do you have her name?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why don't they hold her until the President leaves town? Why are they holding her until the President leaves town?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that they are.

Q You said she was released?

MR. NESSEN: No, I said they were holding her. If I said she was released I misspoke myself. I don't know what happened to her after she went to the precinct.

I think now, Phil, it is a Chicago police matter.

Q The Chicago police say they are going to hold her until the President leaves town?

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: The Secret Service is out of the matter. All the questions, I am sure, can be answered by the Chicago police, who are now handling the matter.

Q Who is the Chief of the intelligence service?

MR. NESSEN: It is Michael Cohen.

Q Since this involves White House matters and integrity, and three different policemen have told five different reporters three different things, why don't we get a spokesman --

MR. NESSEN: I have given you the intelligence the chief of the intelligence service has given to me. It is out of the hands of the Secret Service, and I don't see how we can go much further than we are now from the Secret Service's point of view.

If we probably stopped haggling about these things and got on the phone, we can find these things out from people who are in charge of the case now.

Q What is her name?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the name, and she is not charged with anything by the Federal Government, and I can't give it to you if I don't have it.

Q You don't know if she has been released?

MR. NESSEN: Bob, once she got to the police station and the Secret Service said they had no interest in it, I dropped it and I think rightly so.

Q She is not under surveillance by the Secret Service?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

I don't anticipate anything else on this episode. Are there any other questions?

Q What was the reason for the five-minute halt in the motorcade?

MR. NESSEN: We already told that story once.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 7:15 P.M. CDT)

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AT 7:21 P.M. CDT

MR. NESSEN: Let me preface this by saying we have the lady's name. To my knowledge, and the fact I mentioned to you she is not considered to be a danger to the President and the episode was in no way related to the President's visit in the Secret Service's judgment, I want to make it very clear I am not doing anything but giving you the name given to me by the Secret Service of the woman involved in the episode I have described.

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Her name is Carmen Teresa Pulido. That is all I have, and that is all I am going to give.

Some local journalists have told me that the woman's husband is there with her, but I have no personal knowledge of that.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 7:25 P.M. CDT)