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N E W S   C O N F E R E N C E

#565

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 2:50 A.M. CDT

AUGUST 19, 1976

THURSDAY

(Kansas City, Missouri)

MR. NESSEN: I don't have an exact schedule for tomorrow. I think what we ought to do is say there is a lid on until at least 10:00 a.m., but don't hold me to 10:00. It could be 11:00, 12:00, 1:00 or whatever. It will be no earlier than 10:00, so let's say we will put on a lid until 10:00.

Q     What will not be earlier, the President's announcement?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q     Is there anything prior to that?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q     Is he going to bed right away or what?

MR. NESSEN: No, he has a staff meeting up there now.

Q     Do you expect him to tell his selection before the Convention?

MR. NESSEN: I don't really know, Aldo.

Q     What time did he get up this morning?

MR. NESSEN: About 7:15 this morning.

Q     I apologize if I am wrong, but you told the travel pool you expected the announcement about 10:00 or 11:00.

MR. NESSEN: 10:00 or 11:00 or 1:00; about 10:00 I said.

MORE

#565

Q We originally were to get it around noon. Are you revising it?

MR. NESSEN: No, I am not revising it. Nobody knows the time. The time is not arranged yet. It will not be earlier than then.

Q Yesterday you told us around noon.

MR. NESSEN: It may be around noon. It will not be earlier than 10:00.

Q Isn't there a celebration going on up there now, drinks and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the President is just now beginning a staff meeting.

Q For what?

MR. NESSEN: He is meeting on the selection of a Vice President.

Q Who is there?

MR. NESSEN: Various members of his staff.

Q Is Harlow there?

MR. NESSEN: Just various members of his staff.

Q The staff meeting was on what?

MR. NESSEN: The selection of a Vice President.

Q What time do you think he will get up tomorrow and what will he be doing before 10:00 tomorrow morning?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I will give you that after the fact, Walt.

Q Do you know when he will notify the Vice President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I will give you that after the fact, too.

Q Can you or do you rule out the possibility the President will throw the Convention open when he sees us tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I have no indication he will.

Q Did you have any doubt?

MR. NESSEN: I have never heard it discussed, Jim.

Q I gather from what you said the President still has not decided on a running mate?

MR. NESSEN: If he has in his own mind, he certainly hasn't told anybody.

Q Tonight he did.

MR. NESSEN: He didn't say, if he had. I know he hasn't told anybody.

Q Is he making that decision now in the staff meeting?

MR. NESSEN: He will make it sometime between now and tomorrow, late in the morning or early afternoon.

Q Does he have a bed time set for this morning?

MR. NESSEN: A bed time?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what time he is going to go to bed.

Q Ron, when will we have an advance on the acceptance speech?

MR. NESSEN: Probably around 3:00 tomorrow afternoon. I think we have decided to make it for a flat a.m. release.

Q Ron, has phase three started yet? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I think we are probably on toward the final phase, Rudy.

Q What is the word count on the acceptance speech?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a word count. I have an estimated reading time of 25 minutes, not counting applause.

Q Do you know how many words?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, will he bring the Vice President with him?

MR. NESSEN: I expect he will.

Q Will it be down here?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it will.

Q Who was in the staff meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to name them tonight.

Q What about his family? Are they up there?

MR. NESSEN: They are up there, scattered around different places, different rooms.

Q They are not gathered celebrating?

MR. NESSEN: They are not all in one place, no.

Q Did he tell you whether he did ask Mr. Reagan to be his running mate?

MR. NESSEN: I think he was asked that a lot over there himself, Bob, and I guess he gave the answer he wanted to give.

Q I thought maybe afterward he might have told you something.

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean in a fit of conscience for not having blurted it right out, he asked me to go back -- (Laughter) No, he didn't.

Q On the Vice Presidential issue, did he receive or send out any phone calls?

MR. NESSEN: I think I asked Bill Roberts to tell you as the calls were coming in. The first call to the President after the nomination was from the Vice President. The second call was from Barry Goldwater. I don't think there were any others before we left to go over to the other hotel.

I will give you one other little bit of color, if you will let me go after that.

You know there is a procedure in which the Convention formally notifies the candidate that he has been nominated. They send a small delegation over. The delegation arrived, and I can give you the names, if you want. They are Senator Griffin, Congressman Michel, Dick Rosenbaum, Fred Biebel of Connecticut -- I will give you all the names afterwards. Many of them had their red and yellow baseball caps on.

Q How many people were there?

MR. NESSEN: Fifteen people.

Q When did they arrive?

MR. NESSEN: A few minutes before I came down, so say 15 minutes ago.

Q What did Mrs. Ford say to her husband when she got back?

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute. These people came in. All had their baseball hats on. They shook hands with the President and congratulated him. Some asked him to autograph their baseball caps. (Laughter) I told you it was color.

Q Did he comply?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he complied, and Bob Griffin said, "Mr. President, we are here to tell you you were nominated, in case you didn't know it."

Q Did they leave or are they participating in this meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Some are participating in the meeting but others have left.

Q What about?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to give a complete run-down on the staff meeting.

Q But isn't there a party going on up there?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, different members of the family and staff are in different rooms and so forth. Some are watching television, some are working, some are celebrating.

Q Why can't you tell us who is in the staff meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I prefer not to.

Q In line with an open Administration?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, has President Ford heard from former President Nixon since Mr. Ford has become the candidate?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q He didn't call him?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q And the President didn't call him?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Why isn't any of the Ford family not participating in the President's celebration?

MR. NESSEN: What happened was we all went upstairs, the President went into his office to begin this staff meeting, and some people who had seen the group in the lobby came up and explained to the President what a large crowd it was and that they were enthusiastic and they were asking for him.

He said, "Okay, I will just run down for a few minutes." He just literally walked out very swiftly to the elevator and down without any advance preparation to go.

Q Is that why a microphone just happened to be standing on the balcony?

MR. NESSEN: No, there was a stand-by plan to come down and see the crowd.

Q He told us he would stop when he came in.

MR. NESSEN: He didn't. He went straight up and decided not to go and that decision was overturned.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 2:59 A.M. CDT)

#565

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH LARRY SPEAKES

AT 3:12 P.M. CDT

AUGUST 19, 1976

THURSDAY  
(Kansas City, Missouri)

MR. SPEAKES: Cheney, Schmults and Nessen will be down in about 15 minutes to brief on the Vice Presidential thing.

For those of you that don't know, I will be handling Senator Dole's press through the next week or so, or maybe longer. While we are waiting on them to come, I can give you a little bit of color on Senator Dole's telephone calls and a little of his plans and take your questions. I haven't had but about 15 minutes with him.

I will take your questions and get some answers.

Q Is he going to Vail?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, possibly next week.

We will start from the top. The President called Senator Dole at the Muehlebach at 10:31 and spoke for four minutes. Senator Dole said, and this is a direct quote, "I didn't expect the call but I wanted to be prepared."

The President opened with greetings about, "How are you," and so forth. The Senator said he was a little nervous when the President came on the line. He said, "I have talked to the President before but not about this matter."

The President said something along the lines, "I would like for you to be on the ticket," I think it was. Dole said, "Certainly." The President said, "I think we will make a good team." They worked out the arrangements for him to come from the Muehlebach over to the Crown Center.

Senator Dole was picked up by one of the President's White House advance men in a Pacer and he and Mrs. Dole came over here. They met with the President in the President's office on the 18th floor for 30 minutes, or more -- I am not certain on the time on that. I don't have any details on the discussion.

MORE

#566

The Vice President was there and there was one or two others whose names I don't have.

Then, they came down and made the announcement here, which you saw. Then, Senator Dole went back upstairs and talked briefly about the people who would place his name in nomination tonight. I don't have those names because they have not all been contacted and haven't been worked out but we will get an announcement on that as quickly as possible.

He talked briefly about his speech, which is now being written. He left roughly 45 minutes ago to go to the Muehlebach. He will remain there. He has an obligation to drop by a reception that Senator Thurmond is giving around 5 o'clock. He will go to the hall tonight. He anticipates going to Washington this weekend. He will be appearing on "Face The Nation" on Sunday. We anticipate him meeting with the President sometime next week in Vail but we don't have an exact date on that. That is something Ron will be announcing.

Basically, that is all I have until I have a chance to get back to him.

Q Where is the reception?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the location.

Q When will Dole go to Washington?

MR. SPEAKES: Sometime this weekend. I don't know whether it will be tomorrow afternoon or Saturday.

Q Who is writing his speech?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

Q White House speechwriters?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Does he have agents detailed to him?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he had agents with him and they are with him now.

Q Was that right after he got the telephone call that agents were detailed to him?

MR. SPEAKES: Apparently, he didn't pick up the agents until he got here.

Q Do you know about the identification of others who were on the list?

MR. SPEAKES: They will cover that in the 3:15 briefing.

Q Larry, are you going to leave the White House staff?

MR. SPEAKES: I probably will. What I am trying to do right now is get him organized.

Q Will you go with him back to Washington?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I think so.

Q Are you going to be permanently assigned to him?

MR. SPEAKES: It hasn't been worked out, Helen. I will just get started and handle his inquiries for a few days and maybe then it will be permanent.

Q Who picked him up?

MR. SPEAKES: Frank Ursomarso.

Q What is he going to be?

MR. SPEAKES: He is the guy that picked him up in the Pacer.

Q His own personal car?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it is one of the cars rented here.

Q Was that car selected to not attract attention? Is that what you mean?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it apparently just happened so quickly that that was the car used.

Q Was he a Secret Service agent?

MR. SPEAKES: He is in the White House Advance Office.

Q This was at the Muehlebach he picked him up?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q A rental car?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Who appointed you?

MR. SPEAKES: I guess Dole did.

Q Did you know him before?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I had known him in passing on the Hill.

Q Did you say what time he got picked up this morning?

MR. SPEAKES: Roughly an hour before he was announced here.

Q Was Senator Dole told he was the President's first choice, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: He didn't tell me that. I don't know that it has ever been ranked first choice, second choice, and so forth.

Q Is Kinsolving going to be your assistant?

MR. SPEAKES: That is right, Walt, and you will be his aide. (Laughter)

Q Dole said he wanted to be prepared?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. He said, "I didn't expect a call, but I wanted to be prepared."

Q Prepared for what?

MR. SPEAKES: If he got a call. I am sure he knew his name was on the list.

Q Is he moving into the Crown Center?

MR. SPEAKES: He has an office and a suite here, but whether he will sleep here, I don't know.

Q He said he didn't expect a call. Did he say that to the President?

MR. SPEAKES: No, to me as he described the call.

Q Did he ask the President to call back on another line? (Laughter)

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Did he have lunch upstairs with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so. I think he just went directly back and met with his immediate staff there.

Q Did the Senator know Frank? Seriously, when he got there, did Frank toot the horn and say, "I am the one," or how did that work?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't gotten that yet.

Q Did you say that Mrs. Dole came separately?

MR. SPEAKES: No, she came with him.

Q Was she with him when he got the call?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q What about the release of the data the President said would be made public vis-a-vis medical reports, finances, etc?

MR. SPEAKES: I will have to check and see how we will release it.

Q It would be nice if we could have that fast because apparently that was part of the criteria for choosing him.

Q Will Mrs. Dole resign her regular job?

MR. SPEAKES: She will do whatever is proper and whatever is legal. We have lawyers looking into it, and whatever is required she will do it.

Q Where does she work?

MR. SPEAKES: The Federal Trade Commission.

That is all I have. I will try to keep everybody posted. You can put your inquiries in through the White House Press Office. I am going to hang with him throughout the afternoon.

Q Anything about how was the speech being written? Did Dole talk to someone and say, "Here is how I would like it written"?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Who is doing it?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the players.

Q Where can we reach you?

MR. SPEAKES: You can leave word for me down here for the time being.

Q Through the next week, can we get hold of you through the White House?

MR. SPEAKES: We will get it established in Washington next week.

Q What time will we get the acceptance speech from Dole?

MR. SPEAKES: We may not have an advance text from Dole. It is being worked on. The guy writing the speech said it may be 6:00 or 7:00 before he gets a final draft.

Q Do you have any guidance on the President's acceptance speech?

MR. SPEAKES: The President's speech is being typed right now. I would give them an hour.

Q It is still 6:00 p.m. release?

MR. SPEAKES: That is where it stood when I left.

Q Is that speechwriter one of Dole's staff members?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Marty. I will have to check.

Q What about the Thurmond reception; is that here?

MR. SPEAKES: I am not sure of the location.

Q Was it for whoever was named Vice President?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so. I think it was something previously scheduled and he accepted.

Q Did the President interview Mrs. Dole?

MR. SPEAKES: She was present, but I don't know whether he talked to her at all. She was present in the President's office when they came over for about an hour this morning, but how much conversation between the two, I don't know.

Q What is wrong with his eye?

MR. SPEAKES: He said when he was making the speech in the hall the other night it was either fatigue, smoke, lights, et cetera. It was a burst bloodvessel. It doesn't affect his vision and not regarded as serious, but it is bloodshot.

Q Did he check with a doctor?

MR. SPEAKES: I think so, right.

Q Larry, has anybody asked you about the acceptance speech?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. It is being typed now. It should be an hour.

THE PRESS. Thank you.

END

(AT 3:22 P.M. CDT)

#566

This Copy For \_\_\_\_\_

N E W S   C O N F E R E N C E

#567

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 5:07 P.M. CDT

AUGUST 19, 1976

THURSDAY

(Kansas City, Missouri)

MR. NESSEN: I have one or two or three or four little schedule items that I think will be of interest. I will wait just a little bit for everybody to come on up. It has to do with tonight's traveling and tomorrow's traveling and so forth.

Let me just kind of go through slowly some times that will be of interest to you.

The President is going to be leaving to go over to the Kemper Arena tonight to deliver his acceptance speech around 8:45. I can't pin it down too much closer than that because it partly depends on the process of nominating the Vice President and how long that takes and so forth, but around 8:45.

That means that the press should assemble for its buses at around 7:45 with the bus departing at 8:00. The President leaves around 8:45. The press assembles at 7:45 and leaves in the press bus at 8:00.

Baggage call in the morning is 5:30 to 7:00 in the press room. The bus leaving here to go to the Muehlebach for the RNC breakfast at around 7:15 to 7:30. We haven't pinned it down yet. Let me say this: The final and refined schedule is being prepared now, a kind of bible, and will be put out, I would say, within a half hour to an hour.

The bus to the Muehlebach in the morning leaves here at 7:10 to 7:30. The bus leaves the Muehlebach to go to the airport at 9:00. The press bus from the Muehlebach to the airport in the morning -- 9:00 a.m.

MORE

#567

Now, a small surprise for you. I know you like surprises. Senator Dole has invited the President to visit his home town of Russell, Kansas tomorrow to attend a picnic barbeque at midday and the President has accepted.

So, at 10:00 the President will leave the Kansas City Municipal Airport and will fly to Salina, Kansas Municipal Airport, arriving there at 10:35. There will then be a motorcade of 80 miles to the town of Russell, Kansas, the home town of Senator Dole, where there will be a picnic barbeque.

At 3:00 p.m., having motored back from Russell to Salinas, the President will depart Salina en route to Grand Junction, Colorado. Due to the change of time zones, he will arrive in Grand Junction at 3:00, the same time as departure, but different time zone, so in other words it is an hour flight.

Q On the flight from here to Salina, will the President be on Air Force One?

MR. CARLSON: Yes.

Q Will the President and Vice President go on the same plane?

MR. NESSEN: He is not Vice President yet.

Then a helicopter from Grand Junction to Avon -- it is a little landing strip near Vail -- that is about an hour helicopter flight, which means the President would arrive in Vail around 4:00 Mountain Time.

Now, for some filing information on this trip to Russell. All the telexes in this area of the world are right here and it will not be possible to get any telexes shifted over to either Salina or Russell in time for filing tomorrow. We are making a great effort to get a press phone set up at the picnic site and/or a press phone set up at the Salina Airport, either or both.

The only other item that I have right now is that some of you are having your wives and children get aboard the press plane in Washington, come out here, pick you up, go to Salinas and then from Salinas to Grand Junction and so forth. Now, these times are not totally firmed up yet, but they will be when we put out this bible in a little bit, but if you happen to talk to your wife tonight, the press plane check-in for dependents boarding in Washington will probably be in the 5:30 area, a.m. If your wife is still talking to you, you can tell her there will be a 6:30 press plane take off. The reason for the lengthy check-in procedure is there are a lot of wives and children and it is figured it is needed that much time to get bags loaded and so forth.

Q Will another bus go directly from the hotel to the airport and not to the Muehlebach?

MR. NESSEN: If you would like it, we can arrange that, I believe. Can we not, Doug, Ray?

If people do not want to go to the RNC breakfast in the morning, but would like to go directly to the airport from here, can we provide transportation?

MR. ZOOK: Yes, we will have two buses.

MR. NESSEN: One will go over as a pre-position and one directly to the airport?

Work it out with Ray.

Q On the breakfast, will there be open coverage? Next question, if it is open coverage, will we have time to file or will we just have to get on the bus and motorcade to the airport? In other words, is it worth our going there at all?

MR. NESSEN: They will have elaborate filing facilities there. It won't be a problem to file. You could certainly cover at least part of it and file.

Q What else do you have for tonight? Is the President going to any parties?

MR. NESSEN: At the moment, other than going to the arena to deliver his acceptance speech and returning here, I don't have any additional plans for the President. I expect him to return here and go to his suite.

Now, if he should decide to do anything else, I will let you know. Right now, he doesn't plan to do anything else.

Q Is the family going with him to the arena?

MR. NESSEN: John, is the family going altogether to the arena?

MR. CARLSON: I think so.

MR. NESSEN: I think that is right.

Q Will Senator Dole come over here and go with them?

MR. NESSEN: I think he has to be there ahead of time because his nomination and acceptance speech will come before the President's.

We have Doug Blaser working on all the travel arrangements, et cetera, for tomorrow and tonight. Ray will help you with your baggage problems and your wife and children problems, or some of them, anyhow. I guess, for the moment, that is all we have. I would say there is a news lid until departure time for the acceptance speech with the exception of the posting of the schedule for tomorrow's activities and tonight's activities.

Q Will there be a text of the speech at the RNC?

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect to have a text of that.

Q He will speak?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q Will Kissinger be there tonight?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 5:17 P.M. CDT)