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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#596

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:50 A.M. EDT

OCTOBER 21, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: I guess everybody saw the swearing in for the members of the Council on Aging.

Coming up shortly, we have the brief drop-by by the President at a meeting of organizations observing the 20th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. There will be a pool taken in at the beginning to take some pictures.

Q How did that come about? Do they always meet here? (Laughter)

Q Ron, where is that?

MR. NESSEN: The Cabinet Room.

These groups have celebrated this anniversary over the years. They are having a dinner in Washington tomorrow night at which they invited the President to attend. He wasn't able to accept because he is going to be in Williamsburg for the debate. So, instead, he invited them here and also he is sending a message, which will be read at the dinner.

Q Will we have the text of that before we leave here for Williamsburg?

MR. NESSEN: I will check for you, Ralph.

A number of members of the group, the leadership of the group, are friends of the President, and they urged him to take part in this event.

Q What purpose do they represent? Some organizations or something?

MR. NESSEN: They represent the American Hungarian Federation --

Q Do you have a list of those which you can give us?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

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For the trip to New York this afternoon, the President will depart the South Grounds by helicopter at 3:50 and leave Andrews at 4:10, arriving at JFK at 4:55. The President will go by helicopter from JFK to the Wall Street landing pad and then by automobile to the Waldorf-Astoria.

I think you have seen the press schedule. Upon arrival at JFK, the President will have a statement to make on environmental matters concerning airports and aircraft noise. We hope to have copies of this prepared in advance to give out on the press plane on the way to New York.

Q Will they be available here as well?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

He will do this when he gets off the plane, if he can be heard over the aircraft noise. (Laughter)

Q Who is he going to do that to? The schedule shows him just being met by a TWA representative. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: The members of the New York press corps have been notified the President will have a statement to make on this subject when he arrives.

Q So, just to the press?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and it will be handed out as a press release.

Q On what, again?

MR. NESSEN: An environmental matter concerning airports and aircraft noise.

Q In the New York area?

MR. NESSEN: That is one of the areas his announcement will apply to.

Q Is the other Dulles, where the Concorde lands?

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you wait and see the statement.

Q Can we stick around to hear the other man, an added extra thrill of two-for-one? (Laughter)

Q Isn't there some way we could watch the other man for a little time?

MR. NESSEN: The last shuttle leaves at 10 o'clock. They take cash or credit cards. I don't know what time the last Amtrak leaves but they have Greyhound and Trailways busses every hour. (Laughter)

Q Do you have an advance?

MR. NESSEN: Do you want us to hold our press plane so you can hear Governor Carter?

Q Yes. That is a generous act.

Q It would be a very magnanimous thing.

Q Do you plan an advance of the President's remarks?

MR. NESSEN: No, we don't.

Then we come to tomorrow. I think you pretty much have the schedule for tomorrow. The President is leaving at noon.

There will be a little farewell on the South Grounds, attended by staff from the PFC, the RNC and the White House. We will make arrangements for coverage of that.

Q Are you going to change the rules and let us out there as he departs?

MR. NESSEN: This is an event to cover as opposed to protective coverage of a helicopter takeoff.

Q What time will that be?

MR. NESSEN: They are expected to gather at about 11:30 for departure at 12:00.

Attendance is not mandatory. (Laughter)

Q Will the President speak at this?

MR. NESSEN: He will probably have some farewell remarks as he begins his --

Q What does this farewell mean?

MR. NESSEN: Farewell to his staff as he begins the final campaign trip.

Q You will have copies of the statement available in Williamsburg, I take it?

MR. NESSEN: He is likely to speak off the cuff, but I guess the best thing to do is have a transcript dixed down to Williamsburg.

Q On tonight's dinner, was it the people themselves who decided they wanted Carter and the President not there at the same time?

MR. NESSEN: I can only speak for the President, but as I understand it, we accepted some time ago. From what I hear on television and read in the papers, Carter indicated he would not attend. So, it wasn't arranging anybody's arrival or departure time, except our own. Apparently, at the last minute, some New York Democratic officials told him he better attend if he wanted to win New York, so at the last minute he indicated he would attend. He apparently picked his own arrival time. We certainly had nothing to do with that. I am told that somebody went to the Archdiocese of New York and asked, "Is that in fact the way it happened," and they said, "Yes, that is in fact the way it happened."

Q So, the President's people have no objection if Carter were to be there at the same time as the President?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not. Why would we?

Q It won't work out that way.

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea when Carter is arriving or leaving. You have to ask Jody Powell.

When we last left the President on the advance schedule, we had gotten as far -- how far had we gotten? I thought he was heading back East.

Q I thought we were on the poignant farewell.

MR. NESSEN: I think it will be a very joyous farewell because the next time they see him he will be on his way to being elected.

Q Did you say the farewell is open to coverage?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q Why don't you say where the President is going to be tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: He is going to be in Williamsburg.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I said yesterday the press is staying at the Sheraton in Richmond and the President is staying at the Governor's Mansion in Richmond.

Q What is he doing in Williamsburg during the day?

MR. NESSEN: He is going to have mostly time by himself to make preparations for the debate.

Q Where will he be? The Lightfoot House?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the exact name of the house where he is going to be.

Q Where will the press be?

MR. NESSEN: There will be a big press center.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: The League of Women Voters set it up as they did in Philadelphia.

Q Will we share that?

MR. NESSEN: It is one big press center for everybody.

Q But the President will be in a private home?

MR. CARLSON: I think it is called the Presidential Quarters or something like that.

Q Is it in the reconstruction area, some Colonial mansion?

MR. NESSEN: Can we find out, John?

On Saturday, I think I mentioned to you, the President will speak on the State Capitol grounds in Richmond at 9:00, leave Richmond for Raleigh-Durham at 10:40, address the State Fair in Raleigh at noon, and then depart Raleigh at 1:45 to go to Columbia, South Carolina, attend the second half of the Notre Dame-South Carolina football game in Columbia, and then depart Columbia to fly to Hollywood-Burbank Airport, in Hollywood, California, at 9:30 p.m. Pacific Time. The President and press will both stay at the Huntington-Sheraton Hotel in Pasadena on Saturday night.

On Sunday morning, the President will attend church services at the San Gabriel Mission.

Q Is that Roman Catholic?

MR. NESSEN: I think so.

Q Is that in Pasadena?

MR. NESSEN: It is in San Gabriel, California.

Then there will be a PFC reception, and then the President will go by motorcade to a public rally in Fountain Valley, which is in Orange County, California.

Q Will President Nixon be there?

MR. NESSEN: I hadn't heard of that.

Q What time is that rally?

MR. NESSEN: Two o'clock in the afternoon, California time.

Q Is that a motorcade from San Gabriel to Fountain Valley?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

On Sunday evening, the President flies to San Diego, where he will attend a public rally at the Grossmont Mall, in the eastern suburbs of San Diego. The President will stay overnight in San Diego, at Westgate Plaza.

Q What time is that rally?

MR. NESSEN: Eight o'clock in the evening, San Diego time. Then overnight at the Westgate Plaza for the President and the press pool. The rest of the press corps will be at the Town and Country Motel in San Diego.

Early Monday morning, at 8 o'clock, the President will leave San Diego to go to Seattle. He will land at the Boeing Aircraft Company out there. He will then go by hydrofoil -- that is a new campaign vehicle that we haven't had before -- to Harbor Island, where he will tour the Todd Shipyards.

Following that, he will come back by hydrofoil to Pier 57 in downtown Seattle for a noontime speech. I don't have the exact location for you. This is Monday we are talking about.

Q Is he going to have remarks at all these places?

Q Will we overnight in Seattle?

MR. NESSEN: At 2:30 in the afternoon the President will leave Seattle and fly to Portland. In Portland, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon Portland time, he will speak to the National Association of Broadcasters Northwest Regional Conference. This is in the Sheraton-Portland Hotel. He will speak briefly and then answer questions from the audience.

Q Will that be open coverage?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Then, at 6 o'clock in the evening West Coast time, the President will leave Portland to fly to Pittsburgh. The President and the press corps will remain overnight at the Pittsburgh Hilton. Then at 9 o'clock Tuesday morning, the President will address the Economic Club of Pittsburgh and after that will fly to Chicago. I don't have any other details except to say that on Tuesday night we will spend the night in the Chicago area.

Q Ron, are you saying in Portland he is having no public appearances and in Pittsburgh there are no public appearances?

MR. CARLSON: There might be other things. These are the main events.

MR. NESSEN: This is the rough schedule as we have it so far.

Q You don't have anything on Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything beyond 9:00 Tuesday morning, plus the flight to Chicago.

Q Can you tell us what it is going to be like on Wednesday? Our office is going to be switching people.

MR. NESSEN: John, I didn't bring my overall schedule for next week out. Do you know roughly what we will be doing on Wednesday?

MR. CARLSON: Yes, but I don't think we want to go into that.

MR. NESSEN: We are not far enough along to do that.

Q Can you say whether we will be going back to California after that one visit, or can't you say?

MR. NESSEN: At this moment, there are no plans to go back to California.

Q Is he going to be speaking at Boeing and the shipyard?

MR. NESSEN: I think he will probably speak to the Boeing employees. I don't know whether he will speak at the shipyard or just go on a tour of the shipyard.

For those who asked about what the President will do in Williamsburg, in the Colonial restored section there is a house called the Presidential Residence, and that is where the President will stay during the day. Most of the day he will spend, as I said, preparing for the debate.

Q How much will he be paying for this?

MR. NESSEN: Whatever is the standard fee, Phil.

Q Do you know?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't know.

Q What will he be doing, Ron? You said he will be studying, but could you give us a little more detail?

MR. NESSEN: If you recall, it will be the exact same routine he followed on the two previous debates. At some time, he will go over to the theatre and have the lighting and sound checked, spend some time relaxing, going over papers, and talking to his aides, and so forth.

Q Will he have briefing books?

MR. NESSEN: He will probably take some papers along to read.

Q Do you know if he has reviewed any kind of strategy he might use in this debate as opposed to what he did in the previous debate, the last debate?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there is any strategy except to be himself and answer the questions.

Q Will he be defensive?

MR. NESSEN: Why do you say that?

Q The polls said he was put on the defensive and what-have-you, and the general consensus was he was put on the defensive by Carter, and I was wondering if he might be doing anything this time to combat that?

MR. NESSEN: The only strategy is to be himself and answer the questions.

Why don't you let me finish my announcements?

Q Just on the debate, the last time he took a lot of briefing papers and so forth. Will he be taking fewer this time? He won't be spending as much time doing this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he took a lot last time. He will just take whatever papers he wants with him for any issues he wants to review on the last day.

Q Has he been briefed by anybody in preparation for these debates? He talked to Kissinger before the last debate. Is he --

Q That really helped him. (Laughter)

Q Is he getting briefed by anybody?

MR. NESSEN: I think Mike Duval will tell you -- Mike's complaint is that he hasn't spent very much time in preparation for this last debate.

Q That is what he said before the last one, and he was right.

Q Ron, one other thing on that. Is Mrs. Ford going to join him there this time?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know exactly what the plans are, and I haven't talked to Sheila, so I am not exactly sure whether she is going to be there or not.

Q Is she going to travel with him on this tour?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't talked to Sheila, and I don't know what the plans are.

Steve will be going down through the Carolinas with the President, I understand, and to California. Steve Ford will join his father in Raleigh and travel to California with him. Susan will go to Williamsburg with the President, and I am not sure about Mrs. Ford.

Q Before we leave the campaign, Ron --

MR. NESSEN: I have a feeling we are not about to leave the campaign.

Q Before you go to the cost of living index, the PFC, in one of its TV spots, is using a picture of several prominent blacks, including Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordan, Stan Scott, and an unidentified woman who is thought to be Dorothy Hite. These people are -- at least Vernon Jordan is -- outraged because the implication is that they support the President. Vernon Jordan, I understand, has sent a telegram to the White House expressing his discontent.

Is the President aware of it? Is there going to be a change in the ad? Is it going to be stopped? What are you going to do about it?

MR. NESSEN: I am told that is a Republican National Committee advertisement. I don't know anything about it, really. You have to check over there.

Q The PFC said last night it was a PFC advertisement.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that it is an RNC ad.

Q Have you looked into it at all?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't had a chance to look into it. It is an RNC ad and I haven't had a chance -- I don't know what role I would have in it. You ought to check with the RNC.

Q I was wondering what the President had to say about it, if anything?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't heard him say anything.

Q Did he receive the telegram?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, before we leave questions dealing with the campaign, the Carter headquarters in Atlanta confirmed this morning that they have sent a letter from Legal Counsel Doug Huron, which says the Old Time Gospel Hour may include a personal attack on Governor Carter on this Sunday's broadcast, because the Reverend Jerry Falwell, of that 15,000-member Baptist Church in Lynchburg, strongly criticizes Governor Carter for being interviewed in Playboy. UPI reports Dr. Falwell has charged that this letter is a concerted effort to intimidate and threaten the 260 stations which were scheduled to run this on Sunday morning.

My question is, since the President, as well as his TV ads, have also commented on the Playboy interview, does the President feel that a Baptist minister should have the right to criticize Governor Carter without being subjected to such legal action by the Carter campaign?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't know enough about the --

Q Ron, I am giving you these details. Now, would you ask the President -- because this is rather important, it has been on UPI -- and I would like to know, does the President feel that a Baptist minister should be able to criticize Governor Carter without being subjected to what the Baptist minister calls a campaign of deliberate harassment?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is a matter we would have a comment on, Les.

Q The President doesn't care about this, is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, I don't know what the facts are, and it is a matter that sounds like something we wouldn't have a comment on.

Q On another point, Ron, does the President, as a result of this morning's article in the New York Times on a subject -- is the President going to continue going around saying Jimmy Carter is slandering the United States by saying our prestige abroad has declined when your own Administration polls are saying that Jimmy Carter is correct, that American prestige abroad is the lowest in 22 years? Has the President responded to those findings at all one way or another?

MR. NESSEN: I believe you are probably referring to a story about some USIA surveys?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that the surveys are not yet complete and the analysis has not been made; that as the article says -- I believe in the second paragraph -- that certain selected findings were leaked by a person -- I think they referred to as a person interested in the election of Jimmy Carter -- I think that is the wording, I am not quite sure. If you have it there you can probably read the quote. That is really where it stands. It is an incomplete survey for which the analysis has not been made yet and the source of the selected leaks is identified in the story so I don't know what I can say beyond that.

Q The story also quotes an official of the USIA as having said the subsequent analysis of that survey does not differ with the findings that are reported here.

MR. NESSEN: Since the survey is not completed and the analysis has not been made yet, I don't know how that statement could be made.

Q Has the President seen the preliminary analysis?

MR. NESSEN: No, nobody at the White House has. There is no preliminary analysis.

Q I mean, whatever this is.

MR. NESSEN: This is a partial leak of a partially completed survey.

Q Has he created a new plumber's outfit to find out --

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q The point is, has he seen any of this survey?

MR. NESSEN: No, nobody at the White House has seen any of the partially completed survey.

Q Are you saying it is conceivable that the same survey -- say, on one hand our prestige abroad has declined over the last 22 years, and on the other hand perhaps it hasn't, or something?

MR. NESSEN: That is right. Jim Keogh tells me there are parts of the survey which reveal quite positive attitudes toward the United States and other parts of the survey indicate less than positive attitudes.

Q Well, has the President now asked to see it?

MR. NESSEN: No, he hasn't. It is not finished yet and it hasn't been analyzed yet.

Q Both the positive and negative aspects of the survey are reported in this analysis.

MR. NESSEN: There is no analysis yet. I am told a number of staff people have started to prepare analyses which don't agree on what the partial findings mean. That is where it stands at the moment.

Q Does the President qualify his statements about Carter's position in light of what is here in the paper?

MR. NESSEN: Not in light of what is here in the paper, no.

Q Since the President apparently doesn't know about this -- I assume he picked up the New York Times this morning and read this for the first time -- now what happened after that? Did the President tell a functionary or someone to call over there and find out about this report?

MR. NESSEN: No, he didn't.

Q Did he show any interest in it? Did you decide you would call over?

MR. NESSEN: No, Jim Keogh called me yesterday and said it would be in the New York Times so I sort of anticipated it would be.

Q In a quote attributed to Alan Carter, Associate Director of USIA's Public Information Office, he confirmed the figures in this preliminary survey, said a second analysis had been prepared, and said that "the two papers come out basically the same way."

MR. NESSEN: All I know is what Jim Keogh tells me, which is that the survey is not completed, the analysis has not been made, that there are findings that indicate a high degree of respect and prestige and other less positive responses to other questions, and it has not come over here in any form, and parts of it, according to the New York Times, were leaked, by someone interested in the election, to Governor Carter. That is the sum total of my knowledge of the story.

Q I would say Keogh was disturbed enough to call you about it, right?

MR. NESSEN: A lot of people call me every day and tell me things they think I will be asked about in my briefing.

Q You were forewarned.

MR. NESSEN: I don't consider it a warning, Helen. I get 47 phone calls a day from people all over the Government saying, "Guess what will be in the paper tomorrow?"

Q It is a campaign issue.

MR. NESSEN: That is for you to decide.

Q The President has already decided.

Q Ron, is the President going to have access to the analyses before he leaves on his next campaign swing?

MR. NESSEN: Jim Keogh's indication is that it is nowhere near any sort of finished form.

Q The survey was conducted in July and August. It seems like it is taking --

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I can only tell you that the extent of my knowledge is what I have been told by Jim Keogh and I have given you the 100 percent total of my knowledge about this matter.

Q What about the report that was mentioned in the Post this morning -- I think it was in Kraft's column -- that Schlesinger has said that President Ford wanted to cut the defense budget by \$10 billion?

MR. NESSEN: I have no knowledge of that.

Q You didn't read the paper this morning?

MR. NESSEN: I read the paper.

Q You didn't read Kraft's column?

MR. NESSEN: I always read Joe Kraft's column.

Q Then you saw that thing. Now is this accurate that Schlesinger has said this?

MR. NESSEN: You have to ask Jim Schlesinger.

Q Is it accurate, Ron? Why beat around the bush? Is Schlesinger accurate when he says President Ford wanted to cut the defense budget by \$10 billion, or not, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, I have no knowledge of any such proposal.

Q In other words, you never heard that the President wanted to cut the defense budget by \$10 billion. Is the White House denying Schlesinger's accuracy, or not?

MR. NESSEN: All I can tell you is what I know, and I don't know of a plan to cut the defense budget by \$10 billion.

Q Did the President at any time propose to cut the defense budget by \$10 billion?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Not to your knowledge. Well, could you take the question and ask the President if Schlesinger is accurate or not?

MR. NESSEN: I would be happy to.

Q You were going to tell us about the CPI about 20 minutes ago.

MR. NESSEN: That is right. I forgot about that.

Q Before you go to that, the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee predicted this morning that the country would see the most vicious attack upon the character and credibility of a candidate ever laid on a man at this political level, implying that this will be done by the forces interested in the election of President Ford with the target being Governor Carter.

Does the White House have any comments on a statement such as that? Also, can you tell us whether the President has seen specifically the advertisement which shows the Playboy cover and the Newsweek cover?

MR. NESSEN: In answer to the first question -- do I have any comment on what you tell me Bob Strauss said -- the answer is, I don't. The second -- did the President see the ad of the Playboy cover and Newsweek cover -- I don't know whether he did or not. The advertising is handled by the PFC.

Q They don't handle what he watches on television. That is why I asked.

MR. NESSEN: Was that on television? I haven't seen it.

Q Are you saying the President hasn't cleared the kind of ad and the tone?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he has seen and cleared every ad, Helen.

Q Has he given any sort of an overall general policy statement on the levels that they should --

MR. NESSEN: As I started to say, I don't know that he has seen and approved every single ad in radio, television and print. I also don't know of any ad that gives the White House any problem, either.

Q You are saying, then, he approves of those ads?

MR. NESSEN: I said I don't know of any that I have seen or heard about that cause the White House any trouble.

Q The point is, here is one that quotes Vernon Jordan and suggests that Jordan is a supporter.

MR. NESSEN: I said that is an RNC ad.

Q You are right, but doesn't the President have any influence in what is being done in his name? Another suggests he ended the Vietnamese war. A third one has Newsweek and Playboy. Isn't the President concerned about what these ads are doing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know about RNC ads. I do know about the PFC ads. As I said before, I don't think the President has seen and approved every single ad. But I also don't know of any ads that have caused the White House any trouble.

Q Do you know if the President has approved the tone of the ads which are direct attacks on the Governor?

MR. NESSEN: You have reached a conclusion, and it is very hard for me to answer any question in which you have reached a conclusion. I have told you we have had no trouble with any of the ads we have seen so far.

Q You know Carter was interviewed by Newsweek also, so it would be a little misleading, wouldn't it, not to show --

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to haggle with you over our ads. I told you the White House has no trouble with any of the ads we have seen so far.

Q Can you tell us, then, what input has the President had in these ads? Did he sit down and talk to Deardourf and Bailey at some point and say how he wanted them to be?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the exact degree of involvement he had in the preparation of the ads.

Q Was there any?

MR. NESSEN: He has had contact with Deardourf and Bailey, sure.

Q On the ads specifically?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, he has approved every single ad.

Q I am saying has he had input into the content of the ads?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the exact degree of input.

Q He has had some but you don't know the degree?

MR. NESSEN: He has had discussions with them, sure.

Q I am a little confused here about this ad that features some of the blacks. You said you don't know of any ads that give the White House any trouble. Are you including that one in this?

MR. NESSEN: That is an RNC ad. I am talking about PFC ads.

Q You are not including that?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't know anything about that ad.

Q But you have seen it.

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen it. I have only heard about it on the radio.

Q Have you talked to Peter Teeley at all, because last night Peter Teeley told me that, number one, he hadn't seen a telegram yet, but as far as he knows the picture used in the ad is a public picture and he sees no problem with that. And then he said that he will check with the people in the PFC who put the ad together to find out what was involved in putting the ad together.

MR. NESSEN: Further checking indicates it is an RNC ad.

Q It is paid for, designed and put on the air by the RNC?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is it is put together and sponsored by the RNC.

Q And not by anybody in the President's campaign?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q Does that mean you disavow the ad?

MR. NESSEN: I am not disavowing the ad, Bob. I haven't even seen it.

Q You obviously know about it.

MR. NESSEN: I have heard about it and have had questions about it.

Q I don't understand what you are saying.

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand what you are asking.

Q I am asking you if the RNC ads are not related to the President and the White House?

MR. NESSEN: They have not been passed through here. I, myself, haven't seen that ad. I don't know if anybody here has seen the ad.

Q Is the RNC not going to clear any of its ads with the White House?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, they never have.

Q In other words, if the RNC had an ad featuring the bombing of the Vatican by Jimmy Carter, you would have nothing to say about that? (Laughter)

Q Is there any connection, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see a connection, frankly. (Laughter)

Q Does the President have no responsibility, feel no responsibility about what the RNC is putting out in his name and with him and for his sake?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that it is with him, for him or in his sake.

Q Ron, then there is no responsibility, and the White House doesn't care what the RNC puts out; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is not.

Q What is your relationship to the RNC and its advertising policy?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, there isn't any, Bob.

Q So, you are disavowing this ad?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the ad. I don't know anybody here who has seen the ad. The RNC, as a routine matter, does not pass its ads through the White House.

Q Are you going to make any effort to see the ad?

MR. NESSEN: No special effort.

Q Ron, President Ford is the Republican nominee and the Republican National Committee is allowed to spend a certain amount of money for his candidacy. Does he not take responsibility for everything done on his behalf in this campaign?

MR. NESSEN: Annie, as I say, I haven't seen the ad. I don't know that anybody here has seen the ad. The RNC does not pass its ads through the White House. What else can I say?

Q Regardless of whether you or anybody else has seen it, millions of Americans have seen it and are getting the impression that Vernon Jordan and the other blacks in this picture support the President, and they are concerned because they say they do not.

MR. NESSEN: I think you need to talk to the people who sponsor the ad.

Q Does the White House have any concern that there might be a misleading impression created by the ad in his behalf?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, first of all, I don't know that it is in his behalf since I have not seen it.

Q It certainly is. The heading says President Ford has been working quietly for blacks, or something to that effect.

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean by something to that effect?

Q I can't remember the exact quote, but the heading clearly implies --

MR. NESSEN: It is not our ad, and I don't know any more about it than I have told you.

Q But you all were sent a telegram. It has been two days since the telegram reportedly was sent.

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen the telegram, either.

Q Have you talked to the President about it?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the purpose of talking to the President would be.

Q He might want to disavow something that was obviously unfair and misleading.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know anything about the ad so I can't deal with conclusions.

Q How can you say you don't know anything about it? You have been discussing it.

MR. NESSEN: All I know about it is a set of questions I have been asked and one story I heard on the radio this morning as I was sleeping.

Q You have not discussed it with anyone?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. Well, I discussed it enough to find out it was an RNC ad.

Q So, you do know something about it?

MR. NESSEN: That it was an RNC ad.

Q But you don't know what is in it?

MR. NESSEN: I do not.

Q Why did you call the RNC to ask about it?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't.

Q Who told you, then?

MR. NESSEN: I talked to the PFC and they said it was an RNC ad.

Q They disavowed it?

MR. NESSEN: Come on, Jim.

Q Doesn't President Ford take the responsibility for an important national campaign --

MR. NESSEN: Do you want to go through the whole litany again, Annie? I told you everything I know about this thing and I have nothing to add.

Q Mr. Ford has criticized Jimmy Carter for what he thinks is lowering the level of this campaign. There is now a question in this press room regarding an ad which brings up some ethics in the campaign, and we are trying to find out what the President of the United States has done.

MR. NESSEN: I can answer factual questions here but I can't argue the philosophy of advertising with you. I have told you every last fact I know about this matter and the rest of it is a philosophical debate which I don't think we need to have here.

Q No, it is not.

Q It is a fact that those men say they do not support the President and the ad clearly indicates or implies that they do.

MR. NESSEN: You should talk to the people who sponsor the ad.

Q Maybe the President ought to talk to them, Ron. They are misrepresenting him, according to you, or are you standing up there and giving these people carte blanche for any kind of advertising?

MR. NESSEN: Les, I can tell you the full extent of my knowledge, which I have told you.

Q There is a specific thing on the ad, and the ad itself says it is paid for by the President Ford Committee. As a matter of fact, the ad that appeared in the Baltimore Afro-American and also one that appeared today in the New York-Amsterdam News says specifically President Ford Committee, and it lists Baker and the Treasurer, Hughes.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding from the PFC is that it was an RNC ad. If it is a PFC ad, I will double-check for you. But that is what I am told by the PFC.

Q Also, the telegram that was sent to you, I believe specifically states that the ad carries the notation it is paid for by the President Ford Committee.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is it is an RNC ad.

Q Are you disputing Warren? Don't you think he is accurate in this? He reads those newspapers and he stated it, Ron. Don't you think this is an evasion of a rather deep question? Warren is an accurate reporter.

MR. NESSEN: I couldn't agree more, Les. (Laughter)

Q What about the cost of living?

MR. NESSEN: It went up four-tenths of one percent in September. That works out to an annual rate of 4.8. I think you could say the White House is pleased that this is further evidence of a reduction in inflation. This is the lowest monthly rise since April. One part of the index is especially pleasing, and that shows that the rate of inflation in commodities and in the cost of services has slowed down.

Q Ron, now that we have gotten into the economic area, yesterday the President, when talking about Jimmy Carter's proposal to cut off trade with Arab countries in case of another embargo, indicated he didn't approve of that approach. He went on to say he wouldn't tolerate another embargo, either, but he didn't say what he would do.

Since Carter has spelled out what he would do, would you like to say anything today about what the President would do?

MR. NESSEN: We went around this a long time ago, a couple of months ago, and the President has been asked about it and has always taken the position that it is not proper for a President to discuss possible courses of action in advance and especially when he indicated yesterday what he thinks the chances of an Arab oil embargo are as a result of his Middle Eastern policies.

Q While we are on the press conference yesterday, has the President reprimanded or chastened Secretary Simon at all?

MR. NESSEN: For what?

Q For having appeared in Playboy as an interviewee?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he has, Jim. I certainly haven't heard of it.

Q Wouldn't you like to amend that statement you just made about the reduction in inflation? This is a rise of inflation by almost a half of one percent in one month. It is going up, not down.

MR. NESSEN: I have never tried to tell you that the cost of living hasn't been rising each month. I am saying this is the smallest rise since April.

Q You said it was a reduction of inflation.

MR. NESSEN: In the areas of services and commodities, it is a reduction in the rate of inflation.

Q It is a slowdown in the increase?

MR. NESSEN: That is right, a reduction in the rate of increase.

Q The Labor Department put out another report today -- a little less noticed but still significant -- showing that real spendable earnings, after taxes, declined either four-tenths or five-tenths of a percent last month, which is not exactly good economically. Do you have anything to say about that report?

MR. NESSEN: I am told that that came out earlier in another report and was republished today as part of this figure. It is based, I am told, on a very slight reduction in the work week. That is what accounts for it.

Q Is Secretary Richardson staying on after he said President Ford twice rejected participation in the disclosure of the Arab boycott before finally coming around to it?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean by staying on?

Q Meaning in the Cabinet?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, why do you ask that question?

Q I ask it because here is a Secretary of Commerce repudiating what the President has said. Back in two press conferences --

MR. NESSEN: I disagree with the repudiation language. This is the way any Administration works. People recommend things to the President each day and the President accepts, rejects or modifies the recommendations. It goes on every day, all day. That is what a Cabinet is for, that is what a staff is for, that is what other people in the Government are for, and that is what happened in this case. It happens each day. You know my feeling about the casual -- I have no business lecturing you, but I have a very strong feeling about this casual throwing around of the words "fire", "kick out", "get rid of" and so forth. It is not fair to the man.

Q I only say that because the President has not indicated he was against the disclosure and so forth. Now along comes a Cabinet officer who says he twice tried to force or urge the White House by sending --

MR. NESSEN: He sent memos here twice, as he indicated in his testimony.

Q Why don't you confirm it, then?

MR. NESSEN: I don't need to confirm it. A Cabinet member said so in his testimony yesterday that this is the normal business of Government -- for the President to receive recommendations from his --

Q I am now talking about what the President said in the debate and the press conference.

MR. NESSEN: What the President has recommended and what Cabinet members have suggested to him in memos are two different things.

Q That is right, Ron, and the President has taken credit for something that he has apparently rejected.

MR. NESSEN: The President took a number of administrative steps last November, as you know. The Justice Department filed an antitrust suit in January -- the first time that ever happened -- and then the President signed the legislation which uses tax advantages as another weapon, and then directed the Commerce Department to make public the names of those companies who answered questionnaires about the boycott. So, I think the record is clear on the boycott issue.

Q There is no question that he signed it because it was part of another bill, but he had been against it.

MR. NESSEN: And also he made a strong effort in the last days of Congress to have compromise legislation passed in that area and it didn't get passed.

Q Yesterday Rosenthal said if there was an effort by the White House he wasn't aware of it, Proxmire wasn't, Stevenson wasn't.

MR. NESSEN: I am sure Mr. Rosenthal is aware of it because a private person went up there to talk to him on behalf of the Administration. That might jog Mr. Rosenthal's memory.

Q Could we have the name?

MR. NESSEN: No, because we haven't asked the person whether he would mind having his name made public.

Q When did we start having private people lobby Congress for the President? I mean, are you doing this in secret or --

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is private persons lobbying Congress in secret.

Q What is it?

MR. NESSEN: It was having the President's views represented to Congressman Rosenthal by someone he knew and had respect for and could discuss this issue with him.

Q This is a friend of Rosenthal's that the President sent to see Rosenthal? Is that it?

MR. NESSEN: That is basically correct.

Q Is it a former Member of Congress?

MR. NESSEN: I am just going to wait until we have had a chance to contact the individual to see if we can make public his name.

Q Ron, could I follow up Jim's question? He asked about the question of the Secretary of Treasury being in Playboy.

I was wondering, in view of the President's statements about the inappropriateness of a President of the United States, one who is running for the office being in Playboy, does he feel it is all right for Cabinet people and appropriate for Cabinet officers to be in Playboy but not Presidents, or what? Could you give us some explanation or rationale for this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't really have anything to add to what the President said.

Q The thing is, none of us know. I hadn't read that issue of Playboy.

MR. NESSEN: Didn't you look at the pictures?
(Laughter)

Q No, I didn't look at the pictures, either.

The question is, what is the difference? This is rather important. If he has castigated or made fun of, poked fun at Governor Carter for being in it, has he nothing to say about Secretary Simon, or does he feel it is all right for Secretary Simon to be in it? Could we get some clarification on this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to add to what the President said.

Q Could you try to get some clarification?

MR. NESSEN: I will check, but I don't expect to have anything.

Q Do you have anything else?

MR. NESSEN: John has been checking while we have been out here and it now turns out that the ad we have been talking about may be in fact a PFC ad.

Q Warren is a good reporter. (Laughter)

Q Well, is it, or isn't it?

MR. NESSEN: It may be, Phil. We don't know. We will check and get back to you. We are checking on it now.

Q If it is a PFC ad, are you going to take a stand on it?

MR. NESSEN: Let us look into it, Bob.

Q Who gave you the misinformation?

MR. NESSEN: One of my unreliable sources.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.