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NEWS CONFERENCE

#325

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 1:10 P.M. PDT

SEPTEMBER 22, 1975

MONDAY

(San Francisco, California)

MR. GREENER: A man came in and gave a note to the cashier at the St. Francis Hotel. It was a threat on the President's life. I don't have the details, but she went for help. When she got back, both the man and the note were gone.

When he passed the doorman, he said -- and this is not a direct quote -- something to the effect of "You had better get out of here. Here is what is going to happen."

The man's name is Ronald Carlo. He gives his date of birth as 11-22-1950. This information comes from the Secret Service. The San Francisco Police Department identified the man as Ronald Carlo. The only address they had was given by the Secret Service as a room at the National Hotel.

He was arrested at 10:40 in the Union Square Park by the Secret Service and the San Francisco Police. He is at present in the San Francisco City Jail. He is charged under U.S.C. 871, which is a law concerning threats to the President's life.

There was no gun or weapon involved. They traced him to Union Square by the description.

Q Do you know what threat the note made, Bill?

MR. GREENER: I do not know the exact words of the note.

Q Did Ron indicate that he knew what the threat was, what form the threat took when you talked to him on the phone?

MORE

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MR. GREENER: Yes, but he didn't give it to me. I said, "Do you have the note," and he said no.

Q But did Ron Pontius know what the threat was, bomb or gun or anything like that. Did he indicate to you he knows what the threat was?

MR. GREENER: Yes, I did ask that much, and Ron's answer was it did not involve any particular weapon.

Q It was just a general threat, it did not say that the note was not specific?

MR. GREENER: I don't have that much, Ann.

Q Did he identify any particular weapon?

MR. GREENER: Ann asked the question did the note say anything about a bomb or a gun --

Q Let's put it this way. Was the note taken seriously? Did it sound like some crank?

MR. GREENER: No, it was taken seriously by everyone that was questioned.

Q Why? Can't you give us any --

MR. GREENER: I don't have the words of the note. I am not trying to --

Q He didn't give you any indication?

MR. GREENER: Just that it was a threat on the President's life.

Q How long after the delivery of the note at 10:40 did the arrest take place?

MR. GREENER: The note was delivered at 10:40. He was arrested at 10:40.

Q That fast.

MR. GREENER: I don't know what time the note was delivered. I don't have a time on the delivery of the note. The only time I have is the time of the arrest, which is 10:40.

Q What time did the President arrive at the hotel?

MR. GREENER: 10:47.

Q Seven minutes after the arrest?

MR. GREENER: At the Hyatt House.

Q Where was the arrest?

MR. GREENER: Union Square.

Q He is at a different hotel?

MR. GREENER: He arrived at a different hotel.

Q You don't know what time the note was handed over to her?

MR. GREENER: I do not.

Q Do you have a timeframe, whether it was an hour earlier or two hours earlier?

MR. GREENER: I don't. I think it was fairly short, but I don't have that, Dick.

Q The whole episode did occur this morning?

MR. GREENER: That is correct.

Q Did they give you any information on what this guy looked like? Did he look like a kook?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing on his appearance.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Bill.

END (AT 1:20 P.M. PDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JACK HUSHEN

AT 4:10 P.M. PDT

SEPTEMBER 22, 1975

MONDAY

(San Francisco, California)

MR. HUSHEN: Let me just give you a little bit of added information here. They have one person right now taken into custody. The name the Secret Service gave me is Sara Moore.

Q Any middle name?

MR. HUSHEN: I have none.

Age 45, and I have no local address.

Q This is a female?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

Q White or black?

MR. HUSHEN: I do not know.

They have recovered a .38 caliber handgun.

Q Who is they?

MR. HUSHEN: The San Francisco Police and the Secret Service.

They marked the time the shot was fired as 3:30 p.m. -- one shot fired.

Q 3:30 even?

MR. HUSHEN: That is what they are using.

Q And only one shot?

MR. HUSHEN: That is correct.

Q Where was the gun? Was she holding the gun?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know. I don't have any more for you.

Q Do they know where the bullet struck?

MR. HUSHEN: No. They are in the process now -- because there are a lot of officers down there and a lot of Secret Service agents in the area -- of trying to reconstruct what happened so that they get an accurate story and that is what they are doing right now.

Q Was there anyone else arrested in connection with Mrs. Moore?

MR. HUSHEN: Not that I am aware of.

Also, there was a report of other shots fired, possibly during the motorcade route, and this is untrue. There was only just the one shot fired.

This comes from -- let me just give you the name of the Special Agent in Charge of the San Francisco office. It is Ken Iacavone. He is the Special Agent in Charge of the San Francisco Field Office of the Secret Service -- Kenneth Iacavone.

Q What is he doing?

MR. HUSHEN: He is the man who is supplying this information to you.

Q Where is the suspect?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't say any more right now.

Q UPI has a report this woman was checked out last night as a possible threat to the President. Could you see if Iacavone can give us anything on that?

MR. HUSHEN: We are going to have a lot of questions but I don't think I will be able to get any answers for awhile.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 4:15 P.M. PDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JACK HUSHEN

AT 5:30 P.M. PDT

SEPTEMBER 22, 1975

MONDAY

(San Francisco, California)

MR. HUSHEN: I am going to give you some more information. This is from Ken Iacovoni, whose name I gave you earlier. He is the special agent in charge of the San Francisco field office of the Secret Service.

The gun that was recovered is a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. It was fully loaded with six rounds and one expended.

Q Six left in it?

MR. HUSHEN: No, five left in it. Five rounds left in it.

According to the Secret Service, a witness knocked the woman's arm down and took the gun away from her.

Q Who did?

MR. HUSHEN: A witness, a private individual citizen.

Q Did you say it was a woman?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q What was it, a woman or a man?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q The witness says this was done?

MR. HUSHEN: This is what the witness tells the Secret Service -- that he was the one who knocked her arm down.

Q Why are you saying "he"?

MR. HUSHEN: I will have to check that. I don't know what the sex is of this witness.

Q And took the gun away from her?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

Q How did you put it -- knocked the woman's arm down?

MR. HUSHEN: And took the gun away from her.

Q After a shot was fired?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

Now the bullet that was fired apparently ricocheted off something and struck a man standing on Post near Mason.

Q Which street is that?

MR. HUSHEN: Isn't that the street that runs up here behind the hotel?

Q Standing where?

MR. HUSHEN: On Post up the street from where the shooting occurred.

Q Further up the street?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q That is quite a ways up, Jack.

Q And struck a man?

Q It is quite a ways up.

MR. HUSHEN: What is the next street?

Q It is the next street.

MR. HUSHEN: He was standing up towards Mason. He wasn't standing on the corner.

Q It is a whole block.

Q He was standing on Mason or Post?

MR. HUSHEN: On Post.

Q I was there and I can tell you he wasn't standing up there. He was standing about 15 feet from where the President's limousine had been and he walked up and handed the cop the thing and he didn't say it had struck him. He said it had fallen on his feet.

Q It was on his clothing and he said he had knocked it off his clothing. When it fell with a clunk he investigated it and saw it appeared to be a bullet.

MR. HUSHEN: Okay, his name is John M. Ludwig. He is 46 years old and he is a cab driver, and he was treated for an injury in the area of the groin, from this ricocheted slug.

Q He was?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes. (Laughter) He was treated and released.

Q You said it struck a man standing further up the street and you didn't say anything more except the identification of the street and where he was standing.

MR. HUSHEN: Correct. Standing near -- I don't know how far away he was from ---

Q Standing nearby?

MR. HUSHEN: Right.

The woman who was arrested was questioned here in the Borgia Room at the hotel.

Q Would you spell that?

MR. HUSHEN: B-o-r-g-i-a.

Q The Borgia Room of the hotel?

MR. HUSHEN: Of the St. Francis Hotel. It is on the mezzanine landing just up from the Post Street entrance to the hotel. She has now been taken by the FBI to the San Francisco Police Department for further questioning.

Q Why the FBI?

MR. HUSHEN: Because she is being held on a Federal crime of assault on a President.

Q What did she say, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I have no information to give you about what she has said.

Q Now is that the same ---

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know what the statute is on which she is charged, but it is a Federal statute.

Q But it is the same as a threat on his life?

Q What about the arraignment?

MR. HUSHEN: I have no information to give you on that at all.

Q May I interrupt? I have a live broadcast. I will not use this material until the briefing is over, but I have to go on live in less than 60 seconds. So if I start talking I am not filing on this.

MR. HUSHEN: I understand. Let me add this one thing. She was interviewed yesterday by the Secret Service and by the San Francisco Police Department, and Iacovoni said that the San Francisco Police Department took a gun away from her yesterday.

Q Who said that?

MR. HUSHEN: Iacovoni.

Q Agent Iacovoni?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, right.

Q They took a gun from her yesterday?

Q Were they there today?

MR. HUSHEN: No, they were there when -- it was a joint interview by the Secret Service and the San Francisco Police Department.

Q The police took the gun away from her?

MR. HUSHEN: The police took the gun away from her and charged her on some State offense -- I am not clear what it is -- and released her.

Q How did they know to pick her up?

MR. HUSHEN: I think in a review of whatever the Secret Service procedures are to check on -- well, I am not ---

Q Where was she picked up?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q When? That is my question.

MR. HUSHEN: Yesterday. That is all I have.

Q The Secret Service interviewed her yesterday?

MR. HUSHEN: That is correct, the Secret Service and the San Francisco Police Department. During the course of this interview they found out she had a gun. The caliber and make, I don't know.

Q She was carrying the gun with her?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know. The gun was taken away from her.

Q Why can't we talk to this guy Iacovoni?

MR. HUSHEN: Because he has gone over to the police headquarters.

Q You know these bits and pieces. I don't know, but this is pretty hot stuff we are playing around with and it is very open-ended information.

Q Can we file now?

MR. HUSHEN: As far as I am concerned, file.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 5:40 P.M. PDT)