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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 10:30 A.M. EST

NOVEMBER 1, 1975

SATURDAY

Q Did you sit in for the whole session?

MR. NESSEN: All 19 minutes of it -- 10:04 to 10:23. The President was at that table, with a microphone and a glass of water.

Q How long a table would you guess that is?

MR. NESSEN: Four feet, maybe.

Q Not much bigger than this, then?

MR. NESSEN: A regular four-foot table. This is about two and a half feet. I think it was about that big.

There was a microphone, a glass of water, the court reporter was right here, and there was a blue back-drop set up between two poles.

Q Curtains up?

MR. NESSEN: The judge was here with a microphone. The defense attorney was here with a microphone asking his questions.

Q Three mikes?

Q I am having a little trouble. There were three or four mikes?

MR. NESSEN: Four mikes.

Q The judge sat to his right?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

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Q At a different table?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Were they together like that?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, they met here at the corners.

Q And the defense attorney sat to his left?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, Mr. Virga.

Q Then Keyes and Thornburgh sat next to Virga, also on the left.

By the way, do you know the proper spelling of Thornburgh? In your release you say "burg," but our Justice reporters says it is "gh."

MR. NESSEN: We will check for the exact spelling on Thornburgh.

Q The court papers all have "gh."

MR. NESSEN: Okay.

Q The door to the hallway is where?

MR. NESSEN: Here.

Q Two cameras?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Were they minicam?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q How far away would you guess the cameras were? What type of distance are we talking about?

MR. NESSEN: Fifteen feet to 20 feet.

Q Where were you.

MR. NESSEN: I was back here.

Q Who else was back there with you?

MR. NESSEN: A couple of agents, Bob Mead, and some technicians.

Q The President sat in front of the blue curtain?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the backdrop.

Q What was he totally wearing?

MR. NESSEN: He had his regular clothes on today.

Q The same thing we saw him wearing in the Oval Office?

MR. NESSEN: A dark blue suit, blue tie with red stripe, shoes, socks, undershirt and underwear.

Q Was Buchen in there?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Are you sure about the underwear? (Laughter)

Q All the others were SS?

MR. NESSEN: I left after the initial part of it and went in here with Buchen and Rumsfeld.

Q An anteroom?

MR. NESSEN: With the TV monitor.

Q Did you have a monitor?

MR. NESSEN: A monitor is attached to the tape recorder.

Q So, you could hear all the testimony?

Q And see him?

MR. NESSEN: I could see him.

Q That is where they ran the cables through to another little room?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Shared by Nessen, Rumsfeld and Buchen?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The three leaks?

MR. NESSEN: There won't be any leaks out of this.

Q Is there any way at all that you can describe the tone of the hearing?

Q How did they open it?

MR. NESSEN: The President walked in and the judge had a black robe on, incidentally. The President came in and shook hands with the judge, then went and took his seat. The judge had some kind of ordinary legal language which he read. Then they sat down, and it was conducted, I would say, almost dry, legal, businesslike, very low key.

Q How many questions would you say he was asked?

MR. NESSEN: There is nothing I can do on that part, Fran.

Q You said it was almost dry, legal, businesslike, and very low key?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. This is a very accurate description. This show is going on the air tonight.

Q Did both Keyes and Virga ask questions?

MR. NESSEN: I am not --

Q I don't know whether it was just the defense wanted him as a witness or whether it was just the defense asking questions.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the legal problems are for talking about --

Q Just as a matter of information, it was my understanding, as it was Ann's, that it was a question of Virga doing questions of the President, and that was all, but the other people were there simply to --

MR. NESSEN: I won't quarrel with your understanding.

Q No cross-examination? I guess in depositions you don't have that.

Q Did he take the oath at any point? I assume if you just sign your name to something with a sworn deposition --

Q That has to be sworn, but you should be sworn in for it.

MR. NESSEN: He is, in effect, a witness in the trial and is giving his testimony by deposition instead of in person. So, it was under oath.

Q Did somebody say the judge administered the oath?

MR. NESSEN: That would be fair, yes.

Q So, after reading this preliminary language, he administered the oath?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q This time frame you have given us, 19 minutes, is that all-inclusive?

MR. NESSEN: Portal to portal.

Q This is from the time the President walked into the room, or is that the time of the questioning?

MR. NESSEN: From the time he walked in the room.

Q That would include the judge's comments and shaking hands, the opening, so we really shouldn't say he testified for 19 minutes?

MR. NESSEN: No, it was a little less than that.

Q Did the President volunteer a statement, or was it all question and answer?

MR. NESSEN: All questions.

Q How big a room was that, the small conference room?

MR. NESSEN: I would say it was 25 feet long, 25 to 30 feet long, and probably 20 feet wide.

Q Sort of a small conference room?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Are you aware of what they are planning on doing? Are they going to leave immediately to go back --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Physically, did you see anybody -- was it the big two-inch tape or was it cassette?

MR. NESSEN: They had two cassettes and one-inch tape.

Q Was the separate camera then, in effect, a back-up camera?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q It was done on one camera?

MR. NESSEN: It was done on two cameras to make sure they got a good tape.

Q One was a cassette and one was one-inch?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Did you see any of the tape physically handed to the judge or anything like that?

MR. NESSEN: No, they are going to check it before they give it to him.

Q Did they have any monitor in the room, or was there just a monitor where you were?

MR. NESSEN: No. There was a monitor in the ante-room where the tape was being made.

Q A TV monitor and piped in where you were?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The cameramen and technicians were from the Navy, the President's?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

I don't have anything else. He told me he had a lot of paperwork to do today and would try and clear that up.

Q He is not golfing?

MR. NESSEN: At the moment, that is what he indicated when he walked back.

Q Indicated he would play golf?

MR. NESSEN: Indicated he would stay and do his paperwork.

Q Can you tell us what is going to be the area of discussion with Sadat tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, there were two tapes made on cassette and one tape made on the one-inch. They will be reviewed to make sure they have one good tape and then the back-up tape. The one-inch tape will be destroyed if they get two good tapes.

Q We have a bulk eraser back here.

Q I don't suppose you want to explain cassettes and the one-inch tape --

MR. NESSEN: What can I tell you?

Q When they know they have one good one, the second will be destroyed?

MR. NESSEN: They made three tapes, two cassettes and one tape.

Q They couldn't get it all on one tape?

MR. NESSEN: No, they made simultaneously two cassettes, three copies. Two cassettes and one one-inch tape.

Q How do they do that with only two cameras?

MR. NESSEN: They can make as many --

Q You can feed those into as many recorders as you want.

Q I see.

MR. NESSEN: And he will take custody of one good tape.

Q This is just about the recording, or the picture as well?

MR. NESSEN: Picture.

Q For our readers, we can say two tapes were made?

MR. NESSEN: Three tapes.

Q And one will be destroyed?

MR. NESSEN: Right. One will be taken by the judge and one will be placed under seal and left in the personal custody of the Counsel to the President until further order from the court.

Q In Buchen's office?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Pending further order from the judge?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q And the third will be destroyed if it --

MR. NESSEN: As soon as they determine that they have two good ones.

Q Tomorrow, can we expect any announcements out of Jacksonville?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q I guess we will hear about nuclear reactors in Egypt?

MR. NESSEN: You know, Nixon made the agreement with the Egyptians and they have been negotiating ever since. You know they are pursuing those negotiations. Whether they will reach a conclusion by tomorrow, I don't know.

Q I take it the story came from the traveling troops from al-Ahram, and there would be an announcement --

Q Are they going to discuss anything in particular in these talks?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen the agenda for tomorrow. I have to see Henry at 11:30.

Q Can you give us a little idea?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any idea of what the agenda is.

Q At this point, you cannot confirm that story in the Times?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can say it has been under negotiations and the United States is interested in pursuing that, but whether it will come to agreement by tomorrow --

Q How about by next Wednesday?

Q They didn't say by tomorrow. They said before Sadat leaves.

MR. NESSEN: It is a matter that is being pursued.

Q Ron, would you imagine that down in Florida it will be very much like Salzburg, but with different weather, that we might have a chance to chat with Mr. Sadat and Mr. Ford?

MR. NESSEN: It is not on the plan.

Q Not out at Deerwood after --

MR. NESSEN: It is not on there.

Q Do you expect anything tomorrow in the way of news, apart from the fact that he is meeting with him and all?

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect a big announcement down there.

Q Do you expect to see Henry?

MR. NESSEN: I see Henry at 11:30. Do you mean in the way of a briefing or something? No, I don't.

Q Do you expect to have a readout on the talks?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I will try to get a readout on it.

Q Is Rabin now coming in mid-December? Is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't got that.

Q What about the announcements on the date for the China trip?

MR. NESSEN: My 11:30 meeting with Henry at 11:30 is about China.

Q Can you think of anything else for today?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Monday or Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Can you talk to us after you talk to him about tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect to have anything else on tomorrow.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 10:43 A.M. EST)