

AIR FORCE ONE POOL REPORT
SAN FRANCISCO TO WASHINGTON

September 22, 1975

Narrative portion, supplemented with Fulsom-Rumsfeld interview transcribed separately:

Your poolers were in the two wire cars when Ford emerged from St. Francis Hotel just after 3:30. We were ready to move when a sound that could have been taken for either a firecracker or a gunshot was heard. Police and agents could be seen from Wire Car #2 closing in toward the corner beyond the motorcade, with film cameras centered on a cluster and commotion where, as it turned out, police and agents had someone in custody. Within less than a minute, the motorcade took off at speeds that exceeded 60 miles per hour and approached 70 in downtown San Francisco. On the freeway an unusual number of motorcycle police caught up with and got to the front of the motorcade. Two police cars, the second with roof lights flashing, preceded the President's limousine. Police obviously

were being concentrated around the President's car. The Secret Service follow-up car was followed by two police cars travelling abreast with emergency lights flashing. The motorcade took the usual route to the Coast Guard facility where Air Force One was parked, along an access road. The President's limousine and the following cars drove right up to the ramp; far closer to it than usual. To all effects, there was no crowd. The usual ceremonial line of police wasn't there, but two ragged lines of city and state police faced each other, angled to the right of the ramp. Ford made both lines, smiling, tanned and looking relaxed. His right eye looked to a pooler as if it had been watering. Dr. Lukash said on Air Force One that the President's eyes were okay and he and Mrs. Ford were fine.

Ford went up the ramp at 3:47 p.m. Plane off from ramp at 3:55, takeoff 3:54.

David Kennerly, first of the staff who were with Ford who came back to the pool area, said at first he couldn't talk about what he'd seen and (he thinks) photographed. Then he loosened up said "the President looked startled, but Jesus, getting used to it." He was the first to tell us that he thought it was a woman. He told the pool photographers that he thought he had some good shots. He said he would have his lab kept open in Washington and would have his shots printed up, but Nessen would have to clear any release of his pictures.

Nessen came back soon after takeoff and first asked the pool if it would agree that he withhold his account until everything possible from San Francisco was pulled together by Ron Pontius, acting head of the protective detail, and other White House personnel on the plane. He then agreed to provide what color and impressions he had at that point. Rumsfeld joined him while he was talking.

He said the President left the MacArthur Suite on the sixth floor of the hotel after the Group-Interview, turned left, and went down the single elevator to a small lobby serving the Post Street exit. He saw a small group at two glass doors opening on the main lobby exit and said, "Hi fellows, how are you" as he walked past them and out to Post Street, Nessen and Rumsfeld said Ford waved to the crowd across the street. The crowd applauded, Ford was on the hotel side of the street and the limousine, looking at and waving to the crowd across the street, over the top of the

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limousine the shot was fired. Nessen and Rumsfeld then described the scene that Rumsfeld recounted in his interview (attached) with Don Fulsom.

The pool pressed Rumsfeld for some description of the woman he saw with the gun. He first said he saw so little, it happened so fast, he really couldn't describe her then that she was more middle aged than youthful, with long hair, and "you wouldn't invite her out to dinner." He said he did not remember how she was dressed. He said at one point that she looked to him "as if she were bent over."

He said that during the run to the airport the President asked where Mrs. Ford was and was told that she was enroute from Monterey. Ford then asked Ron Pontius to tell her that everything was fine. Rumsfeld knew only that Pontius then spoke to an agent in the front seat of the limousine. Mrs. Ford travelled from Monterey to the airport on a military DC-9 and boarded Air Force One about one minute after the President did.

Ford, Rumsfeld and Pontius and Merchant got off the limousine floor and in Rumsfeld's words -- "organized ourselves" on the seats. Rumsfeld took one of the jumpseats, Ford sat between Pontius and Merchant. The first statement that Rumsfeld remembered the President making was a request that the air conditioner be turned on. Nessen, who was with Helen Thomas in Wire Car #1, said it was turned on.

At 9:50 EDT, Nessen had not resumed the briefing.

Fulsom
Osborne
Cormier
Thomas

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