

January 7, 1976

POOL REPORT

Ford Visit to Campaign Headquarters

The Presidential party arrived at the campaign headquarters, 1828 L. Street, N. W., shortly after 3:00 p.m. The pre-positioned pool was stationed in an inner office and did not see his arrival at the entrance of the second floor suite of rooms. As he came into the large office where we were positioned, Babs Beckwith, Assistant to Press Secretary Peter Kay, greeted Mr. Ford and pinned a button on his lapel. It was a blue and white button that read, simply, President Ford. It appeared to be the official campaign button of his election effort.

The President was acquainted with Miss Beckwith. After greeting her, he turned to reporters and other campaign workers gathered in the room and said "Babs is the daughter of an old friend of mine and the neice of a former roommate in college." Campaign Chairman Bo Callaway then introduced the President to other campaign workers and the conversation as Mr. Ford moved along the line shaking hands was primarily hi, how are you--nice to see you--really appreciate it (an obvious reference to the campaign efforts).

Carolyn Booth, Director of Volunteers, told the pool there were seventy staff members at campaign headquarters, most of whom were there today. According to Miss Booth there are another sixty regular volunteers. She said about half of them would have been on duty today. The others were called to come in and meet the President. So the total number on hand for the visit was perhaps 125.

From the main office where the hand shaking took place, the President then moved into several offices along a corridor chatting briefly with workers at their desks. He then came back into the main office and delivered the "pep talk" which you heard on the pool tape. At one point in the visit, the President met volunteer worker Sandra Shepard who was holding her nine-month old son Jonathan. The baby seemed startled by all the attention focused on him, and the President, laughing, turned toward the cameras and said to young Jonathan, "look at all those characters down there..." The baby reached out for the President and Mr. Ford took him but (editor's note: he successfully resisted the temptation to kiss the baby for the benefit of the cameras.) While holding the child, the President remarked "he's the youngest volunteer."

As the President started to leave following his speech to the volunteers, he added the postscript "there's an old saying, the harder you work, the luckier you are." Amid much applause and general excitement in the hallway, the President left saying, nice to see you all.

Russ Ward/NBC Radio