

February 14, 1976

POOL REPORT #7PFC Reception and travel pool to Ft. Lauderdale Airport, Air Force One from Ft. Lauderdale to St. Petersburg/Clearwater Intl Airport

About 500 to 600 persons sipped coffee and munched danish to the accompaniment of the Good Times Band, a rock and roll ensemble playing the music of such contemporary pop stars, the Bee Gees and Bread. The President arrived at 8:08 to cheers and worked the crowd for about 20 minutes, where one lady was heard to exclaim, "He looks like a very simple, plain, ordinary man," Another man told the President to "Give'm Hell."

(The President then spoke for about 15 minutes and pool understands remarks were piped back to HOJOS press room.)

(During the President's speech, Nessen told the pool that Miami Dolphin's offensive tackle Norm Evans came to President's suite early this A.M. and chatted for 10 to 15 minutes. Evans, who is involved in Christian Athletic activities is among those invited to Sunday's athletic prayer breakfast at the White House. President offered him a ride to Washington on AF #1, but Evans declined explaining he had to get to D.C. sooner than the President.)

At the conclusion of his remarks, the President worked his way out of the ballroom shaking hands all the way. He left the hotel shortly after 9 a.m. About three minutes later at 9:05, the motorcade stopped near the corner of Sea Breeze and Harbor Beach Parkway. A Fort Lauderdale city police motorcyclist escorting the President had an accident. The officer's motorcycle apparently flipped, but the President's motorcade was not directly involved in the mishap. The officer was lying on the side of the road with his head on the curb; he was bleeding from an abrasion on the right arm. The officer appeared to be in considerable pain. Mr. Ford got out of his car and went to the officer and bent over and took the injured officer's hand and gave it a squeeze. Poolers heard the officer say thank you. According to Dr. Lukash, according to Nessen, Ford told the policeman, "I'm sorry, very sorry about the accident. I hope you're up and around very quickly." Poolers were kept about 40' back by SS agents.

Motorcade was detained about two minutes overall... and ambulance was approaching as we departed.

At the airport, He was presented with an autographed soccer ball by the St. Anthony Soccer Club, and a big Valentine Poster by a group of third graders.

He worked the fence, stopped at one point to autograph a cast on a boy's arm. Shook hands with band members and Shriners.

Aboard AF #1, Nessen came back and said, "Don't expect crowd at St. Pete airport because it's too far from the city; no effort made to get crowd; and it's a secondary terminal. He will be greeted at airport by 23 mayors of Pinellas County. Nessen said all 23 had been invited and accepted.

Farney--Wall Street Journal
DeFrank--Newsweek
Groward--UPI

MacLeod--AP
Rodgers--AP Radio

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