

Pool One

Air Force One, Andrews AFB to Springfield

AF One wheels up at 2:34 p.m. EDT, somewhat late. Nessen said that when the Army helicopter was ready to lift off the President and his party from the White House South Lawn, a gauge indicated the engine was not quite at full power. Rather than take any risks, the chopper was shut down -- Nessen said it was unknown if the gauge was accurate -- and the Ford party transferred to a second chopper brought to the South Lawn within minutes from Anacostia. Asked if there had been two head bumps as a result, Nessen made a zero symbol with finger and thumb.

Aboard Air Force One were Senators Howard Henry Baker Jr. of Tennessee, Bob Dole of Kansas and John G. Tower of Texas. Asked why, if they were going to work the delegates or what, Nessen replied merely to this extent: "They're all three supporters of the President."

Staff aboard were Jack Marsh (subbing for Cheney) and Terry O'Donnell. From the PFC were Rogers C. B. Morton; deputy chairman James Baker 3d, who is in charge of the delegate search; and Peter F. Kaye, the spokesperson. Pool requested access to Kaye and Dole. Kaye walked back somewhat later with his hands over his ~~z~~ mouth and returned to the forward section, very unspokespersonlike.

Nessen, meantime, begged off any political questions. He said only that Ford would make the same pitch he had been making, that he had a record of peace, prosperity and trust, and that he deserved the nomination on the basis of his record. Nessen would not say if Ford was likely to repeat the negative side of that theme -- as he did in Ohio -- about the debacle of a Reagan nomination.

Also aboard, though unmentioned by Nessen, was Ed Terrill, the PFC official responsible for convention states. Terrill walked by and said in a brief conversation it was unclear how the 19 at-large delegates were to be apportioned. He said both sides might run a slate and hinted that each side might toss a couple of delegates to the other; for instance, he said a Reagan slate might include Gov. Bond and AttyGen Danforth, who are Ford backers.

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