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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#585

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:07 P.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 22, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: We want to move right along so we can go to the signing ceremony for the defense appropriation bill.

Q We are not late.

MR. NESSEN: I know, I am late.

There were two additions to the schedule today. At 4:30, John Connally will be coming in to talk to the President. He is in town. The President asked him to come in. I am sure they will talk about politics.

At 5:30, Billy Graham will be in. The purpose for the Billy Graham --

Q Is it part of the debate preparation?

Q No, Playboy. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Billy Graham is here for the President Tolbert reception. He indicated that he would like to stop by and talk to the President. He will probably ride over to the reception with the President. Billy Graham and Tolbert are old friends, which dates from the fact that Tolbert is a Baptist minister, as he mentioned himself yesterday, I believe. He also is the former President of the Baptist World Alliance, which is an organization covering all Baptists and also, President Tolbert was a leader in the Billy Graham evangelistic crusade that was conducted in Liberia. I am sorry, but I don't have the year of that.

Anyhow, this gives you the background on the relationship between Billy Graham and President Tolbert.

Q Is he coming in to endorse the President, by any chance?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any indication of that.

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Q Ron, will we get a chance to talk to Connally after the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: If you like, I could make him aware of your wishes and ask him to come and talk to you.

Q Did Connally call the President or did the President call him?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. They have pretty much a standing arrangement where when Connally comes to town, he gets in touch with us.

Q How about Graham? I want to be clear on Billy Graham. You are saying no one in the White House, the President on down, asked Billy Braham to come? It was strictly a case of Billy Graham calling up and saying he would like to chat with the President; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Ron, will he talk to the press afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: I think they are probably going to leave directly from their meeting to go over to the reception.

Q Ron, speaking of Southern Baptists, several of the leaders of this second largest denomination in the country, along with Members of the Senate of both parties, have spoken very strong reaction to --

MR. NESSEN: Les, I am not going to comment on the Playboy interview today or any day.

Q Would you let me ask the question, Ron? I have a question. Do you wish to convey to the American people the idea that the President does not care about this, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I said each day I have been asked, Les, that I am not going to comment on that interview, and my answer is the same today.

Q Okay.

Q Is Connally going on the southern tour?

MR. NESSEN: I don't believe so.

Q Could we get the Reverend Mr. Graham going in the front door out there? Can you tell us which door he is going in so we can get him if he is going in that entrance?

MR. NESSEN: I will check and find out which door he is coming in.

Q Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: On the debate preparation, some of you have asked about that.

Q This is his first visit to the Ford White House since the President took office, if I remember correctly. Is that not the case?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: I thought he was at a dinner or some event or something.

Q Maybe I was on vacation when he came in.

Q What time did you say he would arrive?

MR. NESSEN: His appointment is at 5:30, Phil.

Q Ron, I have a question which does not deal with Playboy.

MR. NESSEN: Okay.

Q Let him make his announcements, first.

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you let me give my announcements, of which I have a fair number.

Q Okay.

MR. NESSEN: On the debate preparations, some of you have asked what he is doing. I would describe him as having a relatively quiet day today. He has staff meetings. In fact, he has spent most of the morning in staff meetings. He will spend three or four hours this afternoon, either in the Oval Office or in the study, alone with some briefing material, some written material.

It is possible that the President will ask a staff member to come in from time to time to provide additional information, but that is how I expect him to spend today. Then, of course, at 4:30, he sees Connally; at 5:30, Billy Graham, and then he goes to the reception for President Tolbert.

I would not be surprised if he spent the evening after he returned to the White House continuing to review material in written form.

Q Does he have people throw questions at him?

Q What kind of presentation, Ron? Kind of sharpening up on the matter?

MR. NESSEN: He does not plan today to work with other people or to go through any kind of make-believe debate or anything like that. He does not plan to.

Q Has he done that before today?

MR. NESSEN: He has had members of his staff ask him possible questions, as he does occasionally before news conferences.

Q Is he using a television taper so that he can play himself back?

MR. NESSEN: He is not doing anything today except sitting alone in his office.

Q Not today. You say he has had people throw questions at him. Has he also taped stuff on that?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of. I have not seen that.

Q Will he be doing it?

MR. NESSEN: No, he is pretty much finished with group meetings on the subject and is concluding his preparation by himself.

Q Is it a mock debate with the staff?

MR. NESSEN: No, I would not call it that, Bob. What it is is basically very similar or really identical to what he does before news conferences and, in fact, what he does in the mornings, what he did just now, when I was talking to him. I said, "Here are some of the questions that I will be asked," and asked them and he gave back the answers that he would give.

Q Ron, the question was asked but we couldn't hear it so I am not sure of the answer. Has he or will he try to answer questions in front of a video tape machine, or whatever you call it, so that he can look at it again?

MR. NESSEN: He does not plan to do that today or tomorrow and --

Q Has he?

MR. NESSEN: -- I am not aware of him having done that before. I have not seen him do that before.

Q Who is asking him the questions?

MR. NESSEN: The people who are involved in preparation of written material include Mike Duval, Dave Gergen, Jim Cavanaugh, Dick Cheney, Jim Baker, Stu Spencer --

Q You said this is the kind of thing that is done normally?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want you to think that is an exhaustive list but I gave those names as a sampling of the kinds of people --

Q You gave them so fast. Gergen, Cavanaugh, Cheney and who else?

MR. NESSEN: Baker and Spencer, among others.

Q Yourself?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Does he use a timing device, Ron, for the two minutes and three minutes for answers?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen anything that resembles the kinds of descriptions that I have heard and read about of mock debates and people playing the part of Carter.

Q No, no.

Q Would you say whether he has done it and you might not know about it? That is a classic "I have not seen, I have no knowledge," and we have got a lot of that.

MR. NESSEN: It is a classic cop-out.

Q "As far as I know," is another one.

MR. NESSEN: That is a good one.

Q Don't be ashamed. We had an elaborate preview of how the acceptance speeches came forth.

Q Let him answer it.

MR. NESSEN: I think I can spell out for you what he is doing today and what, to my knowledge, he has done in preparation for this before today.

Q Ron, can you pin this down and say, I don't know about it but maybe he has done it? That I can understand.

MR. NESSEN: All I can tell you is the extent of my knowledge, and I have not seen him do any of these things that --

Q Have you heard about it?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard about it on radio and television and in the papers.

Q Have you had preparation so you don't have to answer questions about it?

MR. NESSEN: I think what we have said from the very beginning is that the President will be fully prepared for his debate tomorrow night.

Q "I have not seen," is not enough of an answer for us, Ron, I am sorry.

MR. NESSEN: That is about all the answer I can give you, Marilyn.

Q Can you tell us how long this preparation process, as working with other people, has gone on, how many days?

MR. NESSEN: I would say three or four days, probably ending over the weekend.

Q Ron, you said that you would not describe these things as mock debates and you said they were very similar to the kinds of things he did in preparation for briefings and that sort of thing. Why were they held in the Theater? Are these things done in the Theater normally when he is preparing for a news conference?

MR. NESSEN: Some were held in the Theater and some were held in his office and some were held in his Residence and some were held in the study.

Q What were held?

MR. NESSEN: The sessions of aides asking him questions that were likely to be --

Q Who was doing that?

MR. NESSEN: As I mentioned before, they were Duval --

Q No, we got that list. You prefaced that by saying, these are the people who asked him the questions. Are these the same people?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the same people.

Q Did the acting Jimmy Carter get to participate in this -- Mr. Penny?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, there was no acting Jimmy Carter at any point in the preparation.

Q What is his role, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: He has played the role that he plays, which is to help the President with his delivery and presentation.

Q Has he asked some questions?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so. He does not have a background in substance.

Q How will Carter be addressed?

Q Ron, is the President being given Carter's positions in sort of a format where he can present his rebuttal to what might possibly be a Carter answer?

MR. NESSEN: I think I have said here before that among the material that the President has read in written form are some of Governor Carter's past statements.

Q Has the President studied Carter's interview of Playboy?

MR. NESSEN: He has not.

Q Ron, you said you were not going to comment on that. (Laughter)

Q What is this? What is this?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry. I take that back, Dick. No comment.

Q When you saw and heard reports that the President was using the video tape, did you ask any of the people who are involved in this --

MR. NESSEN: Ted, I am trying to give you a full description of the President's preparation as --

Q Did you ask any of them if he was using the video tape?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to give you as full a description as I can of the President's preparation for the debates.

Q But you do not know if he has used questions on the Carter interview, if he has read all of Carter's positions on issues, if I may use that expression? Has he not read the Playboy interview?

MR. NESSEN: He is an avid reader of the newspapers and the newspapers have covered it rather fully.

Q Oh.

Q Ron, do you know anything more about the Special Prosecutor's inquiry into campaign contributions than you did yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Let me finish my announcements, okay?

Q Can we go one more step on this?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q You are saying that he interacted with staff members throwing questions at him for three or four days, but he stopped doing that now?

MR. NESSEN: He has, that is correct. He will not do that any further.

Q As of today he is not studying --

MR. NESSEN: As of today he is studying.

Q How does he address Carter tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Helen. I assume Governor Carter, Mr. Carter. I think the normal form of address is Mr. President.

Q That is how he wants to be addressed?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is his decision to make how people address him. That is my understanding of the custom but it is not his choice.

Q He still has not made up his mind how he is going to address Carter?

MR. NESSEN: I have not even asked him the question, Helen.

Q Why did Ford stop taking questions from his people?

MR. NESSEN: Apparently, he now feels that he has gotten all that he needs in terms of working with other people and is now working alone.

Q Do you plan to brief tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't.

Q Has he asked anyone to look into the questions of the campaign contributions?

MR. NESSEN: Let me finish my announcements, okay?

Q Answer the question.

MR. NESSEN: Do you want to know what time you have to be at the airport tomorrow, or not?

Q Yes.

Q What about the debate question? Earlier, I asked you if the President had reviewed the Kennedy-Nixon debates?

MR. NESSEN: He has reviewed the first video tape or a kinescope, I suppose, of --

Q Why did you say he didn't when I asked you that question a couple of days ago?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't say he hadn't. I said I would look into it.

Q No, you said he had not, Ron. You really did.

MR. NESSEN: I don't remember saying that.

Q Yes, you did.

MR. NESSEN: He has, or I have checked and found he has, and he has looked at the kinescope of the first debate in 1960. The staff people have looked at that one and the other three.

Q When did he look at it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: It has been some time ago. I don't know the exact date.

I don't recall saying that he didn't, Marilyn. I think I said I would check, that I didn't know.

Q Along those lines --

MR. NESSEN: I am going to lie big. I am not going to lie about a little thing like that. (Laughter)

Q I thought you were completely indiscriminate. (Laughter)

Q Ron, did you say earlier today, a few minutes ago, that the President had concentrated the preparation with other people mostly to three or four days, ending over the weekend?

MR. NESSEN: Ending yesterday.

Q Well, that means that he spent the weekend doing it; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: Some of the weekend, some sessions over the weekend.

Q He was not spending any time over the weekend working on the debates?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so, Dick.

Q I think you did, and both I and the Associated Press reporter quoted you as saying that. Why did you say that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that I said that.

Q Well, we didn't make it up, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: No, but why would I say he was not working on preparation if he was working on preparation?

Q You even made a point of saying that you and Mike Duval were the only people who really knew what was going on and could talk about it and you would speak only on the record about that.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q I mean, you said all those things, how is it you don't remember --

MR. NESSEN: I will review whatever -- I don't think we had a transcript around here on Saturday, but why would I say that he was not preparing it if he was preparing it?

Q Because the White House has tried to play down any preparation, we have all known that for days.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, that is not correct.

Q But you admitted that he was boning up.

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't. I said the President would do all the preparation he needed to be well prepared for the debates.

Q Ron, don't your polls show what the Carter polls show, to wit, that people resent the idea of either candidate spending a lot of time preparing for these debates?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen that in any poll, Adam, quite honestly.

Q Ron, could you ascertain from the President, or anyone else that might know, whether he has watched himself on any video tape? I mean, it appears to be an important issue.

MR. NESSEN: It truly does seem to be an important issue and I will check.

Q Ron, how long ago has it been since the President engaged in a debate, do you know?

Q What was the question, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: What was the last time the President engaged in a debate. It would have to be during one of his Congressional campaigns, and I will look into it. I have not looked into it.

Q Do you know for sure he did during a Congressional campaign have a debate?

MR. NESSEN: He debated, I think, on a number of occasions over the 13 times he ran for office.

Q Why does the President feel he has to devote this amount of time in preparing for debate when he has emerged daily on the issues of State? Why wouldn't he expect to know that?

MR. NESSEN: He spent as much time preparing for the debate as he feels necessary.

Q I know that, but why does he feel all this time is necessary is my question.

MR. NESSEN: I suppose so he can look good in the debates (Laughter) as opposed to looking bad in the debates, which would be bad for his campaign.

Q What does "looking good in the debates" mean, Ron? Does it mean winning this debate? Does it mean looking attractive? What does it mean to the President? What does looking good mean?

MR. NESSEN: I would say it means --

Q Winning.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Winning and losing, you know --

Q Looking good to the American people in terms of voters? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Could you hum the first few words, the first few bars? (Laughter)

Q The real winners will be the American people.

MR. NESSEN: Right, the real winners will be the American people.

Q It is a good question. I want to hear the answer.

MR. NESSEN: I have some announcements to make. We can fool around -- again, I must learn my lesson here not to try to be facetious.

Q Oh, Ron, don't.

MR. NESSEN: Don't learn my lesson? Don't stop? Stay as facetious as you are.

Q Have you finished your announcements, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Not quite, Sarah.

Q Would you please finish them?

Q Do you have an answer to the question?

MR. NESSEN: The press check-in tomorrow --

Q Answer the question, please.

Q Let us find out what time we are leaving tomorrow, for God's sake.

Q Get on to something more important.

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, what has gotten into you?

The press check-in is 12:30.

Q You are not going to answer the question?

Q You are not going to say what looking good means?

MR. NESSEN: I think maybe the American people will decide what looking good is. Will that work? Does that sound right? That is good.

Q What are the elements that will go into that decision?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I think that is a decision for the American people to make, who looks good.

Q We didn't ask that. The question was, what --

MR. NESSEN: I think you have to ask the American people who they think looks good.

Q What image is the President seeking to convey tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: The President is not seeking to convey any image. The President is seeking to discuss the important issues that face the country this year in detail. As we have said from the very beginning, that is what we believe to be the purpose of the debates, is to have an opportunity for the two candidates to discuss in great detail the issues that are of concern to the American people this year and are important to the country this year.

So, looking good would be to be able to discuss the issues, the President's record, the President's proposals for the future and his policies in great detail and depth so the American people will understand fully what he has accomplished in his first two years and what he plans to do in the next four years. That, I would say, would be looking good for the President.

Q Ron, in preparing for the debate, has the President looked at reruns of his Kansas City speech?

MR. NESSEN: Of the Kansas City speech? Not that I know of, Dave.

Q He probably saw the edited version that was put on the air.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he watched it that night.

Q Could we look ahead to the weekend trip? Check-in on Friday may be a little hectic.

MR. NESSEN: 12:30 tomorrow is the check-in time for the Philadelphia trip. The press plane leaves Andrews at 1:15. The President departs the South Grounds at 1:50 and departs Andrews at 2:10. The press plane will arrive in Philadelphia at 2:00.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: Philadelphia International Airport. The President departs at 2:10 and arrives Philadelphia International Airport at 2:40. Then, the President goes to the private residence.

Q You were going to get that for us.

MR. NESSEN: I am looking for it now.

Q Do you know what terminal at Philadelphia International?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't. It does not show on my schedule.

Q Will he see any press at the airport when he arrives?

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean in the way of a press conference? No, he plans to get in the car and go over to the private home. I don't have the details of the private home, yet.

Q Whose private home?

Q Ron, does the President get butterflies before something like this?

Q Why is that a secret?

Q Is that private home the home of Mr. Roman Haas?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it. I have not sat in on the scheduling meetings these past few days.

Q Ron, what is the private home that the President is staying in?

MR. NESSEN: We have not announced the name or location of the home, yet. We will find out as soon as we can.

Q Where he stays belongs to all the people. If he has an open Administration, he cannot stay at somebody's private home and accept their hospitality without telling about it.

MR. NESSEN: We will post this afternoon.

Q You mean you just want it to leak out. It is going to leak out. It is going to get out.

MR. NESSEN: I said we would post this afternoon.

Q You will be posting it this afternoon. I thought Mr. Carlson just told you that you wanted to keep it a secret.

MR. NESSEN: No, what he said was, we will post this afternoon.

Hello, Mary. Nothing has changed, right?

He will spend the day in the private residence from the time he arrives until it is time to go to the theater.

Q Doing what?

MR. NESSEN: Relaxing and continue preparation.

Q What is the reason for not telling us now?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it now or else I would tell you now.

Q Certainly, the White House has it. They have been investigating the home for weeks.

MR. NESSEN: I said we would post it this afternoon.

Q Why not give it to us now?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it now, Sarah.

Q You have somebody back there who could give it to you in two seconds.

Q Sarah, please.

MR. NESSEN: At 9:15, the President departs this private residence to go to the Walnut Street Theater and at 11:00, the debate concludes. He will spend the night at the private residence and, as I said yesterday, the press will spend the night at the Sheraton Hotel.

Q The President is going to the Sheraton Hotel tomorrow night?

MR. NESSEN: No, the press is going to be at the Sheraton.

Q What about the victory party?

MR. NESSEN: After the debate, I don't have anything to -- I am sorry, I didn't hear the question.

Q Isn't he going to the Bellevue-Stratford after the debates for a victory party?

MR. NESSEN: I am told that the PFC is having sort of a "watchers" party at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel and I would not rule out the idea that the President might drop over there.

Q A "watchers" party?

MR. NESSEN: A group of people coming to watch the debate, sponsored by the PFC.

At 10:30 Friday morning, the President speaks to the Polish-American Congress at the Ben Franklin Hotel at 10:30. I don't know the outlook for a text, frankly. At noon, the President will leave Philadelphia to come back to Andrews. The press plane will leave Philadelphia -- it is scheduled for 12:30, but that is really up to you when you want to leave. The President arrives on the South Lawn at 12:50 and the press plane will land at Andrews at 1:00.

Q You said there might be one other activity in Philadelphia Friday morning. Is that scratched?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is still possible.

Q Earlier or later?

MR. NESSEN: Later.

Q Would it alter the return?

MR. NESSEN: It would not alter the return.

Q It won't alter the return if he has a 10:30 thing.

MR. NESSEN: No, because it will be a very short event on the way to the airport.

Q Ron, is this PFC thing open to the press or is that a private thing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the details of it, Tom, but I think it is in the public rooms or in the lobby, even, at the hotel.

Q The next morning will it be the situation where the President will be questioned or in some way say, "How I did"? I mean, that is a fairly obvious sort of thing you would want.

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean --

Q You know, "What is your reaction now that you did it?"

MR. NESSEN: I would hope that I would be able to reflect to you sometime Thursday night how he feels he did.

Q Yes, but getting it from him, having him on tape, on film.

Q Why don't you give it to us now and we will hold it for release. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I can give you that HFR now, if you like. (Laughter)

It is time to go. We plan to go in two or three minutes.

Q Could we not get that before Thursday night?

MR. NESSEN: I said I would give it to you now, for release at 11:00.

Q The President is going to make some other drop-in appearances on Friday morning, isn't he? Besides the Polish Congress, he is going some other place, isn't he?

MR. NESSEN: There is the possibility of one other event in Philadelphia on Friday morning, but it is not for sure.

Q Do you have anything you want to say about the Prosecutor's investigation of campaign contributions?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything further to say because there has been nothing changed since yesterday.

Q What is the Saturday check-in, please?

Q Have they changed the status of that?

MR. NESSEN: They have not.

Q The Saturday check-in, please.

MR. NESSEN: 4:30 a.m. is press check-in on Saturday morning.

Q Ron, why might the President drop into the Bellevue-Stratford?

MR. NESSEN: These are people from the PFC, they are Ford supporters and fans, and it is possible -- and by no means definite and, in fact, just possible -- that he might go over there on Thursday night.

Q Has the President asked Schweiker to meet him in Philadelphia at the Bellevue-Stratford? As one of the official Republicans greeting the President, Senator Schweiker, is he on that list?

MR. NESSEN: He is not on this list to be met at the airport.

Q Is Dr. Lukash going to the Bellevue-Stratford?

Q Who is on that list, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously not.

MR. NESSEN: I have to give you the check-in times for Saturday or else we won't get organized here.

Q What PFC's are involved?

MR. NESSEN: The Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware PFC's are sponsoring this event.

After the signing ceremony, let me say this, which is beginning shortly, Don Rumsfeld will come here to brief on the defense appropriations bill.

For Saturday, a 4:30 check-in and 5:30 press plane departure. At 6:50, the President and Mrs. Ford depart the South Lawn. At 7:00 a.m., Central Daylight Time, the press plane arrives at the New Orleans International Airport, which is at Kenner, Louisiana.

At 7:10, Eastern Time, the President and Mrs. Ford leave Andrews.

I don't have an arrival time for the President in New Orleans, but at 10 a.m. -- the boat, the NATCHEZ, leaves from -- we are going to post this, aren't we?

MR. CARLSON: No.

MR. NESSEN: The boat leaves at 10:30 from a ferry boat landing on the Mississippi.

At 5:30, the boat arrives at the Toulouse Street Wharf, Jackson Square, New Orleans, and that is where the President will have the rally.

For Sunday, the President goes to church in the morning. At 11:30, the motorcade will depart New Orleans and will stop at the following places: Bay St. Louis, Mississippi; Gulfport, Mississippi; and will arrive at Biloxi at approximately 3:15 p.m.

There will be a lot of filing facilities and a 1-hour stop there, so that is one filing place.

Q That is not the one we are more concerned with.

Q What about filing on Saturday off that boat.

MR. NESSEN: There will be two stops, one about an hour and a half after departure, which will be 11:30, a half-hour stop, lasting until noon.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the name.

Q We need that.

MR. CARLSON: I can give it to you, Helen.

Q When are you going to give it to us?

Q Yes, that is the idea.

Q We may never meet again.

Q Why can't this stuff be written and passed out?

MR. CARLSON: It will be, Phil.

MR. NESSEN: Today is Wednesday and the trip is Saturday.

Q If you have it, why can't you put it on a sheet and distribute it?

MR. NESSEN: It will be. I am just trying to give people some advance notice so they could plan Saturday morning.

Q The thing is we usually get in stuff on Friday night and it is too late for planning.

Q What is the second filing point on Saturday?

MR. NESSEN: On what? On Sunday?

Q On Saturday.

MR. NESSEN: One filing time will be at 11:30 and the other filing time is 1:30 and then the third filing time will be when we get to New Orleans, which is 5:30.

Q How long will the 1:30 time be?

MR. NESSEN: Each of the two filing times along the way will be 30 minutes and, of course, in New Orleans, that is the end of the line, so --

Q Ron, can we go back to the Whyte episode? I would like to ask you --

MR. NESSEN: The signing is about to begin.

Q Can you adjourn and come back after the signing?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't plan to, Sarah.

Q There are a lot of questions we didn't ask today because we didn't have a chance.

MR. NESSEN: I said that I don't have anything to add on it --

Q There are a lot of questions that you have not had today that you ought to have.

MR. NESSEN: I can get by without them, Sarah.

Q You told us that Billy Graham asked to see the President. I understand that it was the other way around, the President called Billy Graham. Will you check on that to make sure?

MR. NESSEN: I will, but I was told this morning that Billy Graham asked for a chance to see the President.

Q Can we have a second briefing today, please?

MR. NESSEN: You have Don Rumsfeld coming in.

Q Can we have a second briefing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know if I can do it today.

Q On the Whyte episode, did you find out whether the President knew that U.S. Steel was paying for those trips?

MR. NESSEN: The President didn't ask who was paying the bill.

Q He didn't ask?

MR. NESSEN: He did not.

Q In either case?

MR. NESSEN: He did not.

Q Have you determined whether the President feels that either of them or the second one was a violation of the House code of ethics.

MR. NESSEN: I said yesterday that if he had thought there was anything wrong, he would not have done it.

Q That is not an answer to the question. Does he think it was not a violation?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is an answer, Dick. What I said yesterday was that the President does not feel that it was wrong or else he would not have done it.

Q Can you answer the question, yes or no? Does the President think it was a violation?

MR. NESSEN: No, he does not.

Q No, he does not?

MR. NESSEN: No, he does not. That is what I said yesterday and that is what I say today. The President is an avid golfer and over the years the President has played at various golf courses and sometimes he has been the guest of various people he knows and sometimes they have been his guests at his golf course, and he never considered a golf game to be a gift of substantial value.

Q Ron, does he think it was a gift of substantial value for him to take \$1,000 extra in his fee to go down there on 22nd Street to speak to the Seaman's Union when he was in Congress?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Going down there at noon and making a speech that they handed him to read and he took an extra \$1,000 over the usual stipend for Members of Congress?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that one, but I am sure --

Q Will you find out the answer for us?

MR. NESSEN: I think if you check with the House Judiciary Committee, Sarah, I am sure that must have been one --

Q I want Jerry Ford to tell me if he did that.

MR. NESSEN: I think the House Judiciary --

Q I want you to ask Jerry Ford for me if he did that.

MR. NESSEN: I think that is probably --

Q That was referred to, that was referred to in the story yesterday that it was only half referred to. Now, I think we are entitled to --

MR. CARLSON: Anybody that wants to go into the signing ceremony has to move out.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:40 P.M. EDT)