

POOL REPORT

Visit to Steel Plant
Aliquippa

October 26, 1976

The President left the Pittsburgh Hilton Hotel for trip to Jones & Laughlin steel plant in Aliquippa, about 20 miles northwest of Pittsburgh, at 10 am. A few supporters were on hand to cheer him as he left. There also was a small group of people on other side of hotel entrance carrying a sign that read: "right to life against Ford. Murder of unborn not a states rights issue."

The approximately 30-minute motorcade to steel plant was uneventful. There was, however, a considerable amount of highway construction which caused the motorcade to slow down and at one point even stop. Traffic coming from the other direction was stopped and appeared to be backed up for a mile or more.

A few town residents and steel workers were on hand to greet the President when he arrived at the plant, located on the Ohio River. Inside a basic oxygen furnace building the President shook hands with a number of workers. When I was able to get close enough to hear there was a familiar voice saying: "Hi. How are you? Nice to see you."

Ford wore a blue and white hard hat with his name stenciled in blue on the side. He also wore a raincoat type gear to protect his clothing from what appeared to be small metal particles that filled the air. One worker said the particles were graphite.

Joe Garagiola accompanied the President through the plant and seemed to create as much excitement among some workers as did the President. One worker was heard to remark: "Where's Joe? He's the one I want to see."

Inside the building, the only one he visited, the President watched molten steel -- a worker said 200 tons of it -- being poured into a ladle. From there it was transferred to molds.

He then watched as the furnace was refilled with scrap metal and molten iron and then charged with oxygen. (That also comes from a plant worker.)

The driver of the pool car said the parking lot was "a sea of mud" this morning due to recent rains. It required several truckloads of gravel to make the lot passable for the motorcade.

After watching the steel being poured and the furnace recharged, the President returned to his car for the drive to the airport. He did not make any public remarks.

The whole event seemed to be nothing but a photo opportunity worth about 5 seconds on the evening news.

Dick Ryan - Detroit News
Mike Wright - U.S. News
Bob Shieffer - CBS

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