

October 31 1976

POOL REPORT -- Akron-Canton Airport to Sheraton-Belden

Air Force One landed shortly after 11:15 p.m. at Akron-Canton Airport. Meeting Ford were former National GOP Chairman Ray Bliss, Akron Mayor John Ballard, Canton Mayor Stanley Cmich, Summit County GOP Chairman James Waddell, Stark County GOP Chairman Bob Levitt, Federal Judge Leroy Conte of Eastern District, and Rep. Ralph Regula. Crowd wasn't let up to nearest fence. Ford circulated, chatting with greeters. Bliss told some of the President's men, "It's like 1960 all over again." (Bliss was Chairman of Ohio GOP, which carried the state for Nixon.) Little later Ford spotted Bliss, said, "Ray, you son of a gun, we've been battling a long time."

Car talked again on way through the airport roads to the few scattered people in weather that AF-One report said was 33 degrees. Within last block before reaching his hotel, it again got loquacious, addressing the gendarmerie standing lonely on the corners.

Hundred to two hundred people outside his hotel. He worked the crowd, and if he didn't shake hands with, pat, or otherwise please anyone, it was not apparent. "Good luck Mr. President," said Therese Farber, a history teacher from Massilon, Ohio. To six-year-old Marcy Mertis, who was in the arms of her father, James, Ford said: "Hi Sweetie. You look a little sleepy." Cuddly pink Dr. Dentons clad young Marcy. Unfortunately, Dad James Mertis had brought not just wife and three kids, but all four, so he does not qualify for the exemplary 5-person tax break. They're from North Canton. Ford posed for a picture with Joyce Finn, United Airlines Stewardess.

President entered hotel and we left. Mondale was in Canton Sunday at a get-out-the-vote rally in a Romanian Orthodox Church, St. George.

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