

November 1, 1976

POOL REPORT #75 - TRAVEL FROM GRAND RAPIDS AIRPORT, PARADE MOTORCADE, TO PANTLIND HOTEL

The chicken network didn't work in the parade. There was nothing eventful about the plane ride from Detroit to here, nothing really eventful about the talking car antics from the Wonderland and to the plane.

When the President got off the plane, he said it was great to be back home and greeted some members of the national press and said, among other things, "I got a sweet little mama here, First Mama," and embraced Mrs. Ford. He was met by the people listed on the bible. He also said to the national press, "You have been great to us and we appreciate it."

He talked every time there was a small group of people on the way in from the airport. Lines of cars stopped by the police honked their horns and he responded over the public address system. Before the motorcade reached the parade staging area, for about six blocks leading up to it there were crowds at first one deep, and then up to three deep, before we got to the staging area. Before he got to the staging area there was a large sign stretched across the street which said "Welcome Home Jerry and Betty. GR Loves You."

The parade moved very quickly through the route for one reason or another and the crowd, I would estimate, was five and six and seven deep on either side. It looked pretty well advanced. Everybody had professional appearing signs and there was what I intend to describe as genuine enthusiasm.

Then I presume everybody saw what happened when he reached the hotel. Let me double-check this. There were 16 high school bands -- 16 bands of that variety -- and 30 antique cars. The parade route was 16 blocks, according to Mr. Nessen. There were 30 antique cars, 16 bands and one talking car. He talked to people from the car from the airport to the staging area. The car slowed down but didn't stop. Even before they reached the parade staging area, he talked to people. The President and Mrs. Ford were up on the first tier in the limousine and Marvin Esch and what appeared to be Mrs. Esch were in the tier just below them. The overhang under which the President stood was heated with those lights when he reached the hotel, the Pantlind Hotel.

Almost from the moment he began to talk the President's eyes began filling with tears and there was no doubt in my mind that he was indeed overcome by the reception.

#

Bob Jamison-NBC