

November 21, 1976

BRIEFING
BY
JOHN MULLIKEN
DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY TO THE VICE PRESIDENT

HILTON INN
TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK

AT 2:45 P.M. EST

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MR. MULLIKEN: Bill Roberts has asked me to announce the end of the briefing first, which is, they finished eating at 2:25.

Q Menu?

MR. MULLIKEN: I don't have the menu. Everything, I suppose.

At 2:45 they teed off again. Estimated time of departure now from the main house is 6:00 o'clock.

Q So we miss Bionic Man tonight?

MR. MULLIKEN: I hope so.

As to the small ceremony, it took 8 minutes, at the main entrance to the main house, Kykuit, which is Dutch for "Lookout," on the east porch. That is the direction it faces when you drive up. You come exactly to this area. It took 8 minutes, from 12:20 to 12:28. There were 15 people in the party, and then some extras, such as the Deputy Press Secretary, WCHA, photographers, etc.

Q What kind of photographers?

MR. MULLIKEN: Jack Kightlinger.

Q Is he going to provide us with photos?

MR. MULLIKEN: No. Rick Thomas, the President's photographer. The only photo is of the plaque itself, which is a smasher.

Q What is the reason for no photographs?

MR. MULLIKEN: Private.

Q What does it mean, it becomes a landmark?
I am not very current.

Q We have all of this.

Q What does the plaque look like?

MR. MULLIKEN: Let me run through it very quickly. Do you want to know who was there?

Q Excuse me, I am sorry. I would like to know what it means to be made a landmark. Does it have any significance whatsoever?

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MR. MULLIKEN: Yes. You get a plaque. You have been surveyed by two committees of the Interior Department, and they come to a decision what --

Q It doesn't make it public property?

MR. MULLIKEN: It doesn't make it public property. It is private. The Vice President continues to pay taxes and maintenance. It has got a plaque.

Q Does it ever become public?

MR. MULLIKEN: If they want to turn it over to become public, they have to go through a whole lot of other considerations. In this case, for this particular site, it wouldn't be until after the brothers -- all the brothers own it. Nelson lives in it. The whole family owns it. The family would have to be through with it, but probably -- there is nothing definite -- on the death of the brothers. Then they would have to decide how this would become public, if it were going to go like the one in Palm Beach --

Q The Japanese house is not his residence, then?

MR. MULLIKEN: It is his residence.

Q Which one does he live in; both of them?

MR. MULLIKEN: Rockefeller?

Q Yes.

MR. MULLIKEN: He lives in the big house.

Q Did the President say anything at the ceremony?

MR. MULLIKEN: Do you want that right now?

Q Go through it. Tell us.

MR. MULLIKEN: The 15 people who were there include the President, Mrs. Ford, Rockefeller, Mrs. Rockefeller, two brothers, David and his wife, Peggy, Laurance and his wife, Mary, the Director of the Park Service, Mr. Everhardt, and his wife, Nancy, Gary Everhardt, and three children, Carol Murphy, Melinda Murphy. Then the two Rockefeller boys, Nelson, Jr., and Mark, ages 12 and 9. The 15th person was Jack Marsh who didn't stand with the group over by the plaque, but stood back to one side, but was a guest, a member of the ceremony.

It began with the Vice President making a few introductory remarks. He announced that he had a statement from Secretary Kleppe which told of the designation of the site May 11th. He said he wouldn't read the statement, that Kleppe couldn't be there, but sent the statement. It is the statement which we have put out.

He then introduced Mr. Everhardt, who announced that he had 14 color photographs in a large portfolio of various parks that the Rockefellers had, starting with their father, given to the Park Service. He held up one photograph,

which was Arcadia National Park in Maine, and the Vice President said that he really should give these pictures to Laurance because Laurance had donated two parks to the Park Service. So there was a lot of scrambling and fumbling around until the portfolio opened, and the two boys helped. Then he held up the photograph.

Mr. Everhardt presented the President with about a 12-inch high casting of a grizzly bear in commemoration of his visit to Yellowstone Park and the bill and the funding for the national park. Then the President took this, handed it to Mr. Marsh, and they then went on. The President then said a few words and he unveiled the plaque.

The point of the plaque is that this is a second plaque. The only difference between this plaque and the one that has been on the wall since May is that this one includes the words "Dedicated By President Gerald R. Ford, November 21, 1976." It is, therefore, a larger plaque, the same casting. It will replace the plaque that is on the wall now.

Q Where is it, exactly?

MR. MULLIKEN: As you face the door, Fran, it is immediately on your left. It is on the left side.

Q What side of the front door?

MR. MULLIKEN: The left side of the front door as you face it.

Q What did the first plaque say? What else is on the plaque?

Q Why did the Rockefeller family want to have this thing named as a landmark?

MR. MULLIKEN: It has been under study, and it was newly named before. It is one of 100, I believe. They are continually studying about 100 in the Park Service. This was up for consideration. It is part of the 1955 Act, and I think they thought it was a great honor.

Q I can't understand that; I am sorry. The whole thing escapes me. Of what significance is the estate besides its historical connection with old John D? What significance does this have for the country? I am sorry. It escapes me.

Q Have you seen the Kleppe letter?

Q Yes.

MR. MULLIKEN: That doesn't sway you?

Q I retire.

MR. MULLIKEN: The same thing as Ford and Dearborn, and quite a few others, the Kennedy Compound. There are other ones, Averell Harriman's home. These are historic landmarks that are being used now by people. They are still private.

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Q Does the Vice President have a doctor in residence at his estate?

MR. MULLIKEN: I don't know. I don't think so.

Q Is Roberts here?

MR. MULLIKEN: He was in the other room.

Q Did you ever tell us what the President said?

MR. MULLIKEN: No, I didn't. Basically, the President said he was happy to be there, that he wished to say a few words before he unveiled the plaque, and that the designation of national historic landmarks gave you an opportunity to mention great people, great events and great places. It was his extreme pleasure to be there with his wife, Betty, and to be able to -- I am paraphrasing, of course -- be able to mention this great humanitarian and great philanthropist who had, it has so eloquently been said, been doing God's work, the Lord's work, and that he was very happy to unveil the second plaque, which would replace the first plaque.

Q Referring to John D., Sr.?

MR. MULLIKEN: Yes.

Q Is any of that a quote, the words "humanitarian", "philanthropist"?

MR. MULLIKEN: That is a quote.

Q Doing the Lord's work?

MR. MULLIKEN: God's work.

Q Is that a quote?

MR. MULLIKEN: That is a quote. That came from an earlier quote. That came out of the church, didn't it?

Q How about that plaque? What does it say?

MR. MULLIKEN: I am looking for that.

Q Is that all the President said?

MR. MULLIKEN: About. It was a very short ceremony. A great deal of time was spent on unveiling the portfolio, opening it up. It was very cold, at least.

"In Memory of the John D. Rockefeller Estate,
Designated a National Historic Landmark, May 11, 1976,
Dedicated By Gerald R. Ford, November 21, 1976."

Q Did they take a tour of the grounds?

MR. MULLIKEN: Not before.

Q After? It was on the schedule.

MR. MULLIKEN: They may have afterwards. They came from the church and went right back there. They were forming up when we got there.

Q Did you have a fill on any of the dinner conversation last night, especially as it related to politics?

MR. MULLIKEN: I don't believe I did. The only fill I have is from Jack, who was there. They were alone, the four of them alone. They had cocktails in the main house, went down to the Japanese house, and ate Japanese food.

Q No specific subjects? It was just casual conversation?

MR. MULLIKEN: It was pretty casual, very relaxed, and certainly didn't reorganize the Republican Party last night, if it is possible.

To finish this, do you want the rest of it?

This has historical significance in commemorating the history of the United States.

National Parks are serviced by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

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Q How does the plaque look?

MR. MULLIKEN: It looks bronze to me. It is metal. I went up and plunked it. It is brown. The smaller one is about this big; the bigger one is about like that. The bigger one has to get the "Gerald R. Ford" in there.

Q What are they going to do with the little one; burn it?

MR. MULLIKEN: I don't know. I guess they will have to give it back to Mr. Kleppe. Would you like it? It is heavy.

Q John, we were told at the White House last week that Kleppe would attend this ceremony. Do you know why he was not here?

MR. MULLIKEN: I do not. I was told by the Interior Department he had another commitment. He was invited.

Q Regarding the residence, will Kykuit continue to be occupied by the Nelson Rockefeller family or will he move out of that house and move into the Japanese house?

MR. MULLIKEN: As far as I know, that is a rumor. There is no confirmation as far as I know, that I have had from the Vice President.

Q As far as you know, he will continue to occupy the historic landmark?

MR. MULLIKEN: For the present. They use the Japanese house as they did last night for special events and the Emperor of Japan was the first one to see it outside of the family. I think now we have the President eating in it. But I haven't heard of any "pack up your clothes and lets go down the hill". It may come about. But I haven't heard of any confirmed schedule.

Q In replying to Tom Jarriell's question about last night's dinner conversation, you said you had a fill.

MR. MULLIKEN: I just talked to Kightlinger. He was there taking pictures.

Q Is this the President's first visit to Pocantico, the Estate?

MR. MULLIKEN: First visit of the President either as President or Congressman to Pocantico -- or as Gerald Ford.

Q How many staff servants does it take to run Kykuit?

MR. MULLIKEN: I don't know. They never put that out. The first time I had ever seen it it looked like a bunch.

Q How many rooms?

MR. MULLIKEN: I have no idea; over 20 bedrooms.

Q It overlooks the Hudson.

MR. MULLIKEN: That I could see for myself; it was a heck of a view of the Hudson, beautiful.

Q From the back?

MR. MULLIKEN: From the west. The plaque faces what is the front, but it really looks away from the Hudson and the Hudson is out the west porch. It goes on down.

Q Was there any comment today about the fact that it is Georgian architecture?

MR. MULLIKEN: No. I didn't even make that comment today. (Laughter) I haven't made that comment but once. I am not trying to cut Bob off. I will be glad to talk to him about it, what little I know. But there is no transfer of anything. There is no Federal funding.

Q The real purpose today was, in other words, to get President Ford's name and dedication onto this thing?

MR. MULLIKEN: The real purpose was that these landmarks can be dedicated and are dedicated. There are 1349 landmarks that have been identified and dedicated since 1960. They get a plaque and a certificate. This plaque and certificate does not need to be given by any one person. Once you get your plaque you are a landmark. But if you are lucky enough to have a dedication by either Secretary Kleppe or by other members of the Park Service or by the Director or by, as in the special case the President of the United States, that is very appropriate, too. What it did was get a plaque with the President's name on it. You are quite right.

Q Is this the most recent landmark or have others been dedicated?

MR. MULLIKEN: I understand at the time this was announced by the Interior Department in May there were 75 announcements. This is one of the 75.

Q Any others dedicated by the President?

MR. MULLIKEN: Not that I have heard about. I don't speak for the White House, but I haven't heard of any. You will have to ask Bill Roberts or John Carlson.

Q Who makes up the golfing party this afternoon?

MR. MULLIKEN: The golfing party this morning -- Bill? I don't know if you had the members of the golfing party this afternoon. This morning it was the brothers, David, Laurance, the President and the Vice President. It is a nine-hole course. We debated that one last night. It is nine holes. You can play it two ways so it becomes eighteen.

Q Who won?

MR. MULLIKEN: The President always wins as a guest.

Q They shot nine holes this morning?

MR. MULLIKEN: That is apparently what they are going to do.

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Q Which way did they play the holes?

MR. MULLIKEN: They go around and come back.

Q This afternoon they go the other way?

MR. MULLIKEN: Whichever way they went first, they come back.

Q Did they play the whole nine this morning?

MR. MULLIKEN: I will have to find out.

Q Do you know who the partners are this afternoon?

MR. MULLIKEN: No. We certainly can find that out. The same partners were at lunch.

Q Is he going to have dinner at the estate?

MR. MULLIKEN: The President?

The Vice President is scheduled to come down tomorrow with Air Force Two.

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(AT 3:05 P.M. EST)