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Miss Fromme Is Judged Competent to Stand Trial

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 23—A Federal judge ruled today that Lynette Alice Fromme was mentally competent to stand trial on a charge of attempting to assassinate President Ford here on Sept. 5. The judge also granted Miss Fromme's request to represent herself.

The rulings by District Judge Thomas J. MacBride paved the way for the trial to start here Nov. 4. Miss Fromme waived a request she had made at an earlier court appearance to have the trial moved to another city.

The judge ruled after testimony by Dr. James R. Richmond, a psychiatrist, that he had examined Miss Fromme for an hour and 40 minutes and concluded that she was "mentally competent to understand the proceedings" and to cooperate in her defense.

Dr. Richmond also submitted a written report to the judge, which was shared with the United States Attorney's office and a Federal public defender, E. Richard Walker, who was

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United Press International
Lynette Alice Fromme leaving courthouse in Sacramento, Calif., yesterday.

Miss Fromme Held Competent; Way Is Cleared for Trial Nov. 4

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appointed by the court as "co-counsel" for the 26-year-old follower of Charles M. Manson, the convicted murderer.

Mr. Walker told the judge he had no protest about the psychiatric report except for one sentence that he asked the court to delete before it was made public. Judge MacBride solved this problem by ordering the entire report sealed.

The judge said that by permitting Mr. Walker to serve as co-counsel, he thought the trial would be expedited. He told Miss Fromme that he would insist on clear compliance with the "issues of the case" during the trial.

"I will not permit political statements," he said, "or any statements on ecology—how bad things are because the trees, air, water or land are concerned. I will not permit you to go into these matters."

In her original court appearance before Judge MacBride, Miss Fromme, the first woman ever to be charged with an attempt to assassinate a United States President, called on the judge to have the Federal Government "take over the redwood trees." She added, "There is a gun pointed and whether it goes off is up to you all."

Judge MacBride also ruled that only Miss Fromme or Mr. Walker would be permitted to examine or cross-examine witnesses.

"I can't have both of you jumping up and down during the trial," the judge said.

Miss Fromme requested that the judge ask the Sacramento County sheriff, who is her official jailer, to arrange for her to have a small desk, chair and typewriter in her cell.

The judge replied, "I will not order the sheriff to treat you any differently than any other Federal prisoner." But he said he would have no objection if the sheriff permitted her to have a desk and chair. He also refused to issue an

order directing the sheriff to allow her a longer visiting hour so she could prepare her defense.

However, he agreed to consider any arrangement that might be worked out by Sheriff Duane Lowe, the United States Attorney's office and public defender.

Mr. Walker said that all Miss Fromme was asking is "her rights under the Constitution."

Mr. Walker has asked the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco for a further bail reduction. Bail was originally set at \$1-million. Last week Judge MacBride reduced it to \$350,000.

Miss Fromme, who has lived in Sacramento for the last several years, met Mr. Manson in 1967 when she was 18 years old. She has been a follower of his ever since, working for his release from prison and the release of other members of the Manson "family" charged in the murder of the actress Sharon Tate and others.

The United States Attorney's office will attempt to prove she pulled a .45-caliber pistol from a leg holster and pointed it at President Ford as he was crossing Capitol Park for an appointment with Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. while on a visit to Sacramento.

There was no cartridge in the chamber but four cartridges were in the pistol's clip. Later Miss Fromme said: "I wasn't going to shoot him. I just wanted to get some attention for a new trial for Charlie and the girls."