

2D COAST EPISODE

The Suspect Had Been Queried but Freed by Secret Service

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SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 22—

A shot was fired at President Ford as he stepped out of a downtown hotel here today, but a civilian bystander deflected the gun just as it went off and the President was not hit. A woman suspect was arrested immediately.

The bullet struck the pavement, ricocheted up and slightly wounded a man in the crowd of more than 3,000 that had gathered outside the St. Francis Hotel for a glimpse of the President.

Police officers and Oliver Sipple, a 30-year-old former marine who had deflected the weapon, seized the .38-caliber revolver from the assailant. She was later identified by the authorities as Sara Jane Moore, a 45-year-old activist who had been questioned by the Secret Service here last night but not detained.

Screams and pandemonium erupted from the crowd at the crack of gunfire. Mr. Ford, stunned momentarily, doubled over and was immediately shielded and hustled by Secret Service agents into his limousine at the curb, several feet away.

Taxi Driver Wounded

In the confusion, many thought the crouching President had been hit. But the ricocheting bullet—a flat-nosed, .38-

caliber slug designed to splatter upon impact—struck a taxi driver, inflicting what was later described as a slight wound.

The assailant was said to have fired the single shot from across the street—a distance of about 40 feet from the President.

While the police reported that Mr. Sipple had deflected the gun just as it went off, one policeman on the scene gave a different account that suggested that Mrs. Moore had fired an unobstructed shot before the gun was deflected.

Officer Tim Hettrich recalled: "I was five or seven feet away from the suspect. I looked to my left and saw her raise her arm holding the gun, and I saw her fire a round. Then I saw Sipple's hand reach out and push her hand down. I grabbed the cylinder of the gun, took it away."

113 Bullets Found

After being disarmed and wrestled to the ground by Mr. Sipple and Officers Hettrich and Gary Lemos, Mrs. Moore was dragged across Post Street and into the hotel as Mr. Ford's limousine pulled away and sped toward San Francisco International Airport.

The President's plane left almost immediately and arrived at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington at 11:26 P.M.

The police said that Mrs. Moore had been arrested yesterday and cited for carrying an illegal handgun, which was confiscated along with 13 bullets found in her purse and 100 more found in her car. She also was questioned by the Secret Service as a potential threat to the President, but was released.

According to an affidavit signed by Parks H. Sterns Jr., special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mrs.

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Moore admitted to the Secret Service that she had fired the shot from a revolver that she said she had purchased earlier today.

The affidavit also quoted her as having said that she had seen the President coming out of the hotel and "was surprised that she had so much time."

The apparent attempt on the President's life was the second in 17 days.

Mrs. Moore was arraigned tonight on a charge of attempting to assassinate the President. She was ordered held on \$500,000 bail and a hearing was scheduled tomorrow on whether she should undergo a psychiatric examination.

Late tonight, Donald H. Rumsfeld, the White House Chief of Staff, gave the following account of what had happened:

As soon as the shot was heard, two Secret Service agents, Ron Pontius and Jack Merchant, pushed the President toward the sidewalk. Mr. Rumsfeld crouched beside them.

Within moments, Mr. Rumsfeld recalled later, they all got into the President's limousine and crouched on the floor in the passenger compartment as the car sped through downtown San Francisco at 70 miles an hour.

After several minutes, the President and the others seated themselves in the car and Mr. Ford asked that his wife, Betty, be advised that he was all right.

Mr. Rumsfeld said the first comment he recalled the President's making was a request that the auto's air-conditioning system be turned on. It was.

David Hume Kennerly, the White House photographer, said on the way back to Washington aboard Air Force One that the President had appeared "startled" by the incident, but had quickly calmed down. "Jesus, he's getting used to it," Mr. Kennerly observed.

Mr. Rumsfeld told reporters that the President was "a strong person" and declined to say if Mr. Ford had been shaken by the second apparent attempt on his life. "It was not a pleasant experience, but he's back in his business," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

Back to White House

The President appeared at ease as he smiled and took Mrs. Ford by the arm to go down the ramp from his jet. The two of them walked beneath clear plastic umbrellas from the airplane to a waiting Marine Corps helicopter for the short ride from Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland to the White House.

Following is the text of a statement released late today by Warren Taylor, assistant agent in charge of the San Francisco office of the Secret Service:

"At approximately 3:25 P.M. (PDT) as President Ford was departing the St. Francis Hotel and was entering his limousine, a single gunshot was fired in his proximity.

"Immediately thereafter a white, female, approximately 47 years old, Sara Jane Moore, was arrested by the San Francisco Police Department and

the Secret Service. A .38-caliber revolver was taken from Ms. Moore. She was arrested and will be arraigned before a Federal magistrate.

"The President was not injured and as far as is known no one else was injured either. The President's plane departed for Washington at 3:51 P.M. Pacific daylight time."

Mr. Ford had gone to the St. Francis to address a meeting of the World Affairs Council and to grant a television interview in the MacArthur Suite on the hotel's fifth floor. He left the suite about 3:30, entered an elevator with Secret Service agents and Mr. Rumsfeld and rode down to the lobby.

The large crowd was waiting as Mr. Ford emerged from an exit on the Post Street side of the building. The crowd was behind the police barricade across the street, and a cheer went up as he strode outside.

The President had taken only a couple of steps toward his waiting limousine when the shot rang out.

Thought He was Shot

One witness, John Alexander, an accountant, recalled:

"I was standing across the street from the hotel, and the President came out the door and he started to smile and wave at everybody and I came down and he started to shake hands and then suddenly there was a shot.

"It came from someplace near me, and I was facing him when it happened and then I saw this startled look on the President's face. I never saw a look like that, and he fell over on his knees.

"At first I thought he was shot. But then I realized that he was just getting out of the way. Then suddenly, he stepped forward and they [Secret Service agents] pushed him in the limousine and he took off.

Another witness, George M. Manus, a KCBS radio reporter who was near the President's side when the shot was fired

said he had seen "a puff of smoke and a shot from across the street."

Mr. McManus's tape recorder was operating at the moment and picked up the sound of the shot. The recorder then picked up Mr. McManus's own voice shouting: "My God, My God—someone fired a shot at the President!"

Turmoil erupted in the crowd, Mr. McManus said, with gasps and screams all around as Secret Service men fell upon the crouching President to shield him and move him into the limousine.

Robert Pierpoint, a Columbia Broadcasting System newsmen with the White House press corps, later said he saw a young man approach a policeman just after the shooting. He said the young man handed the policeman what appeared to be a fragment of a bullet, and told the policeman the fragment had landed at his feet.

Another San Francisco policeman, Sgt. Dave Winn, said he had heard the shot. "I turned and saw a silver barrel," he said, "and she was suddenly surrounded by police."

The .38-caliber revolver al-

legedly fired by the suspect was seized with the woman, who was taken into the hotel and held in a room on the mezzanine floor.

Nearly five hours before the shooting today, Secret Service agents arrested a 24-year-old San Francisco man, Ronald Carlo, at a hotel about two blocks from the St. Francis and charged him with threatening the President. He was said to have handed a note threatening Mr. Ford to an employe of the St. Francis.

F.B.I. Begins Inquiry

Clarence M. Kelley, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which has legal jurisdiction over attempted presidential assassinations, announced tonight that his agency had taken over the investigation of the San Francisco shooting.

The Associated Press quoted Capt. William Conroy of the San Francisco police as having said that the Secret Service had questioned the woman last night because she was on a list of potential threats to the President.

"The Secret Service examined her and passed her," Captain Conroy was quoted as having said.

Mrs. Moore is a known activist who had been involved with the massive food giveaway organized last year as an effort to free Patricia Hearst of the newspaper family from her abductors in the self-styled Symbionese Liberation Army.

At the airport, the President appeared calm as he stepped from his car. He took time to thank police officers waiting to see him off. He shook hands with several of them, smiled and said to one officer, "It was a fine job."

Fords Chat Calmly

He then strode to Air Force One, turned and waved at spectators on the apron. As he did so, a car bearing Mrs. Ford arrived. She had spent the day in Monterey, down the coast. She boarded the plane, along with the President.

Moments later, the plane took off for Washington. On board, Ron Nessen, the news secretary, told reporters that the President was chatting calmly with Mrs. Ford and was in a "relaxed mood." He said the President had told Mrs. Ford what had happened, and that she had received the news in a "relaxed fashion" and had not appeared shocked.

Mr. Ford, who has worn a protective vest at public appearances since the gun incident in Sacramento earlier this month, had been on a four-day trip that included one day in Oklahoma and three days in California.

Yesterday, he appeared at a dedication ceremony for a new law school building at Stanford University in Palo Alto. A crowd of about 8,000 was on hand, including small numbers of demonstrators for a variety of causes. Security was heavy and included National Guardsmen in battle dress and a large contingent from the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department.

The President made two appearances in San Francisco today. In the morning, he went to the Hyatt Hotel to speak at a meeting of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Building and Trades Council. Mr. Ford arrived at the Hyatt shortly before 11 A.M., just a few minutes after Ronald Carlo was arrested on a charge of attempting to deliver a note threatening the President to an employe of the St. Francis.

In the afternoon, Mr. Ford went to the St. Francis to speak at the meeting of the Southern California World Affairs Council. After that address, he granted an one-the-spot interview to KPIX Television.

The President and Mr. Rumsfeld had discussed that interview on the ride down in the hotel elevator and had just concluded that it had gone well when Mr. Ford stepped out the door onto Post Street. A newsmen near him said he had looked out at the crowd across the street, said "Hi" and waved his arm once.



Associated Press

President Ford doubling over near his limousine as a shot was fired when he stepped out of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco



Associated Press

Mr. Ford being hustled into his car by Secret Service agents