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Oliver Sipple as he was interviewed in San Francisco

Bystander Who Hit Gun Asserts, 'I'm Not a Hero'

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 23 (AP)—"I'm not a hero, I'm a live coward," said Oliver Sipple, who the authorities say may have saved the life of President Ford.

"It's probably the scariest thing that ever happened in my whole life," added the 33-year-old former Marine.

Mr. Sipple said he grabbed the arm of a woman, later identified as Sara Jane Moore, who was holding a .38-caliber revolver as Mr. Ford was leaving the St. Francis Hotel. Miss Moore, a divorcee, was charged with attempting to kill the President. Mr. Sipple said he had noticed Miss Moore in the crowd as he waited for Mr. Ford to leave the hotel.

"She was there for an hour or two," he said. "Then the President came out and he waved and I started to clap for the President. Then I noticed a chrome-plated gun and I screamed 'gun' as loud as I could and grabbed her arm. I don't know when it went off. Next thing I know there are police and Secret Service all over us. They roughed me up some but they apologized after."

Mr. Sipple said he just happened to be in the crowd outside the St. Francis Hotel.

"I was going to Fisherman's

Wharf and I walked by and saw all the crowds. I asked what was going on and someone said 'The President's there,' and I went down and got in line. I was there about three hours and people were moving away and I just kept going down until I got in the front.

"Why did I do it? It was a gun pointed at the President of the United States, that's

why. I seen a gun and I took a dive for it. I don't even know what I felt."

Mr. Sipple, a heavy-set blond who served in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 before receiving an honorable discharge, said he was on full disability because of mental problems relating to his combat experiences.

"I don't like violence," he said. "I got screwed up mentally because of war. It was enough to wreck me."

Mr. Sipple said he only became frightened after the incident.

"I was shaking so bad I couldn't light my own cigarette. I just asked them to sneak me out of there [the hotel]. I'm still shaking.

"After the entire incident, two policemen grabbed me and one thanked me. Then the Secret Service came and one of them thanked me for saving the President's life."