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Homosexual Controversy Erupts About Man Who Deflected Pistol

By LACEY FOSBURGH
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SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 25—The husky former marine who emerged as a hero at the alleged attempt to assassinate President Ford here Monday has since become the focus of a controversy over whether he is a homosexual.

The latest development came late today when Oliver Sipple held a news conference to denounce the press and others for raising the question of his sexual preferences. The 32-year-old Vietnam veteran maintains that his sexual orientation is irrelevant.

"My sexual orientation has nothing at all to do with saving the President's life," said Mr. Sipple, who lunged at Sara Jane Moore and deflected her arm as she allegedly fired at Mr. Ford when he left the St. Frances Hotel here last Monday.

In the aftermath of the shooting episode, inquiries about Mr. Sipple have produced reports that he is associated with the larger community of homosexuals in this city.

Member of 'Court'

Although Mr. Sipple has refused to say whether he is a homosexual, he has said that he is a member of the "court" of Mike Carangi, who has been elected by the city's homosexual community as "emperor" of San Francisco.

Mr. Sipple, who said he had not heard from the President

or any other officials since the alleged assassination attempt, added, "I would love to have a call from the President, but I understand he's a very busy man."

Today, clearly upset and angry about the persistent interest by some of local newsmen in his sexual orientation, Mr. Sipple said:

"My sexuality is a part of my private life and has no bearing on my response to the act of a person seeking to take the life of another. I am first and foremost a human being who enjoys life and respects life."

White House Undecided

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 25—A spokesman for the White House press office said today that just what form President Ford would use to thank those who helped him in the San Francisco shooting episode had not yet been decided.

The spokesman added that Mr. Ford's decision to thank those who helped had been made before newspaper reports were published concerning the background of Mr. Sipple.

The spokesman noted that "nothing has been changed since and the President will express his thanks to all concerned."