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PRESS CONFERENCE

OF

GOVERNOR MARVIN MANDEL

March 12, 1970
State House, Annapolis, Maryland

PENCIL PRESS

There were no opening remarks or statements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Governor, do you have any announcements?

A. No, I have no announcements.

BEL AIR AND CAMBRIDGE BOMBINGS

Q. Is there anything new on the events in Cambridge and Bel Air?

A. I don't think that there's any additional information at this point. As you all know, and it was made clear, they are looking for a definite suspect in the case. They haven't -- as of a half hour ago -- they have not as yet located the individual -- a white woman apparently from out of State. I say apparently because this is indicated by the automobile that was being used.

Q. Is there a license number, Governor?

A. I think that they do have a license number.

Q. Is it correctly reported that that's a New York license plate?

A. As far as I know, yes.

Q. Can you tell us if she's an SDS, Governor?

A. I can't tell you anything more.

Q. Governor, could you tell us just generally, based on the information that the police have given you, whether this person is believed -- obviously you don't have her in custody so you don't know -- is believed to be an extremist of the left or of the right?

A. When they gave me the information that they had a suspect who is a white woman and a license number, at that point, I said, "Don't tell me any more so I can't be accused of revealing it." So I don't know any more.

(more)

- Q. Do you have any reason to believe that the incidents in Bel Air and Cambridge are related?
- A. There's no evidence to that effect at this point.
- Q. Is there any evidence to the contrary?
- A. There's no evidence. We have no evidence of any relationship or whether there is or isn't at this point. There is no way of tying the two together or eliminating it from being tied together, so we just don't have any evidence at this point.

STATE HOUSE SECURITY

- Q. Governor, was this extra security in the State House yesterday your idea or Speaker Lowe's idea or a joint venture?
- A. Quite frankly, I think it was more a police idea than it was anyone else's. They felt that, in view of the circumstances and previous experiences they have had here, that some extra precautions should be taken. I called - - Captain Hanley spoke to me, and I got Senator James and Speaker Lowe together with him and they made arrangements for additional security.

EXPLOSIVES LEGISLATION

- Q. Governor, overnight have you been able to learn any more about the prospects for an emergency bill of some kind on the explosives?
- A. I have it right - - what we are going to propose - - right here to review. I have not fully read it yet at this point. As soon as I have the opportunity to go over it, it will be printed or rather it will be re-typewritten and then we'll submit it to the General Assembly.
- Q. Can you tell us generally what the Administration will propose?
- A. We have laws on the books now that require permits for transporting, for possession, that sort of thing. But the bill will tighten up all of the provisions - - will include more property. I think Mr. Eldridge can explain it to you more thoroughly. Jack, why don't you tell them exactly what the existing law is?

(Mr. Eldridge) Yes. Well, under existing law it is a felony to destroy with explosives certain enumerated types of property which actually would - - if you look at the list - - cover most types, but not all. We are making it clear that this covers all types of property - - to destroy property of anyone else's, other than a contractor doing (garbled) for the property owner, of course. And the penalty for that will be a maximum of - - for violating that provision - - will be made life imprisonment. There are other provisions that deal with just possession of explosives without a permit, and under existing law the penalty - - the maximum is only six months in jail and the penalty will be increased for anyone possessing them, transporting them in a

(more)

car or such without a permit (garbled).

Q. Increased to what?

A. (Garbled) are proposing from six months to a year. This is just a draft, and this is a decision the Governor will have to make this morning after reviewing the draft - - how much. The problem there is you have, for example, a farmer, who is getting some dynamite to blow a stump out of his field and just negligently does not obtain a permit which the law now requires him to do. And so you can't, I think, unless you start drawing categories within there, make the penalty too great. If you find somebody with a carload of dynamite, and you can't prove they are going to blow up a building, I do think that six months is - - at least, we are proposing to the Governor sounds sufficient.

Q. Was either of the two explosions, the one in Bel Air and the one at Cambridge, a violation of the law?

A. Yes.

Q. As it now stands?

A. Both of them were violations of the law.

Q. What's the maximum penalty now on this - - for blowing up a public building?

A. Well, certainly the one in Cambridge is clearly within the 20-year maximum. The one in Bel Air may be a problem. (Governor interjects) Six months, unless you can show . . . (Mr. Eldridge continues) because it may only be the possession penalty because it may not have been an unauthorized blowing up of property of another and all it may be would be - - those at fault would be guilty of six months and that, you know, we feel should be changed.

Q. You don't intend to increase the 20-year maximum on the agreement (garbled)?

A. Yes, that's in the agreement.

Q. To what?

A. The judge could give either life or a term up to 20 years.

RAP BROWN TRIAL

Q. Governor, in light of the recent incidents in Bel Air and Cambridge, do you see any problem with the Rap Brown trial continuing at this time?

A. No, I don't see any problem with continuing the trial. If you mean is he going to be tried, I don't think there's any question that he will be tried.

Q. He won't be tried in absentia?

(more)

A. He can't be tried in absentia.

Q. There's a news conference in Washington later today at which someone is supposed to announce his whereabouts.

A. I have no doubt that his whereabouts are known. I have no doubt that it has been known all along, and I have no doubt again that they will be able to tell publicly where he is and if he will be in Maryland.

Q. Who are you referring to when you say that "they" know his whereabouts?

A. I am pretty sure that his attorneys know where he is. At least that's my feeling.

Q. Have they indicated that to the police?

A. No, the only reason that I have to say that is that the first calls that I got when this thing happened and as the phone calls were going back and forth, I was informed that his attorney had notified him not to appear in Bel Air because of the explosion. And then subsequently, it was announced that his attorney later on said that he had tried to call him but couldn't locate him, so I just personally believe that they know where he is and . . .

Q. What are you going to do if he won't voluntarily come in?

A. Well, the only thing you can do there is forfeit the bail that he has and put out a warrant for his arrest.

Q. Extradition?

A. Well, if they lock him up, then they can extradite him. But the warrant would have to be - - of course, that's all a matter for the court to handle. I have nothing to do with that.

Q. Do you have any information as to his whereabouts?

A. None whatsoever.

Q. Do the State Police?

A. Not that I know of. I haven't asked them if they do.

Q. What is the bail, Governor, do you know the amount?

A. I think it's \$10,000, but I am not positive.

Q. Have you been in consultation with Mr. Kunstler?

A. No. I have no intention to.

(more)

EXPLOSIVES LEGISLATION

- Q. Governor, what makes you think that this explosives bill you are having drafted would deter somebody who otherwise would be intent on blowing up a court house or . . . ?
- A. I don't know whether the bill is going to deter anyone. But I'll say one thing: if we can lock a few of them up who do anything and if the court will invoke the penalties that it will have under the bill, maybe that will be a deterrent.

PRINCE GEORGE'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Q. Governor, yesterday - - changing to another subject - - the House of Delegates gave preliminary approval to a bill which would freeze the school district boundaries in Prince George's County and allow delegates - - members of the General Assembly - - to change the boundaries at a future date. What is your feeling about that bill? Would you sign such a bill?
- A. I don't know anything about it. I haven't read it. I have never seen it, nor have I ever heard of it.
- Q. Do you believe that the counties should pass legislation in this area to try to freeze . . . ?
- A. I can't answer that until I see the bill. I have never even heard of the bill, quite frankly. I understand some of the Prince George's County delegates didn't either. Go ahead.

STATE HOSPITALS

- Q. Governor, there have been a number of walk-offs, sit-downs, and sick call-ins at State hospitals in the last few days. Do you plan to do anything in this area to either bring the workers back to work or . . . ?
- A. They are back to work as I understand it. I spoke to some of the representatives of these people a couple of days ago, and they gave me what they thought were their problems. I think it all revolves around the salary - - the scale at which they work. I don't know what we can do in that area at this point. I have asked the Department of Personnel just to give me some of the information concerning these people and their wage scale. I will be quite honest with you. I think they are a little low, but how you can handle that particular kind of situation, I don't know. I can't answer that until I get all the information - - how many people are involved, what grades they are in and that sort of thing. We are in the process of getting it.

EXPLOSIVES LEGISLATION

- Q. Governor, back to this proposed legislation, when do you expect that will be introduced?

(more)

A. If I can go over it and have it typed and prepared, I hope to get it in just as soon as we possibly can.

Q. Today?

A. Today, if possible. I don't know -- what time does the Legislature go into session today?

(Reporter) Seven o'clock.

(Governor) Seven tonight? I hope that we can have it ready, at least in one House, for this evening.

WELFARE BUDGET

Q. Governor, have you agreed to transfer some funds within the welfare budget to increase grants?

A. Have I agreed what?

(Reporter) To transfer some funds within the welfare budget to increase grants.

(Governor) Are you talking about the food allowances that we have made in the supplemental budget?

(Reporter) (Garbled)

(Governor) I can't do anything like that within the budget.

(Reporter) You have not then?

(Governor) There is no way that I can. I mean physically -- I personally -- are you talking about the old budget or the new one?

(Reporter) The regular budget -- the first budget.

(Governor) Are you talking about the budget that was submitted to the Legislature or are you talking about the current fiscal year?

(Reporter) No, the new budget.

(Governor) Oh, the new budget?

(Reporter) Yes.

(Governor) No, I haven't agreed to do anything. I don't know what the Legislature is doing with that budget up to this point. I have no information. I don't know what cuts they are going to propose or anything else.

(more)

CAMBRIDGE VISIT

- Q. Governor, getting back to Cambridge for a second, when you went down there and didn't visit the Second Ward, there was quite a bit of unhappiness among the Negroes in the Second Ward. I was wondering whether you purposely avoided this Second Ward or . . . ?
- A. Well, Mike, let me say this: Before I left here, I called Mr. Allen on the phone -- who I appointed as a member of the Human Relations Commission, who is a resident of Cambridge, and who is a resident of that area -- and had him meet me at the County Commissioners' office. He sat through and sat with us in all the meetings that we had. He suggested that he go out into the community, give them all the information that was given to him. And I asked the State Police and the FBI to make all the information available to him on both the Bel Air situation and the Cambridge situation, and he suggested that he go out into the community and meet with the people and explain all the information to them. The only one who is unhappy that I have heard of at this point is you, because no one else down there has indicated that they're unhappy. So I don't know where you got your information from, but he seemed to be quite satisfied and felt that he had been given all the information that we could possibly get and he was -- it was his suggestion that he meet with the various groups and felt that he knew best what the situation was down there.

FEATHERSTONE FUNERAL SERVICE

- Q. Governor, do you have the same information we have about a funeral service of some kind at the very spot where the car exploded on the highway in Bel Air on Friday at the same time of the funeral . . . ?
- A. No, I haven't heard anything at all about that.
- Q. I wondered if you were making any preparations for . . . ?
- A. No, I haven't heard anything at all about that.
- Q. Apparently, some of the Negro groups up there in the northern part of the State are going to gather at the actual spot at 2 o'clock on Friday when Mr. Featherstone is having his funeral in Washington.
- A. Well, if they are, we'll make sure to see that they are adequately protected so that they can have their services.

KU KLUX KLAN

- Q. How active is the Klan in that part of Maryland? This was mentioned by several people up there. Do you know?
- A. I don't know. I have no evidence. I know that there may have been a meeting some years ago, but one time I was going goose hunting, and they called me up and told me that the camp where we were staying -- that we ought to bring our own sheets

(more)

and pillowcases. And after I thought about it, I thought maybe I'd better not. I didn't want to get stopped on the highway. But seriously, I don't think there's that much activity. I haven't heard of any in that area.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Q. Governor, I want to make one last try on something else. As a general principle, do you believe that the Legislature should act in this field of school boundaries to override a local school board's decision to re-draw the boundaries in order to (garbled)?

A. I don't think as a general principle that the legislators ought to determine school districts, but, as I said, I am not that familiar with this particular legislation or problem that they are trying to get around or what they are trying to do, so whatever I say is just a generality and not specific.

Q. Governor, on another subject, do you feel that the State Department of Education should be allowed to go ahead and continue drawing up its guidelines for the sex education program or do you feel that they need another year of study which this proposed moratorium would give?

A. Well, the information that I received from the State Department of Education is that the guidelines that they are preparing about satisfy every argument that's been made in this field. I think they ought to be given an opportunity to present these guidelines and to allow everybody to consider them and to at least know what is in them before we take any drastic action. I think that what they are doing - - what they are attempting to do - - will make this problem just disappear, quite frankly.

MORGAN STATE COLLEGE

Q. Governor, we understand that Morgan College is due to come down again next Tuesday to protest the . . .

(Governor interrupts) I haven't heard anything.

(Reporter continues) small amount of supplemental aid. Do you plan - - assuming that this is true - - do you plan to take any steps to see that there is no repetition of the last protest that they launched?

A. Well, of course, there is no way in the world I can prevent them from coming down if they want to come down. The wisdom of that course will be one that they are going to have to determine, because the Legislature still has to rule on their original budget and their supplemental budget. So they are the ones who have to assume the responsibility of this kind of visit if they are going to make it. As far as precautions are concerned, you mean as far as protections are concerned?

(Reporter) Yes. Asking the Comptroller perhaps not to invite them in.

(Governor) I can assure you of one thing that egress and ingress to this building and all the other State buildings are going to be kept open. And movement within

(more)

the building is going to be kept open, so that people who want to use the building and have to for official business are going to be using it. This is one thing I will assure you.

Thank you, Governor.

NEW SUBJECTS DISCUSSED BY ELECTRONIC PRESS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BILL

- Q. Governor, there is a joint hearing on your Transportation Bill this morning. Do you consider this bill the most important part of your legislative program?
- A. I consider it one of the most important parts of our program. I think it's one of the bills that we feel should be passed. We have, as you know, introduced a number of Administration bills that we would like the General Assembly to consider and we have characterized them into three different categories: those that we feel are the most important; those that we are going to push to get through; and the third class, those that we hope to get through but we don't feel are imperative. This is one of the first category.
- Q. At an earlier press conference you said that there was bound to be considerable opposition to the bill and there would be considerable lobbying against it. How much opposition have you found towards it and from where is it coming, primarily?
- A. Well, as I said to you, there was considerable opposition -- there still is opposition. I think we've managed -- by meeting with the people who are opposed to it -- managed to eliminate a good part of that opposition, but we haven't been able to eliminate all of it. We still have some indications from the Port Authority that they are not opposed to the principle of the bill, but are opposed to the sections that cover their particular authority. There is also -- as I understand again, the AAA have indicated their opposition to the bill. I am not quite sure why yet, but they have indicated they are in opposition.
- Q. On the same subject, originally, it appeared that there was some opposition coming from the State Roads Commission. What do you hear from them?
- A. The State Roads Commission, I think, today will appear at the hearing in favor of the bill.

RAP BROWN TRIAL

- Q. Governor, in view of the incidents in Cambridge and Bel Air, do you think that they will affect in any way the trial of Mr. Brown. I quote his attorney, Mr. Kunstler, who said, "It is absolutely dangerous and ridiculous to continue trials like this." He says it is bound to provoke people white or black. "A pattern has developed," says Mr. Kunstler, "in this case, and there may be more and more incidents if the trial resumes."

(more)

- A. If trials can't be held because those who object to a trial being held can see that incidences can be provoked - - and I am not saying in this instance this is the fact - - but I am saying that from the implications of his statement that wherever there is a trial to be held, if there is any incident surrounding that trial that the defendants or their representatives are not in agreement with it, this is going to be the basis of eliminating trying defendants in courts, we'll never have a trial in this country. So I think that this position is untenable. I think that you can't take that definite position. I think it's not justified either in law or in fact.

BEL AIR EXPLOSION

- Q. Governor, getting back to Bel Air, one of the TV stations yesterday quoted one of your assistants as saying the State Police believed the two men blown up had gone to Bel Air to blow up the Court House and found it too secure and were on their way back when the bomb was accidentally set off. Is this the official theory that you believe?

- A. No, there is no official version of this yet. The FBI, the demolition experts - - we have all the facilities of all the government agencies working on this, and it will be three or four days before they can give an official version of what they think happened up there. As of right now, the speculation is that a charge of explosive was on the right front floorboard of the automobile, that it detonated. It could not have been thrown into the car because both windows - - they have reconstructed the automobile as best they can and they were able to determine that both windows were up by the position of the handles in the doorboard - - in both doors, indicating that the windows were closed so that there could not have been anything thrown into the automobile. The force of the explosion, they found the - - what do you call it - - the compartment in that automobile and in that car it is in the center of the car - -

(Reporter) The glove compartment?

(Governor continues) the glove compartment is located in the center of the automobile. The damage to the compartment was done from the right up to the left and from beneath. The force of the explosion hit the glove compartment underneath going upward, again indicating that it came from the right floorboard. So all of the evidence that they have at this point indicates that the explosion occurred on the right front floorboard of the automobile.

- Q. Do they know why they were there? Were they there to use . . . ?
of telling.
- A. There is no way - - at this point - - no way/I think the latest information they have is that Mr. Featherstone was in Washington at 8 P.M. that night, and between 8 P.M. and 11:30-40, whenever this happened, they are trying to determine his whereabouts, but we don't have any additional information.
- Q. Were they followed at all while they were in Bel Air?
- A. Not as far as I know. There did happen by coincidence that a police car was traveling on the other side of the road going the opposite direction when the explosion

(more)

did take place. They were about 300 feet down the road, heard the explosion, turned around and came back. So they were on the scene immediately after it happened.

SEX EDUCATION

- Q. Governor, did I understand you correctly as favoring a one-year moratorium on the program of sex education in the public schools?
- A. No, I have never made that statement. I don't even know where you could get the implication.
- Q. You did bring out the fact though that you thought they ought to wait until they get further information from the School Board?
- A. I said that the School Board is presently in the process of adopting new regulations on the whole program, and I thought that before any determination is made in the Legislature to take any action, they ought to have the full details of that new proposal before them.
- Q. Suppose that proposal doesn't come through in the next three weeks?
- A. Well, I think that - - I am just saying myself, if I were in the Legislature, I would ask the School Board what their proposed new regulations would be. I don't think that the State School Board would withhold that information from the General Assembly. And I don't know, they may have already done it. I haven't been kept aware of how far the Legislature has gone on this matter.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Q. Governor, it has been suggested again that most of Washington, D. C. be ceded back to Maryland as a means of providing (garbled). How do you feel about that?
- (Governor) Are they serious?
- (Reporter) Yes.
- (Governor) Well, at this point, I would not be inclined to feel the necessity of accepting back any part of Washington. We can't even get back from Washington what they owe us up to this point.

END OF CONFERENCE