

Secret Service and Bay Police Differ Over Whether Sara Moore Was Considered a Threat to the President

By RICHARD D. LYONS

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 1 — The controversy surrounding the failure of law enforcement groups to detain Sara Jane Moore before she allegedly attempted to shoot President Ford deepened at a Senate hearing today when Secret Service agents and San Francisco policemen gave differing versions of whether she had indeed been considered a threat to the President.

At issue was whether Inspector John O'Shea of the San Francisco Police Department tried to warn agents protecting the President that he had considered Mrs. Moore a potential threat to the President, and how strongly he had conveyed his views.

Further, the Senator questioning the witnesses sought to find out why, if Mr. O'Shea had issued a specific warning, the Secret Service had not placed Mrs. Moore in custody.

Mr. O'Shea testified that two days before the shot was fired in front of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco he had warned three Federal law enforcement groups that Mrs. Moore might pose a threat.

Another Squeaky Fromme

That day, a Saturday, Mr. O'Shea testified, he telephoned the Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and, told agents of all three groups that he thought there "was a possibility" that Mrs. Moore "might be another Squeaky Fromme." — a reference to Lynette Alice Fromme, accused of attempting to assassinate Mr. Ford on Sept. 5.

But the Secret Service agents involved testified in a different vein at the second day of the hearings into Presidential protection of the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government.

The Secret Service witnesses were Martin W. Haskell Jr., 34 years old, a protection intelligence squad leader in the San Francisco field office, and Gary Yaeger, 36, who serves in the intelligence division in Washington.

Asked by Senator Joseph M. Montoya, the New Mexico Democrat who is chairman of the subcommittee, if Mr. O'Shea had likened Mrs. Moore to Miss Fromme, Mr. Haskell said: "He did not."

Mr. Yaeger added that the statement had never been made to him either, and that such a remark had not been relayed by any other Federal agents.

Mr. Haskell and Mr. Yaeger,

who questioned Miss Moore for 90 minutes at Secret Service offices in San Francisco the night before the shooting, stoutly defended their decision not to have her placed in protective custody.

"I am convinced that my judgment was not in error," said Mr. Yaeger.

Relating the interview with Miss Moore, Mr. Yaeger said that at first "she was hesitant to talk and became a little upset, saying something like 'I'm in a fine kettle of fish.'"

Mr. Yaeger said he had asked her why she carried a gun and that Mrs. Moore had

answered: "Because my life has been threatened."

The Secret Service agent, who said he had conducted over 500 similar interviews during his five years of service with the agency, said that the answer seemed perfectly logical to him because others he had interrogated had given the same answer and there had been threats against their own lives.

Mr. Yaeger said he had then asked pointedly: "Are you going to try to shoot the President at Stanford [where he was due to have gone the following day]?"

"She calmly said 'No,'" he testified.

The agent then said he had asked Miss Moore if she had intended "to shoot a demonstrator" and that again she had said "No" in a calm voice.

Mr. Yaeger continued saying that Mrs. Moore had displayed "no animosity to the President or the Ford Administration," adding that she had said that she considered it to be a "non-controversial Administration."

"At no time did she display anything that we usually look for—no violence—she didn't dislike Government or authority, and at no time during the

interview did she display any sign of mental instability," Mr. Yaeger said.

Another point in dispute between the Secret Service agents and Mr. O'Shea was the wording and interpretation of a question about Miss Moore that Mr. Yaeger put to the San Francisco police inspector.

According to both men, while the Secret Service men were questioning Miss Moore they called Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Yaeger asked the inspector a question about her.

It was Mr. O'Shea's recollection that Mr. Yaeger had asked him: "Is there anything

else?" He said he took this to mean: "Is there anything else you can tell us about Mrs. Moore?"

Because the inspector had already alerted the Secret Service to the fact that she had been carrying a gun and had intended to be near Mr. Ford during his visit to Stanford University.

Mr. O'Shea said that with this context in mind that he had answered, "No."

But it was the recollection of Mr. Yaeger, as he testified, that he had said to Mr. O'Shea "Do we have a problem?" He said this meant he was asking if

the Secret Service agents protecting the President might have any problems with Miss Moore. Mr. Yaeger said Mr. O'Shea had answered, "No."

"I don't know what he thought I meant about 'problem,'" Mr. Yaeger said, adding that Mr. O'Shea had said nothing about Miss Moore being a strange character.

"If he [Mr. O'Shea] had said 'yes' she would have been arrested the next day" after her meeting with the undercover agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Mr. Yaeger testified.

A third difference between the statements of the Secret Service men and Mr. O'Shea concerned pictures of Miss Moore that the inspector obtained two days before the shooting and offered to the agents.

Mr. O'Shea said the agents were to have picked them up at his office, but did not. The agents said they had tried to obtain the pictures from the inspector the day before the shooting but that the matter was dropped when the San Francisco police had briefly held her on a gun charge.