

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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DATE JUL 19 1982 BY SP2TAD/10
DATE: December 1, 1963

Mr. W. C. Sullivan

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- DeLoach _____
- Evans _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

M : D. J. Brennan, Jr.

SUBJECT: PROTECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

Presidential Security
W. J. Birmingham

The Director requested a memorandum setting forth suggestions to improve the security of the President. The memorandum is enclosed.

To obtain background material so that our suggestions would not be made in areas already covered Liaison Agent [redacted] discussed this matter with Mr. James J. Rowley, Chief, U.S. Secret Service. He indicated his pleasure at being consulted by the Bureau. He called in his top aides for a conference on Saturday, 11/30/63, and the problems attendant upon the protection of the President were discussed in great detail.

Much of the public has the mistaken impression that the Chief Executive takes orders from the Secret Service as far as security is concerned. The biggest problem facing the U.S. Secret Service is getting the President to accept security safeguards. It is a calculated risk every time the Chief Executive travels outside the White House. Riding in open cars and shaking hands with people in crowds as Presidents have done in the past presents a serious threat to security. The White House detail of the U.S. Secret Service is a small group of dedicated men who would gladly give their lives to spare the Chief Executive. The action of special agent Rufus Youngblood is an example of this. As he sensed that the President had been hit by a sniper, he threw the then Vice President Johnson to the floor of the car and then covered him with his own body.

Examples of Security Problems:

At the Dallas, Texas, Hospital immediately after the President was taken there on 11/22/63, Presidential Assistant P. Kenneth O'Donnell told the Secret Service "You are not at fault. You can't mix security and politics. We chose politics."

A few weeks ago at Cape Canaveral (now Cape Kennedy), the President and Vice President both viewed the launching of a missile. Just prior to leaving the airfield to continue their trip, President Kennedy told Mr. Johnson "Get in my plane,

- ENCLOSURE
- Enc.
- 1 - Mr. Belmont
 - 1 - Mr. Rosen
 - 1 - Mr. Sullivan
 - 1 - Mr. Handley
 - 1 - Liaison [redacted]
 - 1 - [redacted]

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Memorandum to Mr. Sullivan
RE: PROTECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

they (meaning the Secret Service) won't care." The Secret Service immediately questioned President Kennedy on this and pleaded with him to have Vice President Johnson ride in a separate aircraft. General Thomas White, U.S. Air Force, overheard these comments and told President Kennedy that he did not allow astronauts to ride in the same aircraft. The President jokingly remarked "Don't you fellows want McCormack as President?"

On Sunday, 11/24/63, President and Mrs. Johnson were headed toward the White House from their home with a motorcycle escort. Mrs. Johnson asked the Secret Service man accompanying them, "How long do we have to have this motorcycle escort?"

Recently President Kennedy was in New York City. As he left downtown New York to return to the airport he dismissed the police escort and his car stopped at red lights the same as other traffic. During this ride President Kennedy asked the Secret Service how the Police Commissioner liked the lack of escort. The President was told that the Police Commissioner was very disturbed by this action.

As soon as President Kennedy was elected, Gerald A. Behn, who later succeeded Rowley as Special Agent in Charge of the White House detail, immediately flew to Mr. Kennedy's side and briefed him on security problems. At that time Behn mentioned that the President always rides in the right rear seat. Mr. Kennedy quipped "Maybe we will change that."

In Florida and on Cape Cod, Mr. Kennedy often jumped behind the wheel of an automobile and drove off. He has been characterized by the Secret Service as a notoriously poor driver who drove through red lights and took many unnecessary chances.

On the morning of the assassination, the President was in Fort Worth, Texas. It rained there as well as in Dallas. The Presidential "bubbletop" car was awaiting him in Dallas at the airport. Approximately 30 minutes before the President was to arrive in Dallas, Presidential Assistant O'Donnell ordered that the plastic top be removed from the President's car in view of the fact that it had stopped raining.

Memorandum to Mr. Sullivan
RE: PROTECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

OBSERVATIONS:

The Secret Service feels that security at the White House and at the Johnson ranch in Texas is well in hand. At the present time a new alarm system is being attached to the fence surrounding the White House to alert the police if an attempt is made to climb over the fence. The Secret Service utilizes closed television channels at the White House as an additional precaution and new gates are being designed. Concerning the "LBJ" ranch at Johnson City, Texas, the Secret Service has a detail there for security precautions. This includes guards at the gates and full perimeter control when the President is there. In flying to the ranch, the President will land at the Bergstrom Air Force Base at Austin, Texas, and fly the 60 miles to the ranch by helicopter. Smaller planes can land at the ranch on the 6,000 foot runway which is only about 500 yards from the main house.

With respect to the questions raised in Mr. Belmont's attached memorandum, 11/29/63, there were two Secret Service men on the front seat of the President's car, one of whom was the driver. It is possible that Mrs. Kennedy looked to the rear for assistance because Texas Governor Connally and his wife were seated on the "jump seats" between the Kennedys and the front of the car. In addition Secret Service agent [REDACTED] in charge of the First Lady's detail, was immediately to the rear of the President's car. Secret Service men were not riding on rear corners of the car as President Kennedy had indicated some time ago that he did not desire this. (b)(7)(C)

Concerning the route of the motorcade in Dallas, Texas, it was determined that the distance from the airport to the Trade Mart where the President was to speak was four miles. The actual route selected by the political advance man was a distance of 10 miles so that more persons could see the President. This route was announced several days in advance and was given detailed publicity in Dallas, including route maps in the newspapers. The Secret Service agent making the advance arrangements was in Dallas throughout the 10 days preceding the President's visit. The actual trip to Dallas was announced publicly on September 26, 1963.

ACTION:

Enclosed is a memorandum embodying suggestions for improvement for the protection of the President as requested by the Director. This memorandum consists of all the suggestions made by the Bureau plus those made by Mr. J. J. Rowley and his Secret Service aides.

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RE: PROTECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

ADDENDUM (12/2/63):

I question advisability of suggesting bulletproof vest
(see item 5 of page 2 of attachment). Suggest we eliminate.

A. H. Belmont

*Memo given to
W. T. Sullivan, Sp. Asst.
to President, &
discussed with him
12/2/63 -
D*

[Signature] V. *[Signature]*
I concur
H