

Memorandum

United States Secret Service

TO : Chief

DATE: March 30, 1964

FROM : SAIC Behn - White House Detail

3-16-600.0

SUBJECT: Presidential Conduct

As requested by Mr. Carswell, considerable thought has been given to what a President should, or should not, do to improve the protection given him.

The following suggestions are made:

1. A President should accept, without question, the amount and type of protection given him. I have never known a President, since and including Roosevelt, who objected to the number of special agents assigned to the White House Detail or to the basic method in which they operated. Upon first assuming office, Presidents have objected to certain procedures. However, after varying periods of time, they have realized that we are trying to do a job which has been given us by Congress and which we are trying to do to the best of our ability. As a result, although perhaps it is difficult, they have accepted the amount and type of protection deemed necessary by us.
2. A President should have the utmost confidence and trust in every member of the Secret Service assigned to the White House Detail. At first this will be difficult for a President, as it will be for most members of his staff, because practically all agents of the Detail will be complete strangers. However, the sooner this trust and confidence is developed, not only by a President but also by his staff, the better it is for everyone concerned. It is believed that as soon as a President, as well as his staff, acknowledges the fact that we are trying to do a job the best way we know how, and the reluctance to confide in strangers is overcome, trust and confidence will develop rapidly.

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3. A President should not stop a motorcade in order that he may get out of his car and shake hands with the spectators. It is true that in this instance the element of surprise would be in our favor and that, in all probability, a planned assassination would not take place. It is equally true that any mentally unbalanced person in the resulting crowd could, on the spur of the moment, pull a knife or gun and kill or injure a President. Another danger is that after a President has reentered his automobile and the motorcade has started to move, someone in the crowd, which by this time would be swarming on to the street, would be struck by a motorcycle or another car in the motorcade and perhaps injured or killed.

It is perfectly feasible, easily arranged and has been done in the past, for a President to shake hands with the spectators at airports, hotels, auditoriums, etc. In these cases, barricades can be in place prior to the President's appearance and the spectators can be controlled.