

Police Doubt a Shot at Ford Motorcade

By WILLIAM ROBBINS

Special to The New York Times

DALLAS, July 6—The shattering of a window in a police car that was escorting Vice President Ford today set off reports that it had been fired upon by a sniper, but the reports were later discounted by officials.

Mr. Ford was on his way from the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport to downtown Dallas to dedicate the New World Trade Center, in the same complex of buildings President Kennedy was bound for when he was assassinated Nov. 22, 1963.

The incident today, which re-

sulted in a fist-size hole in the door window on the driver's side of the police car, occurred in the suburban town of Irving, just outside Dallas. The car was the fifth behind the bullet-proof limousine carrying Mr. Ford.

Within seconds, scores of local policemen, men from the Texas Department of Public Safety and Secret Service agents converged on the scene. Helicopters appeared overhead and police dogs were used.

No evidence of a sniper or a bullet was found. There were no injuries.

The 10-car motorcade, never stopping, proceeded to the

dedication on schedule and Mr. Ford calmly delivered his speech.

A Secret Service source said that the escape of any possible sniper would have been cut off immediately.

"Within one minute, there were five law enforcement people on the scene of the field where the trajectory would have had to originate," the source said. "They just smothered the area, as far as the question of any suspect getting away."

A spokesman for the Secret Service at its Washington headquarters, William A. Haw-

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thorne, said that a search of the around Texas Route 114 had turned up no evidence of a sniper and that an examination of the broken window by ballistics experts showed that it had not been struck by a bullet. The police car, belonging to the state Department of Public Safety, was also searched, but no evidence of a bullet or a stone was uncovered.

"The area was thoroughly searched, but nothing was found," said Capt. John Driscoll, commander of the Dallas Police Intelligence Division, which assisted in providing security for Mr. Ford. "There was no place for a shot to come from."

Mr. Hawthorne, the Secret Service agent, said that the shattering of the window was officially attributed by the service to "heat expansion." The temperature at the scene was in the low 90's.

Helicopters and ground units criss-crossed the area but found nothing. The police discounted the possibility that a stray bullet from a public gun range about a mile away could have caused the hole in the window.

Ford Belittles Incident

The driver, Patrolman Jim Bryan, was not available for comment, nor were the other occupants in the Plymouth sedan, Bob Waters, a detective with the Dallas Police Department, and a Secret Service agent identified only as Mr.



Associated Press

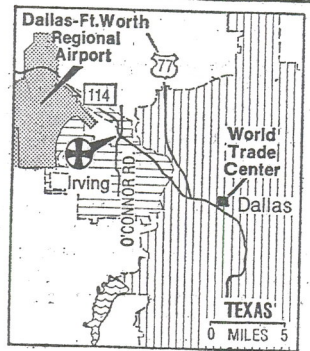
Jim Bryan of the Texas Department of Public Safety in the patrol car he was driving when window was broken.

Markley. Talking to newsmen after making his speech, Mr. Ford called the report of a shot fired at the motorcade "a wild rumor, an unfounded story."

Mr. Ford said that President Nixon had called him from Key Biscayne, Fla., for assurances that everything was all right. The bullet-proof limousine in which the Vice President rode was flown to Dallas yesterday.

A spokesman at the Florida White House said, "The President is pleased there are no injuries."

In a news conference before the dedication speech, Mr. Ford made no reference to the incident. He spoke instead about the impeachment inquiry, saying that the odds against an impeachment of the President "have fallen considerably" in



The New York Times/July 7, 1974

the last month and that the case "has fallen flat."

"I have detected a movement in the House that is more favorable to the President," he said.

"No impeachable offense" has been found with regard to any of the peripheral matters concerning Mr. Nixon, he said, adding that "the case has not been made" by the House Judiciary Committee connecting Mr. Nixon with a cover-up of the Watergate burglary.

In his trade center address, Mr. Ford urged Senate action on a House-passed trade bill that is now pending.

Later in the day Mr. Ford played golf with three prominent Dallas businessmen at a men-only club where not even women reporters were admitted.

Asked about this at the news conference, Mr. Ford said that he had no knowledge of the club's rules.