

## Alarm on Johnson Canceled by Police

By MARTIN ARNOLD

Within one minute after President Johnson's plane landed here yesterday, the police issued an alarm for a man who had previously threatened the President's life. It was retracted 10 minutes later.

The police said the alarm resulted from a colossal coincidence. One high-ranking officer attributed it to a Secret Service agent who "thought he was being sharp."

Air Force 1, the President's plane, touched down at Kennedy International Airport at 4:34 P.M. The President stepped from the plane, hatless, smiling and tanned, and waved jauntily to the crowd.

As he did so, William J. McQuade, the Police Department Chief of Staff, picked up a radio telephone and ordered the department to issue a citywide alarm for a man who had threatened Mr. Johnson's life. He was doing so, Mr. McQuade said, on the authority of the Secret Service.

The alarm was issued at exactly 4:35 P.M., for John Gunnison, alias John F. Rourke, alias Alan David Savage, 36 years old, and a white male, who stands 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighs 160 pounds. He was once described in a police alarm as "rummy looking."

Gunnison was said to be "armed and considered dangerous."

### Approach Motorcade

The President and his party, including Mrs. Johnson in a light blue linen suit and matching wide-brim hat, moved toward the Johnson car in a motorcade of 25 automobiles, two buses and 35 motorcycles.

The alarm continued to go out, describing Gunnison as a man with a dark complexion, hazel eyes and two upper eye teeth missing.

President Johnson's car left the airport at 4:37 P.M., up the Van Wyck Expressway and onto the Long Island Expressway. There, hundreds of surprised World's Fair visitors crowded an overpass connecting the two sections of the fair and watched the President pass below.

All other overpasses along the route had been cleared, except for police, and hundreds of officers lined the parkway leading into Manhattan. It was the usual police routine for a Presidential visit.

### Alarm Continues

The alarm continued to go out on the police radio—the suspect was said to be driving a white 1965 Chrysler, which he had stolen, and which had on it either New Mexico license plate 2A5409 or New York plate WH5262.

At the Queens Midtown Tunnel, the motorcade halted briefly to allow Secret Service men to remove the bubble top from the Presidential car.

At 4:45 P.M., 10 minutes after the alarm went on the air, its immediate annulment was ordered by Inspector McQuade.

Deputy Commissioner Joseph Martin said later that it was canceled because "unnecessary significance was attached to his routine alarm," resulting in intimations that President Johnson's life was in immediate danger.

The alarm was only meant to be a routine broadcast on a stolen car, Mr. Martin said.

He added later that a Secret Service agent who wanted to be "sharp" had connected the stolen-car alarm with the man who some time early last month had written the threatening letter to Mr. Johnson.

Unexplained was how a Secret Service agent at Kennedy Airport had suddenly, as the President's plane was landing, remembered an obscure routine stolen automobile alarm—at least a month old—from the thousands of similar alarms that are routinely broadcast by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### Official Version

The official police version of the flurry of excitement was that an overzealous police officer had mistakenly mentioned the threat on the President's life in what was supposed to be an alarm for the stolen car.

But this led to another question, which the police did not answer. Gunnison, the alleged suspect, was reported last seen on the West Coast or in Las Vegas. Why, then, was an alarm issued for him in New York at that precise moment? Why, for example, wasn't it issued yesterday?

The police said merely that Gunnison, a printer, who had a "New York background," had stolen the car here, and that it was only natural to issue an alarm for his arrest.

Gunnison also wrote the threatening letter to the President early last month, the police said.

While all this was going on, the police—as is normal on a Presidential visit—had cleared Mr. Johnson's route into the city of all vehicular traffic. This added to the delays caused by the heavy Fourth of July traffic.

### Drivers Slow Down to Look

Although traffic moving in the opposite direction was not stopped, it too became stalled as drivers slowed to catch a glimpse of the Johnsons.

At intersections in Manhattan, particularly near Rockefeller Center, the streets were clogged with homeward bound office workers gaping at the speedy motorcade.

Madison Square Garden was surrounded by police officers, and armed plainclothesmen were on the roofs nearby. Helicopters had followed the Presidential motorcade to the Garden from the airport.

A group calling itself "Youth Against War and Fascism" arrived at the Garden to picket, carrying signs reading "Johnson Talks Peace—Makes War."

The police shunted them across the street, behind barricades at the northeast corner of Eighth Avenue and 50th Street. One of the demonstrators, Brent H. Kramer, 20, of 222 Cherry Lane, River Edge, N. J., was given a summons for obstructing the sidewalk. It is returnable July 7 in Criminal Court. Fifty persons took part in the demonstration.