

# Richard Nixon's Brief Return to Washington

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Washington

After nearly 3½ years of exile in California, Richard M. Nixon was back in the city of his triumph and downfall yesterday to honor the man who nearly cost him the presidency they both wanted so much.

The 65-year-old former President came to the Capitol ceremonies for Senator Hubert H. Humphrey with a comet's-tail of Secret Service agents, a mammoth limousine and the staccato background of clicking cameras that had been his inevitable accompaniment in the days of his ascendancy. He was indisputably the celebrity of the morning, despite his dark suit and tie and nearly expressionless face that told neither eyes nor cameras anything about his feelings.

Nixon had left Washington on an August morning aboard a presidential aircraft that lost that status en route as Gerald Ford was sworn in as his successor. He returned on a cold, snow-specked evening aboard a commercial jet, where reporters and television crews were waiting, in vain. He was whisked away to the home of unidentified friends in Virginia where he is to stay.

He missed the reporters and the cameras and he also missed some pickets at Dulles International Airport Saturday night, not many, but bearing familiar signs reading: "Honk if You Think He Is Guilty" and "End the War."



President Carter posed with former Presidents Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon in the office of the senate minority leader before the start of the service for Humphrey

AP Wirephoto

awkward scene, according to another person who saw it. There was handshaking and muted greeting, and Ford kept calling Nixon "Mr. President," and so did everyone else.

Then the photographers came and took the historic picture of the three Presidents together, Nixon, Ford and Carter, standing side by side yesterday on this cold morning.

In the Rotunda, Nixon was ushered to a seat at the end of the second row of Very Important Chairs, beside Betty Ford.

Nixon had reportedly planned to make some sort of statement about Humphrey on his arrival, a reminiscence of some sort about their shared years in politics, in the Senate and in the vice presidency, but there was a concern that "other things" would inevitable come into it. So he decided to say nothing, to be as inconspicuous as possible, and as private.

At the end, Nixon spoke briefly to Mrs. Humphrey. Tricia Nixon Cox did too, and then they went out the way they had come in, father and daughter and Brennan and their protectors. The cars sped out of the Capitol grounds before the cortege carrying Hubert Humphrey's body to the plane waiting at Andrews Air Force Base had left.

He has apparently not even talked with old friends and associates during his brief visit, and plans to return to San Clemente this morning.

Yesterday morning, he arrived at the Senate side of the Capitol in his long, dark car about 10:30 a.m., the centerpiece of a dark nosegay

of Secret Service agents. His aide, Jack Brennan, was with him, and so was his elder daughter, Tricia Cox. Nixon was escorted up to the second-floor office occupied by

Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee, the Senate minority leader, where the most important of the many important people gathered to honor Humphrey were taken to

leave their coats and await the proper moment for their entrances. Ford and his wife were there, and Henry Kissinger, and the Nelson Rockefeller. It was a somewhat