

20 Aug 73

Nixon speaks to VFW convention in New Orleans. Motorcade route changed because Secret Service said it had learned of a "possible conspiracy" to assassinate Nixon, who is reported to have agreed to the change in the route. First reports name Edwin Gaudet as a member of this conspiracy - he had allegedly made a threat in a bar to kill Nixon - but New Orleans police superintendent and Secret Service very soon say the cases are unrelated. *over - 3*

Before entering the convention hall, Nixon "[shows] a rare public sign of strain." He turns suddenly from those escorting him, walks back until he reaches Ziegler, puts both hands on his shoulders and angrily spins him around and gives him a hard shove, saying, "I don't want any press with me - and you take care of it."

SFC [WXP] 21 Aug 73 (two stories)

over - A

William P. Rogers says at press conference in Washington that the United States must not become "so obsessed with security matters that laws are freely violated," specifically condemns the break-in at Dr. Fielding's office and says he does not believe the security considerations were sufficiently grave to justify it.

SFC [NYT] 21 Aug 73 (NYT filed Nix Ad)

Nixon (mental health) - "Rare questions about Nixon's mental and physical health were handled, to the surprise of reporters, in an almost routine fashion at a news briefing [21 Aug, San Clemente]. They stemmed from the President's unusual display of anger and lack of poise ... in New Orleans [20 Aug]. The incident was widely publicized and TV cameramen caught the scene on film which some stations later broadcast in slow motion. The film clip showed an angry Nixon and a stunned Ziegler. During his off-the-cuff remarks, the President also blew some of his lines and misquoted the Duke of Wellington. His eyes looked puffy *(over)* and some of his words were slurred, according to close *c* observers."

SFC 22 Aug 73 [UPI]

- "At times during his speech [to VFW] he seemed to stumble over his words in a way that he seldom has in the past."

NYT 21 Aug 73, Herbers - filed Nix AD

- See also John Osborne, New Republic 8 Sep 73.

A See also von Hoffman, WXP 24 Aug 73

John Osborne, New Republic 8 Sep 73

Entry 17 Nov 73 (slapping incident, Orlando, Fla.)

B Secret Service spokesman in WX, explaining agency's unusual announcement of possible threat to Nixon (the first time agency has ~~announced~~ publicly disclosed such a recommendation), says it was in anticipation of reporters' inquiries about change in plans; discounts speculation that announcement was made because the WH had initially refused to alter motorcade route for "political" reasons.

NYT 21 Aug 73, Crewdson

Rugaber (details of first reports on "threat")

Nixon is told of assassination plot by Haig "Sunday night" (19 Aug), asks for more information and is given report this morning by Secret Service, which recommends change in motorcade route, to which he agrees; ~~but~~ however, expresses displeasure about this during flight to New Orleans. At press conference 22 Aug says he "recommended just three days ago" [19 Aug?] that ~~the Secret Service protection for~~ the number of Secret Service ^{men} assigned to guard him be cut by one-third.

SFC [WXP] 22 Aug 73 (Post, Cannon)

NYT 23 Aug 73

c See entry 13 Sep 73, Nixon (physical health).