
Threats to Kidnap
Susan Agnew Were True

WASHINGTON — Despite Brazilian denials, the kidnaping threats on Susan Agnew's life while she was working on the SS HOPE in Maceio, Brazil, were true. Susan was whisked out of Brazil so fast, she had to leave her clothes behind.

Dr. William Walsh, the internationally known and highly respected founder and director of the traveling hospital ship, chewed out Dr. Dennis Lucey, HOPE's liaison man with the Brazilian police, for denying knowledge of the kidnaping scare.

"Not two weeks ago on the ship he sent a message to my quarters asking if I wanted to be advised whenever there was a kidnap threat on Susan Agnew and I told him 'no' because they came in regularly. That was his job. But Dennis, who had not seen the papers, thought I wanted it kept out of the press. We have been playing that down all year. We wanted to keep as much pressure as possible off the girl."

As for the denials issued by the Brazilians, Bill Walsh said, "The same man who was quoted as denying the story, Nobel Cuiabano, (the police officer in Maceio) was the one who used to warn us all the time about the threats. They get most of their information through informers. They have a very excellent internal security organization. We never disputed anything they told us. But I can understand why they deny it. They are concerned about their sources of information and they don't want terrorists thinking in terms of kidnaping foreigners. They try to soft-pedal the subject."

The Brazilians were concerned about Dr. Walsh's safety when he and his good-looking wife, Helen, were with the SS HOPE in Brazil, last year, he said. "They had two security men living in our house the entire time. They lived in the basement and they were armed all the time. They were assigned to us because the Brazilians leave nothing to chance and they are wise. And I am certainly not as important as the daughter of the Vice President."

Reporters who printed the denials could have checked them with Dr. Walsh. Maybe their failure to do so shows the current readiness to accept any discrediting story about this administration — which "at this point in time" is clearly understandable.

Susan, who loved working on the ship, hated to leave the friends she made there and plans to visit them as soon as they return. She received no special treatment. "I was the last one on board in my room so I got the top bunk and the smallest drawer. That's because the other two girls had arrived two days earlier. They kidded me about it all the time."

Along with \$300 a month for running all the audio-visual education equipment, she got Saturday afternoons and Sundays off when groups of six or eight would go to the beach and sometimes to a little

restaurant in Maceio or to the homes of their Brazilian counterparts. There were parties on the ship, too, generally to say goodbye or welcome to the new batch of 24 doctors that joined the staff every two months.

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Susan is so interested in Project HOPE now she plans to do volunteer work for it. She and her mother will attend the HOPE Ball here next Friday and she may go to New York for that gilt-edged, VIP-filled HOPE dinner at the Plaza Hotel on the 25th in honor of Henry Kissinger. The new secretary of state's name has such drawing power every one of the 700 seats at \$100 each were snapped up via the grapevine long before the invitations could be sent out. In fact, they never were mailed.

Nelson Rockefeller, Henry's former boss, will make the main speech at this affair where Kissinger will receive the HOPE Award for International Understanding before his beaming parents, his brother and wife, and his son and daughter. Of course, Henry's favorite female friend, Nancy Maginnis, who worked on the arrangements' committee, will be in evidence.

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The Democratic Party is still at odds with itself. Two factions scheduled two fund-raising parties Thursday at the same hour. At the request of the Democratic National Committee the Averell Harrimans staged a big gathering in their priceless art-lined Georgetown digs and multi-tiered garden to get people to kick in with some kick-off funds for the Nationwide Democratic telethon on the 15th.

But Gary Hart, the whiz kid who ran George McGovern's campaign, corraled Shirley MacLaine, her brother Warren Beatty, and whiz lawyer Edward Bennett Williams to stage a simultaneous party in Stewart Udall's "Overview" offices. Gary, who was raising money for his Colorado campaign for Sen. Ted Dominick's seat, offered "hors d'oeuvres, a signed copy of his new book 'Right From The Start' and an opportunity to chat" with the above — all for \$20, "And he didn't even check with the Democratic National Committee before scheduling it," wailed a faithful Democrat.

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President Nixon's friends are keeping their fingers crossed during this period because they remembered what he wrote in his book entitled "Six Crises." Nixon stated: "The easiest period in a crisis is actually the battle itself. The most difficult is the period of indecision — whether to fight or run away. And the most dangerous period is the aftermath. It is then that with all his resources spent and his guard down that an individual must watch for dull reactions and faulty judgments."

His friends regard the press conference as his decision to face the fight, and the period now as the aftermath.

Oddly, it was Richard Nixon who wrote in that book that "the conduct of Mr. Truman was hard to understand" regarding the infiltration of Communists in government. Nixon called Truman's attitude "sheer stubbornness in refusing to admit a mistake. He denied the evidence in front of him."