



ELIZABETH AND GERALD FORD
A kiss on the forehead after the nomination

AP Wirephoto

SFChronicle

OCT 13 1973

Gerald Ford's Little Secret

Washington

Yesterday was a long day for Gerald R. Ford.

Informed about 11 a.m. that he was among several finalists under consideration by President Nixon for nomination as vice president, Ford did not learn he was the man until about 7:30 p.m. (EDT) — 90 minutes before the public.

He and his wife had just finished a long-distance phone conversation with their son Michael, 23, away at school, and were having a steak dinner cooked by their daughter, Susan, 15.

It might be a good idea, Ford had been telling his wife, that she comb her hair — just in case.

Then came a call from the President, who paid his respects, and said his chief aide, General Alexander M. Haig, would come on the line.

"I am pleased to notify you and your wife the President will nominate you to the Congress to be the next vice president of the United States," said Haig.

"I am honored," Ford was quoted as replying.

Said his wife: "This is wonderful."

Mr. Nixon guarded the secret well.

A beaming Mr. Nixon entered the White House East Room shortly after 9 p.m., mounted the rostrum and, as the audience leaned forward, tantalizingly spoke of the state of the nation, the need for men of leadership and the qualities a vice president should have.

And then, Mr. Nixon said his selection was a man with 25 years in the House.

Every eye turned to Ford, his neighbors rose and started congratulating him and Mr. Nixon — laughing — cautioned against jumping to conclusions.

"Gentlemen, there are many men who served in Congress for that long," said Mr. Nixon.

But Ford, impassive until then, grinned broadly and the secret was out.

United Press