

Police Assess Theories on Ford Motorcade Incident

By WILLIAM ROBBINS

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DALLAS, July 7 — Texas police investigators continued today to investigate the mystery of a shattered car window in Vice President Ford's motorcade, which generated fears that the motorcade had been fired upon yesterday.

Mr. Ford was riding in a seven-vehicle motorcade from the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport to the new World Trade Center, which he was to dedicate, when the window of a trailing state police car shattered.

There was an "audible crack," and the driver, Patrolman James Bryan of the Texas Department of Public Safety, radioed ahead that he was under fire.

"I felt we had received fire through the side window," Patrolman Bryan said later.

A police helicopter and police cars and motorcycles im-

mediately converged on the field from which a sniper could have fired, but they found no evidence of a gunman's presence. And no one was injured.

Secret Service agents with the Vice President quickly ruled out a gunshot, but not before news bulletins, based on a police report, announced that a sniper attack had occurred.

The incident was particularly sensitive in Dallas. Mr. Ford was on the way to the same area that President Kennedy was headed for when he was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963. Local newspapers did not mention the coincidence however.

Immediately after the incident, Secret Service agents collected the shattered window and removed debris from the car's interior. But a spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety said that, before the glass could be examined by a crime lab expert, Secret

Service agents "trashed it"—threw it into a trash can.

The car—a 1974 Plymouth four-door sedan—was then taken to the public safety department's regional headquarters in Garland, Tex., where shards of glass were picked out of the floor carpet and off the seats and held for a possible examination at the state police crime laboratory in Austin.

The car was then fitted with a new window and was returned to service. Patrolman Bryan drove it today while providing motorcade security for the Vice President, who played a round of golf this morning at the Preston Trails Golf Club.

Four different theories about the cause of the incident circulated today among law enforcement officers here, with plausible explanations accompanying each one.

A state police spokesman

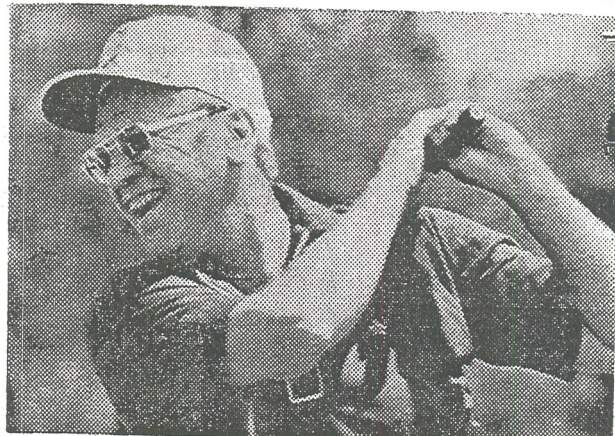
quoted Patrolman Bryan as saying he thought that a shot had been fired from a car meeting his in the westbound lane of State Highway 114 on the northern edge of Irving, Tex., a suburb of Dallas.

Police sources said that it was not unusual for "some drunk or other idiot" to take shots at oncoming traffic. The bullet could have glanced off the window and fragmented, leaving no evidence of its existence, the police said.

The Secret Service said the window had shattered because of heat expansion. They also said the car was new and was being used for the first time.

But Jerry L. Watson, a state police spokesman, said, "We don't go along with that [heat expansion] theory." He noted that the car had previously been standing in the shade and that its air-conditioning was on at the time of the incident.

"There was a hole the size of a fist," Mr. Watson said.



United Press International

Vice President Ford practicing his golf swing at the Preston Trails club in Dallas after speaking at the World Trade Center on Saturday.

"I never heard of heat causing anything like that."

The police also said the car had been in service since last February and that it had 12,000 miles on the odometer.

The state police leaned toward the theory that a rock

had been thrown up from the road by a passing car. The police noted that some heavy construction was going on in the area where the incident occurred, and that there were small piles of rock at the roadside.