The world's most jittery bodyguards are the Secret Service men who have sworn to use themselves as human shields, if necessary, to make sure that Richard M. Nixon won't become the nation's fifth assassinated President.

They take extreme precautions. For example, when President Nixon plays golf, agents with tommy guns hidden in golf bags are always posted on the course. Every rolling stone that could bounce over a previously announced route (as was the case when President Kennedy was assassinated) is checked out for marksman hidden inside.

• All packages coming into the White House are X-rayed.
• The 132-room executive mansion is also frequently checked with Geiger counters for radioactive dust that might be brought in, uncontrollably, by some of the more unusual analyses.
• Gifts of food to the President are nearly always destroyed because it would be too big a job to analyze the contents of each one for poison.
• When President Nixon plays golf, with clubs or without, every rolling stone that could become a threat is either destroyed or removed from the course. Every rolling stone that could become a threat is either destroyed or removed from the course.
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The Secret Service has a history of protecting the President from assassination. The mass of evidence that violence and assassination are an accepted part of the thinking of certain individuals and groups today has increased with the recent murders of President Kennedy, President Reagan, and others. The agents are taught that the life of the President of the United States is in very real and constant danger.

The Secret Service is always prepared for any eventuality. The agents are always on guard, always ready to protect the President at all costs. They are the first line of defense against any threat to the President's safety.

The Secret Service has been responsible for many successful operations to protect the President from assassination. They have prevented many attempts on the President's life, and have saved many lives in the process. The Secret Service is a vital part of the nation's security, and is always ready to protect the President at all costs.
SOLID PROTECTION: Secret Service men surround President Nixon’s car as it passes shouting group of antiwar protesters in Washington, D.C.

- In addition, Secret Service agents are unobtrusively planted at as many tables as possible during such dinner affairs, and they are trained to smile and chitchat just as though they were genuine guests. But all the while they are keeping watch for any suspicious moves by their table companions. They also carry small mug shots of potential troublemakers or have memorized their faces.
- A check is made of all elevator cables to see that no would-be assassin has tampered with them; chandeliers are examined to see that no one has cut partway through the wires, and bomb searches are made quietly in all parts of the hotel throughout the day before the President arrives and are continued until he has left.
- Samples of all food to be eaten by the President at a banquet are sent to a laboratory for analysis the day before — and the food is then kept under guard until it is served.
- Some agents wear devices that look like hearing aids. These can pick up radio frequencies that might be used to communicate with a would-be assassin.

In addition to the 36 agents on duty at the White House, others are assigned to the President’s Key Biscayne, Fla., residence and still others to the West Coast “White House” in San Clemente, Calif., Rowley said.

Because of all the precautions taken, guarding the President is a nerve-wracking task.

"Every President has had dangerous habits," said one agent. "President Truman took long walks every morning on the streets of Washington."

Two Puerto Rican fanatics attempted to kill Truman on Nov. 1, 1950, by trying to shoot their way into Blair House, his temporary Washington residence. One fanatic was wounded and the other slain, along with an Armed Forces guard.

President Nixon, who frequently makes surprise appearances before groups of people, can be an especially hard man to protect. As one agent put it, "He has no fear for his own personal safety."

Other agents, who for security reasons cannot be quoted by name, called Nixon "an assassin’s dreamboat" who is "too brave for his own good."

— PETER THOMPSON