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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#321

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 11:35 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 15, 1975

MONDAY

MR. GREENER: Good morning.

I think most of you have already heard this, but on the official events in the White House, there should be an official announcement.

The President and Mrs. Ford are pleased to announce the birth of ninetuplets to their close personal friend and house guest, Liberty. The First Dog went into labor shortly after noon on Sunday. The first puppy was born at 12:30, the ninth puppy was born at 8:17 p.m.

I think you know all the other details. As for the question of pictures, we are trying to work with it, but Liberty's trainer would prefer to wait a few days, for the puppies' health.

Q How are the mother and puppies doing?

MR. GREENER: The mother and puppies are doing well.

Q How is the father?

MR. GREENER: The father is proud. As most of you know, the proud father is Misty's Sungold Lad. He is a ten-year old golden retriever from Medford, Oregon, and I am told he has 400 other children by previous marriages. (Laughter)

I don't believe we have announced the California trip officially.

The President will make a trip to Oklahoma and California on Friday, September 19, and return to Washington on Monday, September 22. I think we will have a full posting on it, which will be given out right after the briefing.

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Q Do you want to tell us any other future travel in the next two weeks?

MR. GREENER: That is all I have right now.

Q Is this a political trip he is making?

MR. GREENER: There is a fund-raiser in Oklahoma.

Q For who?

MR. GREENER: The Oklahoma State party.

Q Bill, the President's speech in Dallas to the Republican Women's Federation sounded remarkably like that of a candidate. Was that paid for by the Ford Committee or by the National Committee?

MR. GREENER: It was paid for by the National Committee.

Q Is there any thought being given to changing that formula or assessing that against the President?

MR. GREENER: No, he spoke as head of the party.

Q How would you tell the difference between such a speech and a speech delivered as a candidate. Is he going to decide? Does he start charging off to the President Ford Committee when he deems himself in the role of a candidate?

MR. GREENER: He was invited to speak to that particular convention by the Republican National Committee as head of the party.

Q But Ronald Reagan's expenses are not paid by the Republican National Committee in a case like that, are they?

MR. GREENER: I don't know.

Q On Friday, there was kind of an unnoticed tongue-lashing that Chairman Otis Pike gave to the Administration as Chairman of the House Intelligence Activities Committee. He had three Administration members there, and he tongue-lashed them pretty thoroughly on not turning out documents and used the word "dictatorship."

I wonder if the Administration would have some riposte to that?

MR. GREENER: The President addressed the point, I believe, in St. Louis, and I have nothing to add to that statement he made there.

Q What was that?

MR. GREENER: That we have worked with the Pike Committee in good faith and that he had given both classified and unclassified information to the House select committee. We did so obviously on the condition that highly sensitive material would not be released, and the material would be dealt with in a responsible fashion.

Q What about a news conference this week?

MR. GREENER: There is a possibility, as Ron said on Air Force One. I have nothing to announce.

Q Could you give us a fix on a better --

MR. GREENER: I can't at this time, Helen.

Q It would be Washington, if it is to be held, would it not?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

As you know, the President is now meeting with members of the Farm Bureau, the Executive Committee. John Carlson is in the meeting, and if possible, directly after the meeting, will bring the head of the Farm Bureau and Secretary Butz down to answer your questions on the meeting.

Q Back to the question on political trips. What is the device by which the President or someone will determine when the President Ford Committee starts paying for travel?

MR. GREENER: When he starts traveling as a candidate.

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Q But does he put himself in the role of candidate and say, "I am now travelling as a Presidential candidate?"

MR. GREENER: I think it will be clear, Mort, when he does.

Q But he will go to the same sort of meeting he went to on Saturday and the only difference will be he decided he was a candidate, whereas we think he is a candidate already. I mean, who will decide?

MR. GREENER: First of all, there is a law under which he operates. There is a Federal Election Commission which makes decisions under that. The President has already stated he intends to operate both under the letter and the intent of that law, and he will.

If there is any question on that area, this itself would be, if necessary, ultimately decided by them.

Q When he does begin campaigning as a candidate for office, will he charge to his campaign committee the expenses of going to such events as White House Regional Conferences?

MR. GREENER: I don't think so. I will have to specifically check that but I can't imagine it. It is an official function.

Q Does the President have any reaction to the editorial observation in the New York Times today that this country cannot afford a Tuesday through Thursday President other than the fact he is here on Monday, today, which is, perhaps, unusual?

MR. GREENER: None, except what the President has already stated and stated clearly in St. Louis that he feels it is the job of the President to go to the people, which he stated, Ted, and that he plans to continue.

Q Bill, when the President goes to California, will he see the former President?

MR. GREENER: We have nothing on the schedule at this time.

Q Does he hope to see him?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge.

Q Incidentally, did he have any communication with the former President after the Sacramento incident?

MR. GREENER: No, not to my knowledge.

Q Is there a meeting scheduled with Shimon Peres, the Israeli Defense Minister, when he is here. If so, can you tell us when?

MR. GREENER: I don't know, we will check.

Q Is there anything new on the kidnapping

MR. GREENER: No, just the details on it. The President, as you know, is being kept informed and we are, of course, in contact with the Ethiopian Government.

Q Have we learned what it is all about yet?

MR. GREENER: We have received some information from the Eritrean Liberation Front with some demands. They have since claimed --

Q Through what channel?

MR. GREENER: Straight press release -- American officials have been unable to establish any contact with them at this point.

Q Is the American Embassy trying to in Ethiopia or have they been barred by Kissinger from any contact?

MR. GREENER: I think in a situation such as this, I am not going to get into any negotiations they are doing.

Q What is the latest on energy? What is the White House view of where we stand right now? What negotiations are going on?

MR. GREENER: At this point, as you know, the Senate and House are in recess today. The Senate will return tomorrow and at such time we hope they will immediately take up the proposal of the 45-day extension.

Q Will we have some people in here tomorrow?

MR. GREENER: We have none scheduled at this time.

Q In view of the President's reputation for candor, can you tell us why, in the speech to the Republican women, he referred to the 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown vs. Board of Education as being the foundation of racial busing? There was nothing in Brown vs. Board of Education about busing. Indeed, that was a development of subsequent court cases. It seems the President was using a little political license there, wasn't he?

MR. GREENER: I don't know, Walt, I will have to check on it.

Q Do you remember the speech?

MR. GREENER: Yes, but I don't remember the reference and will have to check.

Q I don't think the decision had anything to do with busing.

MR. GREENER: I don't know, I will have to check.

Q I remember on more than one occasion over the weekend, I think he said there has to be a better way to achieve quality education and he listed some of the things -- better pupil-teacher ratio, better classroom conditions, and so forth. Is he saying that this is the way to do it instead of busing?

MR. GREENER: What he has said in the past on several occasions, Ted, is that he feels there are better ways to achieve quality education than through forced busing.

Q I understand, but he was asked about busing and he says there are better ways to achieve it. Does he mean to suggest this should be done instead of busing?

MR. GREENER: Even the court's decision listed other ways that should be tried and that the forced busing was a last resort. That is all he said. He also said that it is the law of the land and where it is so decided, he would live up to the law of the land.

Q People around here were saying a couple of weeks ago while the President's position on busing was well-known, while he had stated it on many occasions, he had no intention of making it a political issue. It was pointed out by aides, Mr. Ford had never made a speech on busing or mentioned it except in response to news queries and things like that. By Saturday in Dallas, he was speaking to a very large political convention. I just wonder, does this mean the President does plan to make this a campaign issue in 1976 and this is something we will be hearing more about?

MR. GREENER: I have no indication that he will be, Bob.

Q Do you think he might propose something, some alternative to busing or will he come out for a Constitutional amendment against busing, or anything like that?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing to indicate he is coming out for any Constitutional amendment. I will have to check on the other things for you.

Q What did he mean when he said we must find a better way?

Q That is what he said, there are better ways.

MR. GREENER: I think he meant it is his intent, as he has stated in the past, we will find better ways to achieve quality education and listed several he thinks should be tried.

Q Bill, in the week that has followed the opening of schools in Boston and Louisville, has the President conveyed to anybody, including Secretary Mathews, his impression of the way things went and his attitude toward his role of the Justice Department in the advance planning for both of those cities?

MR. GREENER: He has been in touch with them and continually briefed on the situation by the Justice Department, as you know.

Q Is the President under the impression that the court has ordered busing in Boston, Louisville, Denver and Indianapolis and so forth because those school districts did not have a desirable teacher-pupil ratio or that the classrooms were inadequate or somehow they were not spending enough for textbooks or any of the other things he mentioned as being ways to achieve a better quality education?

MR. GREENER: I think that the President's words speak for themselves. He said there were better ways to do it, and he would like to see some of them tried.

Q Instead of busing, is that what you are saying?

MR. GREENER: Instead of--but busing as a last alternative, which is exactly what the court decision was, isn't it.

Q Which court decision?

MR. GREENER: I mean the court rule, excuse me.

Q But it has nothing to do with the quality of education in that particular district, does it? The Federal court decisions ordering busing have nothing to do with the quality of education in any district, do they?

MR. GREENER: Why would they rule it, then?

Q It has to do with segregation and integration, and not with teacher-pupil ratios.

MR. GREENER: It isn't for the purpose of achieving quality education?

Q No, it is for the purpose of wiping out segregation.

Q Who says it is?

MR. GREENER: Certainly the law that was passed said so, didn't it?

Q Is that a question or an answer, that the law said so?

MR. GREENER: The law said the purpose was to achieve quality education.

Q What law is this?

MR. GREENER: In formulating a remedy for denial of equal education opportunity --

Q Equal, equality, not quality?

MR. GREENER: There were a number of options listed, and that is exactly what the President has said should be tried.

Q You said a minute ago, Bill, that even the court's decision said that other ways should be tried and that forced busing was a last resort.

MR. GREENER: It was an incorrect statement. I should have said the law itself gave it under the decision made.

Q What law?

MR. SHUMAN: The 1974 amendments, the Esch amendments to the law in 1974.

Q They were amendments to what?

MR. GREENER: I am not sure of the exact title. We will check on it.

Q Since the Secretary has already set the precedence of voluntary appearance before a House committee, would you anticipate that he might repeat that sort of appearance if he is accused, the way he was the other day?

MR. GREENER: I have no anticipation of any repeat appearance before the Congress at this time.

Q Bill, have the St. Louis police given you any information about the status of the search for this man with the 45 pistol that was spotted in Keil Auditorium? Has the President been briefed on any of that? Are there any later developments?

MR. GREENER: No later updates for the President or for us, but possibly the Secret Service has, Bob.

Q Is it true the President will travel some part of every week from now until Christmas?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Which weeks will he not travel? (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: We will announce trips as we get them.

Q Could you tell us, Bill, what the President plans to do with the nine puppies? Does he plan to give them away?

MR. GREENER: It is my understanding the family will keep at least one, and I do not have the details on the others.

Q Has he had a meeting yet on the ERFCO proposal?

MR. GREENER: No, he has not.

Q Will Kennerly not get one of the puppies now that the relations between him and the President -- (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: You will have to ask the owner of the pups, or David. I don't know.

Q Back to the travel. None of the editorial criticism or anything has made the President change his mind in any way on his travel plans?

MR. GREENER: No, we have no changes in travel plans.

Q Bill, was the President told about the revelation by Senator Proxmire over the weekend that in September of 1974, when there was supposed to be a strict holddown on the use of fuel and on waste of energy, that the Navy used 64 aircraft to fly 1,334 officers to Las Vegas for a reunion of a private, nongovernmental organization? Has he caught up with that information, or that news? Has he been apprised of that?

MR. GREENER: I don't know, Ted. That is the first I have heard of it. I will check it.

Q It is on the wires.

MR. GREENER: Obviously, or else you wouldn't have it. (Laughter)

Q Quite apart from that, isn't it a fact, also, that Senator Proxmire informed the Administration of this over the weekend?

MR. GREENER: Ted, I just said I don't know. I will check and get back to you. I have nothing on it.

Q Speaking of the Navy, has the President taken a position yet on this Cat Futch, the go-go dancer who caused the --

MR. GREENER: Not while it is under appeal.

Q Bill, has the President made any comment on it? Is he aware of it?

MR. GREENER: He is aware of it and has made no comment.

Q What did he say when he saw that print?
(Laughter)

MR. GREENER: You don't want an answer, Bob.

Q Yes, I do.

MR. GREENER: I have nothing to say.

Q Where is the real Press Secretary today?

MR. GREENER: The real Press Secretary is in California, and he has gone out to California to work with the advance teams prior to our trip there and also to work with some editorial boards. Before he takes too much blame for that, let me point out I was the one that encouraged either he or I to make one of the trips in advance to avoid a repeat of the problem we had in New Hampshire, Jim, to see if we could do whatever we could to see that we, at least, built in proper filing times and facilities.

Q How long do you think we can keep him out there?

MR. GREENER: You will have to ask him, Bob. He is meeting us when we arrive there.

Q Can we attribute any problems on this future trip to Ron Nessen directly?

MR. GREENER: No, you can attribute them all to me, Phil.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Bill.

END (AT 11:55 A.M. EDT)