

April 23, 1975

**POOL REPORT: #1
AIR FORCE ONE**

At about 9:50 A. M. the President, wearing his flight jacket, came back to the press section bearing a blue leather folder. He was looking for Cleve Ryan, who was fast asleep. The President woke him up and launched into remarks aimed at Cleve (Gloucester, Massachusetts's finest son). "How many Presidents have you asked to be appointed postmaster of Gloucester?" Cleve answered, "All the way from Eisenhower." The President said, "I can't appoint you under new procedures as postmaster of Gloucester, but I do have some authority involving some equipment and some facilities at the White House. So I decided to appoint you postmaster of Air Force One." Cleve, beaming, responded, "Beautiful!" The President gave him an official certificate, which he read.

"The President of the United States of America, I, Gerald R. Ford, reposing special trust in you and the Irish do hereby designate Cleveland D. Ryan of Gloucester, Massachusetts, Postmaster of Air Force One for an indeterminant period, consistent with your proficiencie in answering the postman's credo." It was dated Arpil 22, 1975.

Cleve said, "I finally made it! I'm the only flying postmaster in the world." Nessen asked for a roll of 10-cent stamps; Dick Growald gave him a postcard to mail. The President suggested that he make a speech. Cleve said, "I feel very honored. I'm not very good at making speeches, but I'm a helluva good vote getter."

Asked about salary, the President said, "We'll have to negotiate that." Ford remarked that his son Mike, who is at a seminary near Gloucester, is going to work in that area this summer.

Ford reminded Cleve of the postman's creed, to which Cleve replied, "Yeah, and you can always say I was the first one to deliver the Gloucester Times to you."

Cleve, 62, who has been a lighting technician at the White House since 1934, said as Ford left, "I can't go any higher, everything is downhill from here."

Air Force One left Andrews at 8:36 A. M., earlier than scheduled "just to get an early start on the day," says Nessen. The President met with Rumsfeld and Scowcroft before leaving the White House.

Aboard AF-1: Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, Jr. (D-La.); Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D-La.); Rep. David C. Treen (R-La.); Rep. Lindy Boggs (D-La.); Sec. of Navy J. William Middendorf, II; and staff including Hartmann, Nessen, Cheney, Zarb, O'Donnell, Milt Friedman, Dr. Lukash, Kennerly, Lt. Cmdr. Steven Todd (military aide).

Asked if President will wear special clothes, Nessen quoted him as saying, "I have an old pair of hush puppies," which he will be wearing. Purpose of the visit to the oil rig? Nessen said the President "is just fascinated and very interested in all these new energy things he proposed." This follows visits to Elk Hills and geothermal facility in California -- anticipates a visit to a solar energy example. Nessen says the President believes that you can look at all the charts and maps but you cannot get the best understanding unless you see it yourself.

Aside from the trip, Nessen gave a list of books the President has read recently. On Monday evening after the CBS interview he finished Hersey's "Hiroshima." Before this one, he had read Dan Rather's "The Palace Guard. (No report of his comments.) And George Reedy's "Twilight of the Presidency" (given to him by Maggie Hunter of N. Y. Times during Ford's Vice Presidency). Also three books on Gerald R. Ford, Ter Horst's, Bud Vestalo's, and a paperback that came out when Ford was named Vice President (not by Winter-Berger).

(MORE)

He has been reading a good deal of history, Nessen reports, dipping into several volumes on Thomas Jefferson (Brody's and others), Gore Vidal's "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee", and others. Also a number of books on Vietnam, including two by Bernard Fall, "Street Without Joy," and "Hell in a Very Small Place," and Halberstam's "Best and Brightest."

Nessen also gave a run-down on other reading. "He is an omniverous newspaper reader." Starts day about 5:15 A. M. with Washington Post, followed by news summary and intelligence reports, read N. Y. Times with breakfast and with television news running at low volume. Behind desk in Oval Office are more newspapers and magazines. Between appointments he reads Time and Newsweek, other magazines. Also dips into the Baltimore Sun, N. Y. News, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal and Christian Science Monitor. In afternoons he gets the Washington Star, St. Louis Post Dispatch and Grand Rapids Press. On planes, when local newspapers are put aboard, he almost always dips into them in his cabin.

In response to questions, Nessen said President anticipated 95 percent of questions asked in CBS interview. He said reasons for stopping short of firmly declaring candidacy are two: when you become an announced candidate, "other things come into play" and when you become an announced candidate "all your actions and statements become suspect as political." Nessen says President feels there is a difference in being an announced candidate and stopping barely short, as Ford has done.

P. S. Mr. Ford was last in New Orleans, August 5, 1974 -- 4 days before he became President.

Bonnie Angelo, Ann Compton, E. A. Poe

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