

MARCH 5, 1976

POOL REPORT #2

LINCOLN HOME, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Uneventful trip from airport to the Lincoln home; virtually no crowds along the route. Police estimated the crowd around the home at about 5,000. Ford entered the home from the rear, walked through the kitchen, to a sitting room, past the entrance foyer and into the "formal parlor," where the superintendent of the site, Albert W. Banton, Jr., told the President that he was standing in the room where a committee called on Lincoln to inform him he had been nominated for President. Ford pointed to a small rocking chair and footstool and said, "his long legs stretched out from that chair." Then the pool was ushered out and the President stayed inside for about ten minutes before emerging at 12:05 p.m.

The pool noted two hostile signs in the crowd: "fat cats for Ford", and "we beg your pardon". After the speech the President worked the crowd for about ten minutes. The crowd immediately surrounding the President was mostly kids let out of school for the morning. Several times Ford was being pulled in two directions by the surging crowds and had to admonish them: "Take it easy...take it easy."

On the way back to his limousine behind the home, Ford stopped to chat with men dressed in the uniform (civil war era) of the 7th Illinois cavalry. One of the cav's "officers" said the President had promised to invite them to the 1977 inaugural parade. The President also shook hands with a drum and bugle corps from Sacred Heart Elementary School. Just before leaving the President was given a photograph of Lincoln in front of his home. We presume that it may have been a photo taken at his farewell address because of the large crowd in the picture, but we do not know for sure. Ford said it would be prominently displayed in his private study at the White House. He also said, "you fellas do a fine job. I'm an old has been of the Park Service"--a reference to his stint as a summer ranger at Yellowstone National Park eons ago.

As the motorcade pulled out from behind the home, your poolers noticed that an agent facing the rear in the backup car behind the Presidential limousine was cradling a submachine gun beneath his olive-green topcoat.

On the two minute drive to the hotel, Ford and Congressman Findley stood in the limousine and waved to the moderately heavy crowds. At the hotel, he worked a fairly good crowd in the lobby to the accompaniment of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Hold That Tiger", played by two bands--one a group of Shriners and the others dressed up like a bunch of clowns.

Ed Walsh - Washington Post
Tom DeFrank - Newsweek

#