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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS

The Briefing Room

(3:37 P.M. EST)

MR. GERGEN: Good afternoon. This is to confirm the statements made at George Washington hospital that the President was shot once in the left side, this afternoon, as he left the hotel.

His condition is stable.

A decision is now being made whether or not to operate to remove the bullet. The White House and the Vice President are in communication. And the Vice President is now en route to Washington. He is expected to arrive in the city this afternoon.

Mrs. Reagan is currently with the President at the hospital. For your background, we anticipate that press statements, additional press statements, will be forthcoming from the hospital site.

I'd like to add two notes. We have been informed by Jim Baker that the President walked into the hospital.

I would also like to inform you that in the building as of the moment are the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General as well as other assistants to the President.

Q What building, the hospital?

MR. GERGEN: No, in this building.

Q Do you have any condition on Brady, on Jim Brady?

MR. GERGEN: I'm sorry, we do not. We would like to get that for you as rapidly as possible.

Q Will the Vice President act as President under these conditions?

MR. GERGEN: No. Because of the delicacy of the situation we wanted to inform you that the Vice President is on his way back to Washington.

I would emphasize once again that the President's condition is stable and that we were informed by Jim Baker that he did walk into the hospital.

Q Could he have been hit by a ricochet? Is there any chance that he was hit by a ricochet?

MR. GERGEN: I'm sorry, we simply don't have enough information that is hard at this moment.

MORE

Q Is the President conscious now? Is the President conscious?

MR. GERGEN: I'm sorry, I do not know the information on that so I'm really not able to respond.

Let me say this, let me just emphasize this for your background: the folks at the hospital are obviously closer to this

MORE

situation from a moment-to-moment basis and we are here. We are obviously in very close communication with them and we will try to keep you informed here. But that the primary statement, we expect, will be coming from the hospital because we feel that they are closer to the facts.

Q Who is there, David, at the hospital?

MR. GERGEN: Well, as of the moment, in addition to Mrs. Reagan as I've informed you and others -- Mike Deaver, as you know, and Dave Fisher were with the President at the time. Four people went up together, Ed Meese, Jim Baker, Larry Speakes and Lyn Nofziger went together to the hospital -- oh, I'm not sure of the time. Frankly, the time of these events have run together somewhat.

But we will try to keep you posted here as well as we can. I think you all understand the delicacy of the situation. I simply don't want to report facts that we're uncertain of as of the moment.

This is really to confirm what has been said from the hospital already.

Q David, do you know whether there's any plans to move the President to Bethesda, or Walter Reed, or is he going to stay at George Washington?

MR. GERGEN: I cannot answer either of those questions. We will, as soon as we get additional information, we will obviously try to help you.

I think if you'll be patient, as the situation demands, we will try to get as much information for you as possible.

Q Dave, is the President under any sedation?

MR. GERGEN: I cannot answer that. I really would like -- we basically wanted to let you know where we were as of the moment. We will try to let you have further information as we can. Thank you very much.

Q What time with the Vice President arrive?

MR. GERGEN: Later this afternoon.

END

3:42 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS
BY LARRY SPEAKES

The Briefing Room

(4:09 P.M. EST)

MR. SPEAKES: Mainly I wanted to come here to let you know that I will be present here throughout. Lyn Nofziger's at the hospital. He will be making statements from there. We will have the same information here.

I can only say what we said earlier, that the President has a gunshot wound in the left side of the chest, is in stable condition.

Jim Brady has been shot. It is a head wound. We have no information on his condition.

That's the extent --

Q Is the President in surgery?

Q Are they in surgery yet?

MR. SPEAKES: I can't say.

Q Is Brady?

Q We have gotten confirmed reports, so have other network news, so have the wires, can't you help us with that, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: As soon as we can confirm it we will, and I just --

Q Larry, his brother's been called by the White House and has been told that the President is in surgery right now, that he's already had blood transfusions. Is your information going to be that far behind what we're getting from other sources?

MR. SPEAKES: Lesley, we will do our very best to keep it up. As you know, earlier when I was out here, our initial report was that the President was not hit. That's what we run into when we try to give information when we are not hundred percent sure or we don't have it from the source. We do have somebody there with the President. I will be here. I just wanted to let you know I'll come down every 15 or 20 or 30 minutes just to let you know exactly what we know and will also let you know when we don't have any further information.

Q Is that the extent of what you know, what you've just said now, is that the extent of what you know?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the extent of what I can say at this point.

Q Can you check on the surgery and come back?

MORE

Q Could you confirm the surgery report with a phonecall or something?

MR. SPEAKES: I will.

Q Not 15 minutes, but a few minutes?

Q Larry, can you give us an understanding of how serious the chest wound is?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Do you have any idea? There are reports that it punctured the lung.

MR. SPEAKES: We can't confirm that yet. We've talked to the doctors but, you know, we cannot confirm that yet.

Q Larry, can you confirm reports that Jim is in surgery now?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q What process does the United States government go through with foreign governments when something like this occurs?

MR. SPEAKES: Jerry, there is a notification process and I think the State Department has moved on that.

Q Has the U.S. military been placed on any higher readiness?

MR. SPEAKES: Not that I'm aware of. There were some questions about the Vice President. I understand he was in Texas today. He is returning. He's expected to arrive at Andrews around 8:00 o'clock this evening according to the information that I have now. He has been informed, he is in communication.

Q Would he assume emergency powers?

Q Will there be a division of labor of any kind?

MR. SPEAKES: Not that I'm aware of. We just haven't crossed those bridges yet.

Q What's the nature of the notification that the State Department is making with foreign governments?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sure it's a notification to indicate that the President is in stable condition.

Q Who's running the government right now?

Q If the President goes into surgery and goes under anaesthesia, would Vice President Bush become the acting President at that moment or under what circumstances does he?

MR. SPEAKES: I cannot answer that question at this time.

Q How about the crisis management team? Would that come into effect?

Q Larry, what is the consideration is not keeping us

more up to date on the President's condition? We know he's in surgery and no one seems to be able to come out and confirm it. Why the time lag?

MR. SPEAKES: Lesley, I would assure you there is no reason except we want to be completely sure of our facts.

Q Well, is the President's surgery a fact?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sorry, I cannot do it from here at this time.

Q What can you tell us about the gunman who's in custody?

MR. SPEAKES: Absolutely nothing. That would have to come from Secret Service or the police.

Q Larry, who'll be determining the status of the President and whether the Vice President should, in fact, become the acting President?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Who will be determining the status of the President --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the details on that.

Q Larry, what's the note say?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll let you know shortly.

Q Listen, will you announce it each time you come out here, Larry?

END

4:25 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS
BY
SECRETARY HAIG

The Briefing Room

4:14 P.M. EST

SECRETARY HAIG: I just wanted to touch upon a few matters associated with today's tragedy. First, as you know, we are in close touch with the Vice President who is returning to Washington. We have in the Situation Room all of the officials of the Cabinet who should be here and ready at this time.

We have informed our friends abroad of the situation, the President's condition as we know it, stable, now undergoing surgery. And there are absolutely no alert measures that are necessary at this time we're contemplating.

Now, if you have some questions, I'll be happy to take them.

Q The Crisis Management, is that going to be put into effect when Bush arrives?

SECRETARY HAIG: The Crisis Management is in effect.

Q Who is making the decisions for the government right now? Who's making the decisions?

SECRETARY HAIG: Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State in that order and should the President decided he wants to transfer the helm to the Vice President, he will do so. He has not done that. As of now, I am in control here, in the White House, pending return of the Vice President and in close touch with him. If something came up, I would check with him, of course.

Q What is the extent of the President's injury?

SECRETARY HAIG: Well, as best we know, he's had one round enter his body, in the left side, into the left lung and there is surgery underway to remove the round now. When the President entered surgery, he was conscious. His signs were stable. And the situation is very clear.

Q Did you talk with him by phone before surgery?

SECRETARY HAIG: No, I did not nor was it necessary. I was in close touch with both Mr. Maese and Mr. Baker throughout and have been from --

Q Mr. Secretary, approximately when did you arrive at the White House after following --

SECRETARY HAIG: Very few moments after the incident, very few moments after the incident

Q And do you know what is the condition of Mr. Brady?

SECRETARY HAIG: We understand that -- I just saw on

television what you saw and it sounds serious.

Q What's the reaction of the Soviets on this?
Any reaction?

SECRETARY HAIG: I don't anticipate any reaction.
I think you've gotten all that you need for the moment. In fact --

Q Will you remain in charge here until the Vice
President returns?

SECRETARY HAIG: We will stay right where we are until
the situation clarifies.

Q How long has the President been in surgery, sir?

Q When is the Vice President expected here?

Q 8:00.

SECRETARY HAIG: Later this afternoon.

Q Do you know when the operation began on the President,
about what time?

Q Will he go to the hospital?

SECRETARY HAIG: Was I here? Yes.

Q What time?

SECRETARY HAIG: What time was the -- I don't know. Just
it was shortly after that announcement that you heard on the --

Q What time will the Vice President be back, sir?

Q Early evening.

SECRETARY HAIG: I'm not going to make it a habit of
saying what I --

Q Will you come back and talk to us soon?

Q Mr. Secretary, any additional measures being taken --
was this a conspiracy or was this a --

SECRETARY HAIG: We have no indications of anything like
that now, and we are not going to say a word on that subject until the
situation clarifies itself.

Q Do you anticipate from what you know of the President's
condition that the Vice President will have to for a period of time
take the role of acting President?

Q That's a fundamentally premature question,

END

(4:22 P.M. EST)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Washington, D.C.)

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS
BY LYN NOFZIGER

Ross Hall,
George Washington University Hospital,
Washington, D.C.

(5:10 P.M. EST)

MR. NOFZIGER: I have two bits of information here. The first concerns the President. He went into surgery roughly an hour ago. He is still there and will be there for a while longer. However, the doctors have come out and given a preliminary report to Mrs. Reagan and their word is that his condition is good and it is stable.

Beyond that, I have no further comments.

Regarding Jim Brady, the Press Secretary, he is still in surgery. He has a head wound and beyond that I have no further knowledge.

Q What kind of operation are you performing -- or is the doctor performing on the President?

MR. NOFZIGER: I think that we'll just let it go that he is in surgery and it is -- well, I think we'll just let it go at that.

Q Can you confirm it or not that Brady has suffered a serious head wound?

MR. NOFZIGER: I can confirm that Mr. Brady suffered a serious head wound, yes.

Q Where is Vice President Bush?

MR. NOFZIGER: Last I heard, he was on an airplane headed this way.

Q Are you going to arrange a medical briefing for us later today?

MR. NOFZIGER: We will try to arrange one after the President is out of surgery and after we've talked to them. Yes, we will try to do that.

Now, one further thing. We will continue to keep you posted here this afternoon and tonight. Tomorrow we expect to move the briefings back down to the White House and do them in their regular -- in the regular setting there.

Q How about the other men who were shot?

MR. NOFZIGER: I have no information on them.

One at a time.

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Q Was the bullet inside the President? Is that why they went in and was there more than one bullet?

MR. NOFZIGER: There was only one bullet and I just cannot comment on the operation. I haven't had a chance to talk to the doctors.

Q Who is the President's doctor?

MR. NOFZIGER: I do not have a name.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: The only thing that I want to say is that he will be in there for a while yet.

Q Do you know whether or not the lung collapsed because of the wound?

MR. NOFZIGER: I have not heard. As I say, the doctors say his condition is good.

Q Lyn, did you get to see him before the operation began?

MR. NOFZIGER: Did she?

Q Yes.

MR. NOFZIGER: Yes.

Q Is there any thought of transferring the President to any other hospital?

MR. NOFZIGER: We'll just wait and see. You're a little premature.

Q Can you confirm that it's open chest surgery?

MR. NOFZIGER: No, I can't.

Q Lyn, did they give you a specific location on the bullet? How close to the heart did it come?

MR. NOFZIGER: My preliminary reports were that it entered the left chest and clearly it did not -- no, I can't. It did not, obviously -- there is no indication that it nicked the heart or anything like that.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: I can't tell you.

Q Was the President conscious before the surgery or did he lose consciousness?

MR. NOFZIGER: He was conscious as he went into surgery.

Q Did he say anything?

MR. NOFZIGER: Oh, yes. I have some stuff here. I'm glad you reminded me of that because I took some notes. As he was going down the hall into surgery he winked at Baker, James Baker.

Q Say it again, please?

MR. NOFZIGER: Yes. As he was going down the hall on the gurney, I guess they call them, to surgery, he winked at Baker. He had earlier told Senator Laxalt, who was there, "Don't worry about me. I'll make it." He had told Mrs. Reagan, "Honey, I forgot to duck."

Q What?

MR. NOFZIGER: "I forgot to duck." And as they were wheeling him into surgery he saw Meese and Baker and Deaver there and he said, "Who's minding the store?" And then when he got into the operating room he looked at the doctors and he said, "Please tell me you're Republicans." (Laughter.)

So --

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: That, literally, is all I have and if you will excuse me we will keep you informed as quickly as we know anything.

Q Lyn, are they still in the operation?

MR. NOFZIGER: I don't know. I don't have the vaguest idea. I don't know. I'll check on that. I don't know.

END

5:25 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS
BY LARRY SPEAKES

The Briefing Room

(5:23 P.M. EST)

MR. SPEAKES: Let me say, to start with, that I will not be able to answer any questions and essentially confirming what's been said from the hospital. The President is still in surgery and he will be for a while, but the doctors in a preliminary report to Mrs. Reagan have just assured her that his condition remains good.

As far as the report about Jim Brady, it is untrue and he is in serious condition. Thank you.

END

(5:24 P.M. EST)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Washington, D.C.)

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1981

BRIEFING FOR THE PRESS
BY LYNN NOFZIGER,
DR. O'LEARY,
AND SHEILA PATTON

Ross Hall,
George Washington University Hospital,
Washington, D.C.

(7:30 P.M. EST)

MR. NOFZIGER: Ladies and gentlemen, can I have your attention. Everybody happy? The President is out of surgery and is in good condition and I have brought with me here this evening Dr. Dennis O'Leary, who is the Dean for Clinical Affairs at George Washington University Hospital. Have I got that?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes, sir.

MR. NOFZIGER: Dr. O'Leary will brief you on the President's operation and on his condition as well as that of the Secret Service agent.

Following that, Sheila Patton, who is Mrs. Reagan's press secretary, will have a word to say about Mrs. Reagan. So now let me introduce to you Dr. Dennis O'Leary. Doctor?

DR. O'LEARY: Thank you. Should I use the podium?

Mr. Nofziger has told you the President is in the recovery room. He is in stable condition and he is awake. He was at no time in any serious danger. He was alert and awake with stable vital signs up until the time he underwent anesthesia. He was in the operating room for approximately two hours. Part of that time was spent ascertaining that he did not have any blood in his abdominal cavity. Indeed, he did not. It was a single bullet wound that entered slightly underneath the left armpit. It traversed about three inches of the chest wall and then ricocheted off the seventh rib into the left lower lobe of the lung and moved about three inches into the lung substance itself.

The operative incision was about six inches in width, a relatively simple procedure. The bullet was removed and then the incision was closed. As I say, he is stable and in good condition.

Q What is the prognosis for his recovery?

DR. O'LEARY: The prognosis is excellent.

Q You are saying that he will no doubt recover? How long a time, Doctor?

DR. O'LEARY: That is always difficult to say. The President, however, is an excellent physical specimen and we do not anticipate any problems. It is always hard to be precise as to how long he'll be hospitalized, but he is clear of head and should be able to make decisions by tomorrow, certainly.

MORE

Q Did the bullet fragment when it hit the lung?

DR. O'LEARY: The bullet was distorted and we believe that it probably was distorted by virtue of impacting against the seventh rib as it redirected its path into the lung tissue.

Q Any permanent damage done to the heart?

DR. O'LEARY: We do not believe there is any permanent injury. The heart area was explored. The heart was not involved at all. There were no major bleeding points in the lung and there was no involvement of the aorta, the major vessel running through the chest.

Q Has the lung been reinflated?

DR. O'LEARY: The lung has been reinflated. He has a couple of chest tubes in.

Q What about the Secret Service agent?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. Mr. McCarthy had a single bullet wound also. It entered the posterior right chest and passed through the lung tissue causing virtually no damage at all except for the passage tract. It passed through the diaphragm into the dome of the liver and passed through the liver into the lateral side of the chest where it lodged against the end of the eleventh rib. Mr. McCarthy had -- did have blood in his abdominal cavity. The same test that was performed on the President was also performed on him and it was positive. The abdominal cavity was carefully explored and the only damage was the bullet through the liver itself and a drain was placed in this area and he is doing extremely well, has been in the intensive care unit now for about 45 minutes.

Q James Brady?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. Mr. Brady is still in surgery. His condition is critical. We don't have any further information at this time.

Q Dr. O'Leary, how long would you anticipate that the President would remain hospitalized?

DR. O'LEARY: That is difficult to say. It might be as long as two weeks but that is just a guesstimate at this point in time.

Q Will the President remain here?

DR. O'LEARY: A couple questions. That's not for me to answer. The question was the amount of blood. The President required transfusion of approximately five units of blood before surgery but none during the course of surgery. Mr. McCarthy required no transfusions at all.

Q Can you tell us about the D.C. policeman?

DR. O'LEARY: The D.C. policeman was taken to the Washington Hospital Center. We have no firsthand information on him.

Q Can you tell us about the Brady surgery?

DR. O'LEARY: He was shot in the forehead.

Q Which side?

DR. O'LEARY: I'm not certain, sir. The bullet did pass through his brain and came out the other side. He obviously has significant brain injury and he is in critical condition but I'm sorry, we have no further information at this time.

Q Dr. O'Leary, who performed the operation on the President?

DR. O'LEARY: The operation on the President was performed by Dr. Ben Aaron, who's on our fulltime faculty here as a cardiovascular thoracic surgeon.

Q How do you spell that?

DR. O'LEARY: The last name is spelled capital A, small A, r-o-n. First name, Benjamin.

Q His title?

DR. O'LEARY: I'm trying to think. I think he's an associate professor of surgery.

Q Who else?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. The other surgeon was Dr. Joseph Giordano, G-i-o-r-d-a-n-o, who is head of our trauma team and was in the emergency room almost simultaneously with the arrival of the President.

Q Why did the operation take so long?

DR. O'LEARY: The length of the operation really had a lot to do with the testing to make sure that there was no bleeding into the abdominal cavity. That took about 45 minutes.

Q What was that test?

DR. O'LEARY: It's called a peritoneal lavage.

Q How do you spell that?

DR. O'LEARY: P-e-r-i-t-o-n-e-a-l. Lavage, L-a-v-a-g-e.

Q Why was that important?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. That test is important -- is very simple, a small incision is made beneath the umbilicus and several liters of fluid are placed into the abdomen and then the fluid is brought back outside and looked at to determine whether there's any blood in it. That fluid can move anywhere throughout the whole abdominal cavity and if any organ has been damaged and there's any bleeding, one will find blood in the fluid that comes out. That test was negative and the President, as I said, positive in Mr. McCarthy.

Q Doctor, in view of the President's age, is there any danger that the lung might collapse again?

DR. O'LEARY: Very doubtful. The President is physiologically very helpful. The caliber of the bullet is going to be very hard to tell in the President because it was a really mangled bullet.

Q Is there a possibility of any other complications?

DR. O'LEARY: It's really doubtful. Again, I would emphasize that he is physiologically very young and in good shape.

Q Can you tell us where the bullet entered, at what angle, from the front, from the rear? Can you get into that?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, one would assume that it probably seemed to come from a little bit top down, entering approximately here (gesturing), traversed down.

Q Could you move over here?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes. Traversed down approximately three inches, striking the top of the seventh rib, laterally, and then going about three inches into the tissue of the lung itself.

Q It deflected downward further from the seventh rib?

DR. O'LEARY: No. It's like coming down, hitting the rib and then deflecting in to take a new path.

Q Where was it actually found?

DR. O'LEARY: It was in the parenchyma of the -- in the tissue of the lung itself, contained within the lung itself.

Q You said that the President was conscious for much of the time. What, if anything, did he say?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, the surgeons said that his last remark before he underwent anesthesia was he wanted to make sure that all of them were Republicans.

Q Were they?

DR. O'LEARY: They said that today everyone is a Republican.

Q Doctor, how narrowly did the President escape mortal injury?

DR. O'LEARY: That's a hard question to answer. As I stated, he was never in any serious danger. The bullet was really not very close to any vital structure.

Q How far is not so close? How far from the heart?

DR. O'LEARY: Probably several inches.

Q Is that because it struck the rib?

DR. O'LEARY: If it had not struck the rib it might not have even entered the lung cavity. It could have passed right through the chest wall if it had not struck the rib.

Q Doctor, would you say that, clinically speaking, the President is fully able to discharge the duties of his office as of now?

DR. O'LEARY: I would say probably not now. One has to let the effects of the anesthesia wear off but I think all of us feel that by tomorrow that he would be fully capable of doing that.

Q If there were a basic decision he had to make tomorrow, a decision of state, would he be able to do it?

DR. O'LEARY: We believe that he would be able to do it.

Q Who's operating on Jim Brady?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. Dr. Arthur Koblinc, K-o-b-r-i-n-e. He is operating on Mr. Brady. He is an associate professor of neurosurgery.

Q Is it possible to give us any prognosis on James Brady?

DR. O'LEARY: It's really not possible right now. As I said, he's in critical condition. Anything I would say would be highly speculative.

Q Is Brady being kept alive artificially?

MORE

DR. O'LEARY:

Not at the present time although in the operating room, remember that you've got respirators and monitors and, you know, what have you.

Q Is he on a respirator now?

DR. O' LEARY: Well, almost anyone undergoing brain surgery would be on a respirator.

Q Dr. O'Leary, aside from the obvious gunshot wound, did the President suffer any other injuries? Were there any abrasions, contusions surrounding the --

DR. O' LEARY: Well, not as we're able to ascertain. It's possible that we missed a small contusion here or there. But he was gone over quite carefully.

Q Why was the President -- forth to this hospital and when did the hospital receive word from the ambulance that he would be on the way?

DR. O'LEARY: I can't tell you for certain but I believe we were probably the closest hospital which would have been the prudent thing to do. I received information at about twenty of three that he was in the emergency room and I think he probably got there around 2:30.

Q Who got there first, Brady or the President?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay, I'm not sure who got there precisely first. They all came very fast.

Q -- how about Brady? (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: Well, we maintain a stock of blood. Please remember the Washington -- we do not run our own blood bank. The Red Cross has a regional center that is very near by and we have all the blood we need within minutes.

Q Did you have enough immediately or --

DR. O' LEARY: Yes.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: I can't answer that question. I don't know.

Q Doctor, do you know if the -- President required -- (inaudible) -- of the lung?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay, it appears as if the major reason for bleeding within the chest was as a consequence of the hole made when the bullet actually entered the lung substance itself. -- the only bleeding signs that really could be determined and although he bled down about five units of blood, it was never very brisk. It was kind of steady bleeding. It was very easy to transfuse him and keep up with his blood loss.

Q What is five units of blood? How do you --

DR. O'LEARY: Well, each, let's see, how can I make that simple, it's about two and a half quarts, total of two and a half quarts.

Q -- lungs collapsed?

DR. O' LEARY: What?

Question about collapsed over here.

Q Is his lung still collapsed?

DR. O'LEARY: No, he has a chest tube. And all one has to do is, usually through a chest tube, is to get it in and get the air out of the space between the lung and the chest wall and the lung expands.

He had a chest tube placed in the chest in the emergency room within minutes after he was in the emergency room.

Q So, he's again breathing normally?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes.

Q Did Mrs. Reagan suffer any emotional medical trauma --

DR. O'LEARY: No, I think we'll let someone else deal with that question.

Q Have you got any -- (inaudible) -- the President not being moved from this hospital for the next few days?

DR. O'LEARY: I would say for the next few days it would probably be reasonable not to move him, but I would expect that he will do well and that will be a judgment of someone else at that time.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: We have no reason for believing that significant post-operative problems will develop.

Q -- the President might have to undergo as a result of this operation?

DR. O'LEARY: I would really doubt it. He had a simple procedure. There was very little necessity to cut a lot of tissue and he -- we have every expectation that he'll have a normal post-operative course.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: I don't know the answer to that question.

Q -- the first few moments when he came into your emergency room and he walked in, what was the first thing that was done?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay, I was not personally there. But my understanding is that he got out of the car and stood up and walked in on his own. As I say, he was alert and awake all the time.

Q (Inaudible?)

DR. O'LEARY: No.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: Not to the best of our knowledge.

Q -- carrying the President at that time?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, I think, as soon as he appeared, he may not have wanted to be on a stretcher, but that is our usual procedure for someone who's had a gunshot wound.

Q How far inside the chest did the bullet go --

DR. O'LEARY: About three inches. Okay, I'll give you maybe four inches. We'll give you an inch for the thickness of the chest wall.

Q Dr. O'Leary, can you explain why it was that there was no immediate announcement -- (inaudible) --

DR. O'LEARY: I really can't answer that question. I wish I could.

Q -- know that he'd been injured?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes, I think he knew that he had been shot.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: No, I think, again, I'm giving this to you secondhand. I gather he seemed a little bit light headed but he was cracking jokes and in very good spirits even at that time.

Q -- immediately in the emergency room -- (inaudible) -- any incisions, you have to put --

DR. O'LEARY: No, usually, the smallest incision is made between the ribs and the tube is placed in and then attached to suction.

Q And that was the first emergency procedure?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes, I'd say that was the emergency procedure.

Q Would that be taking the blood off that was coming from the wound in the lung?

DR. O'LEARY: There is probably two basic purposes. One is if there has been any deflation of the lung, the major purpose is to reexpand the lung, remove the air and the other is to provide drainage for any blood in the lung space.

Q -- will Mr. Brady suffer any permanent brain damage?

DR. O'LEARY: I'd have to say that probably is likely but I really can't give you any more information since he is still in surgery.

Q Doctor, how long elapsed between when the President -- (inaudible) -- to the hospital, went into surgery, and can you account for that time?

DR. O'LEARY: I would say from the time he hit the hospital to the time he went into surgery probably was no more than about 40 minutes. There were a variety of things being done. He had to have blood tests performed to find out how much blood he had lost. We had to check his blood gases to determine how much oxygen was getting into his circulation. I think the thing that probably took

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... so much time before surgery was probably for the most part the x-rays. He had to have both a chest x-ray and an abdominal x-ray.

Q Was there surgery on the lung without actually removing the bullet? There was an earlier report that that might be the case.

DR. O'LEARY: I saw those reports but at the time those reports were out the surgeons had not even entered the chest as yet.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: I think every effort would be made to remove the bullet but if it took a lot of additional extensive surgery that might have caused a different decision.

Q Can you give us a timetable? He arrived at 2:30 and we were told the surgery began about 4:00.

DR. O'LEARY: No, no. He got to the operating room maybe 3:15, 3:20. Okay? It takes -- he has to get into the operating room, on the table, get under anesthesia, in order for surgery to start. So surgery started roughly between 3:30 and quarter of four and it lasted until about 5:30.

Q How about the surgical procedure on Mr. Brady?

DR. O'LEARY: Very simply, he is having a craniotomy which simply means an exploration of the inside of the head. Craniotomy, C-r-a-n-i-o-t-o-m-y.

Q Doctor, do you find it extraordinary that a 70-year old man could be shot in the lung and then brought to the hospital and walk in under his own power?

DR. O'LEARY: I think it speaks well for the physiologic health of the President. We do have elderly people, much more elderly than the President is, who do undergo chest surgery but he certainly sailed through it.

Q Do you find that medically extraordinary?

DR. O'LEARY: Maybe not medically extraordinary but just short of that. Okay?

Q Doctor, you said the bullet was mangled. Is there any possibility that the bullet fragments might remain inside the President's body?

DR. O'LEARY: That is a finite possibility but the bullet did, although mangled, seem to be intact. You're never sure that you have ever tiny little fragment out.

Q Has the President been told about Mr. Brady's condition?

DR. O'LEARY: I don't think that he is alert enough, really, to assimilate that information. I don't know really what we would tell him at this juncture, since we're not sure yet what the story is.

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Q Can you talk a little bit about what the body goes through, how much of a shock to the body it is to go through an operation like this? (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: Well, yes, I'd say anytime anyone undergoes major surgery, a thoracotomy is major surgery. It is not extraordinary surgery but it's major surgery. It's got to be a stress for any one of us. It'd be a stress for me. But the critical element is the physiological health of the person and your ability to maintain their vital signs and their blood volume satisfactorily.

The President's vital signs were absolutely rock stable through this whole thing.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: Well, that is a decision really made by the ambulances but I think that we do have several trauma centers in the District of Columbia and to the extent that one center does not get many very seriously injured patients, all of our ability to care for the patients is increased.

Obviously, in the heat of a situation people do the best they can. If you track back where that decision was made it is sometimes hard to find out who really made that decision.

Q (Inaudible) -- who made the incision and how large was it?

DR. O'LEARY: The incision is about six inches -- excuse me -- six inches long and it extends basically from about here (gesturing) into the posterior part underneath the armpit.

Q Could you show that again?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. (Gesturing). About from here to here. Can you see it? Here to here. Just underneath the nipple.

Q Just underneath the nipple?

Q (Inaudible.) -- about the pain?

DR. O'LEARY: Again, hard to tell. He's a healthy guy and I'm sure this is a painful surgery but he withstood it very, very well.

Q Is this a fairly common procedure that hospitals in urban areas have to do frequently, gunshot wound to the chest?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes. No question.

Q Will he have pain for days or weeks or months?

DR. O'LEARY: His surgeons believe that he will probably be in moderate pain. That will probably not be for more than a day or two.

Q Well, you have to cut through muscle, don't you?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes, you have to cut through chest wall muscle.

Q That's a pretty rugged place to cut, isn't it?

DR. O'LEARY: About an average muscle.

Q You've told us what the surgeons did to the President. What are they doing or trying to do for James Brady? Exactly what happened there?

DR. O'LEARY: I can't, again -- anything I'm telling you is rather speculative. Normally they would have to remove the tissue that seemed irreparably damaged. Any time you're operating inside the head, for very obvious reasons, you try and salvage as much tissue as you think has a remote chance of recovering. This is not a good injury. It causes a lot of damage.

Q Is there a finite possibility that with the damage sustained by the President, would there ever be in the near future a need to go back and reopen?

DR. O'LEARY: I said that was extremely remote.

Q Doctor, would you say that Mr. Brady's fighting for his life?

DR. O'LEARY: I think any time a patient is in critical condition, in a sense he's fighting for his life.

Q Did the President get any first aid in the car on the way over?

DR. O'LEARY: I really can't answer that question. I don't know.

Q Doctor, what type of medication is the President on or will he be on while he's in the hospital? Is he on any IVs or anything else?

DR. O'LEARY: He's on intravenous solution right now. As I said, he required no blood intraoperatively and, as with any patient, the medications, really, depend upon what the patient's needs are. I would expect the President is probably not going to need very many medications except perhaps some modest painkillers for a day or so.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: It depends. In a totally normal routine I would guess probably a couple of months after his hospitalization so maybe 2-1/2 to three months might be a good guess, but it is a guess.

Q Would you recommend that he leave Washington for, say, his ranch?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, that's really up to him and his staff. I'm sure that he will be adequately protected.

Q What was Mr. Brady's brain waves? Were they flat? What can you tell us?

DR. O'LEARY: I don't know the answer to that question.

Q As a doctor would you advise him to take off

further time beyond the time that he's hospitalized?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, taking off time depends on what you're talking about.

Q I'm saying away from the pressures of the Presidency.

DR. O'LEARY: That's really not my judgment to make for him. I think that I would urge him to limit his physical activity within reason. There is no reason to believe that he has any impairment of his ability to make decisions or what have you. Making decisions is stressful business but I think he's going to be fully up to it.

Q Doctor, earlier there was a report that the bullet missed the heart by an inch. You said it missed by several inches. Several inches is a relatively large amount of distance within the chest. Was the heart much closer than that? Do you have an actual measurement rather than an estimate of how close it came?

DR. O'LEARY: I wasn't specifically there in the operating room. I think I know where those reports came because, remember, when we're in an operating room the only xray that we can really get that's going to be valid is one that is taken from front to back. Okay? And when you held that up it looked as if the bullet was close to the heart. But you are missing that third dimension and that third dimension it turned out that the bullet was significantly removed from the heart by several inches, as I said. It was not close.

Q Could you tell us at what stage Mr. Brady is in surgery now and about when he will be completed?

DR. O'LEARY: Well, having seen some of these patients, it may go on for hours.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: I honestly don't know that. I suspect so but I don't know.

Q There were reports that the President wasn't aware of what happened to him. When he first was shot, that he didn't know what happened.

DR. O'LEARY: Sometimes there's some shock as a consequence of being hit. You hear people described afterwards, "My goodness, I've been shot." So it's hard to know at what point that realization hit him. I would think by the time he hit our emergency room that he knew that he had been shot.

Q Were you notified that the President was coming?

DR. O'LEARY: Yes. Yes.

Q Who took the call?

DR. O'LEARY: Okay. I don't know where the call came in from but we were notified in advance and he was here almost immediately after that and was literally met by the trauma team at the door.

Q There were reports that the bullet was a low caliber bullet. Can you speculate as to what would have happened with a higher caliber bullet?

DR. O'LEARY: I really can't speculate on that. I'm not a ballistics expert.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. O'LEARY: Yes, he was.

Q Are you seeking outside medical care?

DR. O'LEARY: Not at this time.

Q Were there no complications in surgery of any kind?

DR. O'LEARY: No. He had a simple, penetrating bullet wound into his left lung and that was basically it.

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actually performing surgery, probably four or five, between Mr. McCarthy and the President, neuro-surgical teams working separately.

MR. NOFZIGER: Is that it ladies and gentlemen?

Q Thank you.

Q Thank you, Doctor.

Q Could you spell the Doctor's name, please?

MR. NOFZIGER: O'Leary. O-'-L-e-a-r-y. Dennis with two Ns and one S.

Q Middle initial?

MR. NOFZIGER: Got a middle initial?

DR. O'LEARY: S.

MR. NOFZIGER: S as in Sam.

Q Specialty?

DR. O'LEARY: Internal medicine and hematology.

MR. NOFZIGER: Let me thank you -- thank Dr. O'Leary first of all, and then take upon the White House the blame for you not getting detailed information earlier. We had specifically asked the team at the hospital to let the White House handle this and to wait until the surgery was over before there was any briefing. So if any of you have any complaints about lack of information, don't blame them, blame me -- which you've done in the past anyway.

Q If the operation was completed at 5:30, was there any reason why you waited so long to brief?

MR. NOFZIGER: No, I n don't think the operation was completed at 5:30. I think that by the time that it had been closed up -- he had been closed up and was out of there, it was considerably later than that. I think it was near 6:30, Sam.

Q Can the Doctor verify that?

DR. O'LEARY: The basic surgery was finished at 5:30. He was then closed, which is basically routine for a procedure of this type, and I believe that they finished closing very carefully at about 6:20.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: Yes, he was

Q Would you say that while the President was incapacitated here during the operation that the Vice President was in charge? There was a report from the White House, I believe that General Haig said that he was in charge? (Laughter.)

MR. NOFZIGER: I don't think I want to comment on that. The President will be fully capable of making decisions tomorrow, according to the doctors. In the meantime, the business of government is going on normally and we expect it to continue to. And Vice President Bush is here and the rest of the government is functioning normally, and we expect that it will continue to do so.

Q When you say Bush is here -- where?

MR. NOFZIGER: He should be at the White House.

Q Lyn, n one more question. Since you're taking the blame, can you explain why --

MR. NOFZIGER: I would blame you, but --

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: I'm sorry. Because the initial reports to us were that he had not been hit and by the time I got to the hospital, we knew that he had been. But you're going to ask me why -- so many had rumors run around these things. Some of them come from us. Some of them come from you all.

Q Who arrived first -- the President or Brady?

MR. NOFZIGER: I cannot tell you that. I just don't know.

Q The initial report came from whom?

MR. NOFZIGER: Probably the wire services. That was the first I heard.

Q Have you heard anything about the motive of this thing?

MR. NOFZIGER: No, I have not. You'll have to talk to the Secret Service and to the police about that. That's outside of my area right now.

Q Will you establish now a schedule for regular medical bulletins?

MR. NOFZIGER: My plan is to meet with the doctors here shortly after 7:00 tomorrow morning. We will then have a briefing in the White House Press Room as soon thereafter as possible. We will notify you. My suspicion is it will probably be maybe as early as 8:30 and we will bring Dr. O'Leary or one of the doctors with us at that time.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: Yes, this was to keep you out of the rain.

Q Have you considered invoking the 25th Amendment that the President be disabled and rejected?

MR. NOFZIGER: No. We have not considered it. We have not considered invoking it, no.

Q Did the Secret Service agent save the President's life by stepping in front?

MR. NOFZIGER: I do not know. I was not there.

Q What is Bush's status now? Technically --

MR. NOFZIGER: He is the Vice President. (Laughter.)

Q He is the acting President now, is he not?

MR. NOFZIGER: No, he is not.

Q Will he spend the night at the White House?

MR. NOFZIGER: I don't know. You'd have to ask him.

Q Did the Presidential limousine go to any other place or did it make a direct route from the scene of the shooting to the hospital?

MR. NOFZIGER: To the best of my knowledge, it came directly to the hospital.

Q Can you put to rest all fears, all rumors, that more than one gunman was involved in this?

MR. NOFZIGER: To the best of my knowledge, there was only one

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gunman. That's all we've heard of and the people who were on the scene don't indicate there was anything more.

Q Is there evidence of a conspiracy behind the scenes?

MR. NOFZIGER: I'm not going to get into that, for goodness's sake. We've been -- You know, we'll wait and let the Secret Service and the police do their investigation and then we'll look at it there. But I don't think that that's even for me to speculate on -- no matter how farfetched it may be.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: I think that the President can speak for himself on that when the time comes.

Q Who has physical possession of the bullet at this moment?

MR. NOFZIGER: To my knowledge, the Secret Service does.

Now, if you all would hold it for just a moment, I would like to re-introduce Sheila Patton to you who is the First Lady's Press Secretary, and she can tell you about Mrs. Reagan.

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MS. PATTON: Mrs. Reagan was calm and composed throughout this ordeal. She is grateful for the outpouring of support and prayers from all over the world. She's also grateful for the fine medical attention that her husband is receiving. And, lastly, she's praying for Jim Brady, for agent McCarthy, and Officer Delahante and she hopes everyone else is too.

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. PATTON: Mrs. Reagan heard there was a shooting from her Secret Service agent. We had just returned to the White House from a luncheon. She immediately left for the hospital and learned that the President had been shot here at the hospital.

Q She didn't know --

MS. PATTON: She learned it after she arrived here.

Q -- she'll be staying here all night?

MS. PATTON: That has not been determined yet.

Q How many minutes elapsed when the President arrived -- (inaudible) --

MS. PATTON: To the best of my recollection, we left about 25 of three.

Q -- that where. From the --

MS. PATTON: From the White House in five minutes.

Q Did Mrs. Reagan have any contact with Mrs. Brady at all during the --

MS. PATTON: Yes, she has seen both Mrs. Brady and Mrs. McCarthy.

Q Can you tell us anything about --

MS. PATTON: No, it was a private meeting.

Q Where --

MS. PATTON: In an office near the emergency room.

Q -- visit the chaplain?

MS. PATTON: Yes, she did. She visited the chaplain.

Q When was that?

MS. PATTON: Shortly thereafter.

Q Shortly after she arrived?

MS. PATTON: After the President went up for surgery.

Q What did she say to him?

MS. PATTON: I do not know.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

MR. NOFZIGER: Let me make a couple of quick announcements. Vice President Bush is spending the night at the Vice President's Residence. So, that clears that up. Secondly, I've been asked do I want to move the A.M. briefing to Room 450 in the EOB because it's larger and so let's move it to Room 450 in EOB because it's larger. We will see you there in the morning. Thank you.

Q Is that going to be it for tonight? Should we anticipate any announcements regarding Jim Brady?

MR. NOFZIGER: My feeling is that depending on the situation, I would not rule it out. But that will come out of the White House briefing room. I think we can wind up this place here after this briefing. I think that will be more convenient for all of us.

Q Have our allies abroad been contacted about the President's stable condition?

MR. NOFZIGER: I cannot tell you if our allies have been contacted. But I would be willing to bet that they had been.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. NOFZIGER: I cannot answer that. I do not know.

END

8:15 P.M. ES