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Reagan stable, Press Secretary Brady critical after gun wounds

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Reagan was wounded in the chest yesterday by a gunman who tried to assassinate him with a burst of .22-caliber bullets that critically injured his press secretary, James Brady. Reagan "sailed through surgery" according to doctors who said he'd be ready to make White House decisions by today.

But Brady was said to be fighting for his life, a bullet through his brain.

Dr. Dennis O'Leary said "a really mangled bullet" was removed from Reagan's left lung. He said the president's condition was stable, the prognosis excellent.

"Honey, I forgot to duck," Reagan told his wife as he was wheeled into surgery. Then he told the doctors he hoped they were Republicans.

Two lawmen also were wounded in the mid-afternoon blaze of gunfire outside a Washington hotel where Reagan had just addressed a union convention. They were reported in serious condition but apparently not in danger.

A youthful, sandy-haired gunman from suburban Denver was wrestled against a wall and taken away moments after he leveled his pistol at the president and fired at near point-blank range.

John Warnock Hinckley Jr., 25, of Evergreen, Colo., was booked on charges of attempted assassination of a president, and of assault with an intent to kill a police officer. He was in FBI custody yesterday.

There was no known motive for the savage burst of gunfire that exploded as the president stood beside his limousine, ready to step inside for a rainy one-mile ride back to the White House.

At first, the White House said Reagan had not been hit. But he was taken to George Washington University



President Reagan grimaces as he is shoved into his limousine by two Secret Service agents moments after he was shot outside the Washington Hilton Hotel yesterday.

AP photo courtesy The BLADE

Hospital, and about an hour after the shooting, presidential aide Lyn Nofziger said Reagan indeed had been wounded in the left chest.

Two and a half hours after the incident, Nofziger said simply: "President Reagan went into surgery one hour ago. He is still there and will be there for a while longer."

"I can reassure this nation and a watching world that the American government is functioning fully and effectively," Vice President George Bush said at the White House yesterday.

The assassination attempt transformed a routine presidential motorcade into a scene of chaos. Reagan just had addressed a union convention and was headed for his limousine when the gunman struck. Two of the shots hit the presidential automobile, one slamming into the door, one bursting a hole in the rear window before Reagan entered the car.

One eyewitness said the assailant, standing 10 feet from from the president, "just opened up and continued squeezing the trigger."

Anxious hours later, Reagan was pronounced in good and stable condition after surgery.

O'Leary served as spokesman for two surgeons who operated on Reagan at George Washington University Hospital. They made a 6-inch incision to remove the bullet that had penetrated about three inches into his lung, missing his heart by several inches.

Reagan's lung collapsed, and the surgeons inserted two chest tubes to restore it.

"We've had full and complete communication throughout the day."

O'Leary described Reagan as "clear in the head" and said he "should be able to make decisions by tomorrow (today), certainly."

They gave him blood transfusions, about 2½ quarts in all, to replace the blood he lost.

The wounded president walked into the hospital, "alert and awake" if a bit light headed, O'Leary said. At 70, the doctor said, Reagan "is physiologically very young."

"We do not believe there is any permanent injury," he added.

"He was never in any serious danger," O'Leary said.

The shots also felled Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy, 31, and policeman Thomas Delahanty, 45. A Secret Service spokesman said McCarthy was in "stable condition on the plus side." He was shot in the chest. Delahanty was wounded at the base of his neck. He was reported in serious condition.



AP photo courtesy The BLADE

An unidentified man leans down to check on wounded Press Secretary James Brady after he was shot outside the Washington Hilton Hotel yesterday.

The BG News will resume regular publication Thursday, April 2.

Police ponder motive in Hinckley's act

by Kathleen Kosbar
staff reporter

Police in Washington, D.C., are unable to figure out why John Hinckley Jr. allegedly opened fire on President Reagan and a crowd of people that surrounded him as he left the Washington Hilton Hotel after a speech to AFL-CIO members yesterday, an FBI official said.

Hinckley fired six shots at short range, piercing the president's lung and seriously wounding Press Secretary James Brady, a Secret Service agent and a city policeman.

Little is known about Hinckley, who was arrested by Secret Service agents and charged with attempted assassination of a president and intent to kill a police officer.

FBI officials in Washington said they do not know what Hinckley was doing in the city or how he got so close to the president.

FBI official Dick Markuise said he was receiving more information from reporters trying to confirm stories than he was receiving from officials conducting the investigation.

Officials have been unable to determine the age of Hinckley, described by an Associated Press wire report as a "youthful, sandy-haired man." The exact year of his birth is unknown, and different sources pinpoint him from 22-25 years old.

Markuise said Hinckley was born in a small suburb outside Dallas but is presently a resident of Evergreen, Colorado.

AP reported that Hinckley bought two .22-caliber pistols Oct. 13 using a Lubbock, Colo. address, but authorities refused to confirm if either of these guns was used in the assassination attempt.

Secret Service Special Agent Jim Boyle said the .22 caliber pistol is a "fairly good grade revolver" and em-

phasized that although it is a common handgun, it is not a "Saturday Night Special."

After Hinckley opened fire, he was seized by Secret Service agents and wrestled to the ground outside the hotel, pinned against a wall and hauled away, handcuffed in a police cruiser. Markuise said the man was identified quickly because he was carrying a picture identification card. He was turned over to FBI officials for interrogation.

Markuise said Hinckley is the son of John Hinckley Sr., president of a gas and oil exploration company in Denver.

He graduated from high school in 1973 and attended one quarter at Texas Technical College. Reports did not indicate what he was studying or why he quit. According to a television broadcast, Hinckley was described by his high school principal as "a kid with a behavior problem." A classmate said

he was "a nice guy in the government club." Another called him "unexceptional."

Rumors were circulating that Hinckley was politically active and may have dissented with views held by his family but Markuise said anything concerning political affiliation was only a rumor and officials would investigate further.

Innuendo made it difficult for White House officials to confirm information for reporters and they had to retract a report at one time that Brady had died from a gun shot wound to the head.

Lyn Nofziger, a White House aide, said he would not speculate on whether or not Hinckley could have been involved in a conspiracy to kill the president, no matter how "far-fetched" the idea was. No one else has been arrested in connection with the shooting.

Guarding the president

Trained agents give 24-hour surveillance

Reagan 7th presidential target of assassins' fire

by Craig Hyde
and Kyle Silvers

Before the president makes an appearance anywhere, the Secret Service visits the area to create a protective environment.

Agent Laurie Davis, of the Washington, D.C. Secret Service, said "an evaluation of each individual situation is made" before the president's scheduled appearance.

She said she could not comment on the effectiveness of the agents during yesterday's assassination attempt because she was not able to review all the film clips or broadcasts on TV and radio.

Dr. Gerald Rigby, director of the University's Criminal Justice Program, said the Secret Service is the only agency that deals with the president's personal safety.

"The president's security operates on the same principle as the armed forces physical security," he said. "It is all done with manpower."

When the president appears in public, usually four to six men are visible, yet when there is a confrontation, 30 to 40 Secret Service agents magically appear from their positions in the crowd.

Rigby explains that the Secret Service does not want to force too many security people on the public, yet the public must be aware that security exists.

"People do not know that they are there," he said. "The public is only aware of six or eight and the rest are hidden in the crowd."

"Also, the Secret Service cover themselves and each other," he said.

He went on to explain that the Secret Service is a highly trained security force that possesses abilities that surpass those of a typical police organization.

Rigby explained that the need for a highly inconspicuous Secret Service is a reflection of our society.

"Some heads of state come out with a whole army to protect them, but our presidents always have pretended that they were men of the people and must go out among the people," he said. "If we held the crowds back and didn't let anyone near, there would be less of a need for security."

"He will not admit that he can't go anywhere, so he has protection and goes anyway."

Rigby stressed that this kind of attempt is not a reflection of a society that is becoming violent or corrupt.

"Because this has happened four times before does not mean that our society is bad," he said.

He explained that despite all the security in the world, there is always at least one person who will try something like this.

"A hundred years ago, if there was an attempt no one would know about it," he explained. "Today, in this age of momentary communication, everyone hears about these things and everyone wants to try it."

He explained that the Secret Service is the only agency that deals with the protection of the president during normal times. "Sometimes the local police help out, but usually the Secret Service prefers to handle it."

He stressed that despite all this protection, this kind of thing can happen anytime and there is no reason to doubt the ability of the Secret Service.

"Their first duty is to protect the president, but they cannot injure innocent people. This is why we saw mostly bodily contact," he said, and explained that if a man saw someone pull a gun, the only course of action is to shoot to kill or knock him down with his body.

"We must get people to realize that there is no way we can stop these attempts as long as there is one person out there willing to try," he said.

by The Associated Press

President Reagan is the seventh U.S. president in this century who was the target of an assassination attempt. Two of them, William McKinley and John F. Kennedy, were killed.

The shots fired at Reagan yesterday marked the first assassination attacks since two women tried to shoot President Ford in separate incidents in northern California in September 1975.

Earlier in the century, on Sept. 6, 1901, McKinley was shot during an appearance in Buffalo, N.Y. He died eight days later. The man convicted of the crime was executed a little more than a month later.

On Oct. 12, 1914, a man in Milwaukee shot and seriously wounded former President Theodore Roosevelt. On Feb. 15, 1933, in Miami, anarchist Joseph Zangara shot at President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, but his aim was deflected. The bullet hit and fatally wounded Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak. Zangara was executed.

On Nov. 1, 1950, two men identified as members of a Puerto Rican nationalist movement tried to shoot their way into the Blair House in Washington, D.C., in an attempt to kill President Truman.

Kennedy was killed in November 1963 in Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the crime but was shot and killed by Jack Ruby before he could be tried. Ruby died while legal proceedings were still pending in the Oswald shooting.

The first attempt against Ford came in Sacramento, Calif., on Sept. 5 as Ford was walking to the state Capitol for an address to the legislature.

As Ford shook hands with a crowd that lined his route, Lynette Alice "Squeaky" Fromme, 26, a follower of convicted mass murderer Charles Manson, pulled out a Colt .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol and pointed it at the president.

A Secret Service agent grabbed Fromme's hand. The gun did not go off and the president was not hurt.

Barely two weeks later, on Monday Sept. 22, as Ford walked to his limousine as he left the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, a single shot rang out. The gun was deflected and the bullet missed the president's head by five feet.

Sarah Jane Moore, 45, who was both a radical and an FBI informant, was arrested. It was disclosed later that Moore had called San Francisco police on Saturday Sept. 20, and warned them that she might "test the system" at Stanford University where Ford was scheduled to speak on Sunday. Police arrested Moore Sunday afternoon, took away her .44-caliber pistol and released her.

The next day, Moore bought another gun—a .38-caliber. She said later her attack was "a kind of ultimate protest against the system."

Both Fromme and Moore were indicted under a federal law, passed after the assassination of Kennedy, making it a federal crime to try to kill the president. They were the first people indicted under the law.

Moore pleaded guilty to trying to kill Ford and is serving a life sentence at the Federal Correctional Institution at Alderson, W. Va.

Fromme also is serving a life sentence at the prison in Alderson.

Mayor near scene

by Stephen Hudak
managing editor

Bowling Green Mayor Alvin Perkins had just finished listening to President Ronald Reagan pitch his economic plan to AFL-CIO union members at the Washington Hilton Hotel yesterday when he and his wife wound their way through the hotel corridors. Suddenly, a man began shouting "They tried to shoot the president!"

Perkins and his wife rushed to the lobby windows and could see lights flashing and hear sirens blowing. John Hinckley allegedly had fired six shots at the president and others surrounding him.

"By the time we got there six or

seven minutes later, the president had been removed quickly and only one man was being moved into an ambulance," Perkins said, adding that he could not identify the wounded man.

He said the president had asked the audience of about 4,500 construction and building workers to support his "New Beginnings" budget proposals. Although the trade workers "have it tough," Perkins said, Reagan's message was well received.

Perkins said that he was in Washington on a two-fold mission--to meet with Ohio congressmen concerning the city and to represent a local building trade union.

Reagan stands firm against gun control

It has been almost four months since John Lennon was shot dead in New York City allegedly by Mark David Chapman. Then President-elect Ronald Reagan, in the city that day, commented that Lennon's death was a great tragedy, adding that "we have to try to stop tragedies of this sort."

He added, however, that gun control is not the answer.

The New York Times, in a December 11, 1980 editorial, quoted Reagan as suggesting:

"If somebody commits a crime and carries a gun when he's doing it, add five to 15 years to the' prison sentence."

The July 1980 issue of Field and Stream magazine quoted Reagan as saying gun registration "has been an aid to totalitarian takeover in other countries," and that gun control merely would curtail the rights of law-abiding citizens without in any way affecting crime or criminals.

Oscars postponed

HOLLYWOOD (AP)—Organizers of the Academy Awards ceremony decided yesterday to postpone the nationally televised program 24 hours because of the assassination attempt on President Reagan.

Charlie Frank, a spokesman for ABC television in New York, said the decision had been made to delay the program until tonight at 10 p.m. EST. Earlier, Norman Jewison, producer

of the show, Fay Kanin, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and Johnny Carson, the show's host, had met with ABC television officials at the Los Angeles Music Center to discuss their options.

Fans had started arriving before dawn for front-row seats outside the Music Center and a chance to view the winners and losers at the evening's extravaganza.

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Wall Street Exchange closes at news of Reagan shooting

by The Associated Press

Wall Street's stock exchanges halted all trading yesterday when news reached the financial center that President Reagan had been wounded in an assassination attempt.

The New York and American stock exchanges both stopped trading shortly after 3:15 p.m. EST, moments after news bulletins reported that Reagan had been hit by gunfire.

Both exchanges did not reopen for trading yesterday.

The Dow Jones industrial average was up about 6 points at 2:30 p.m. as word first reached Wall Street that shots had been fired at the president as he left a Washington hotel.

Accounts shortly thereafter said the president had not been hit and was safe.

It was not until after 3 p.m. that word came that Reagan had indeed been injured. At the time of the trading halt, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 2.71 at 992.07.

Evan Cooper, a spokesman for the New York exchange, said it was the first time trading had been halted because of a news event since the markets were closed Jan. 25, 1973, for the funeral of President Lyndon Johnson.

Officials of the New York Stock Exchange said they would meet this morning to decide whether to resume trading, while the American Stock Exchange said it would open on schedule.

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