

87. 1976



"Richard Milhous who?"

reasoned argument. Highlights of the dramatic roll call.

ILLINOIS. Racked by delegate charges and countercharges that low-level operators in both camps had tried to "bribe" them for their votes, the delegation was in some turmoil. National Committeewoman Hope McCormick, a Ford backer, abstained. Reason: she had promised a California friend to support the former Governor on at least one vote. Ford Delegate William Stratton, the former Illinois Governor, abstained. Reason: he had been shoved around by the Secret Service when Ford talked to the delegation that day. Griffin's dep-

uty, Michel, was unable to appease him 79 no, 20 yes, 2 abstain.

INDIANA. State Chairman Thomas Milligan learned that Earl Schmdel of Evansville, considered a likely Reagan vote, nevertheless admired Vice President Rockefeller. Milligan got on his phone to the Ford network. Rocky promptly rushed over to sit beside Schmdel. When the state's 27-to-27 split was announced, the state's Reagan chairman challenged it. Schmdel took the cigar from his mouth and announced proudly: "I voted with the Vice President."

KANSAS. Delegate Charles Hostet-

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ter, who had been considered solidly for Ford, told Senator Robert Dole the day before the vote that he was "softening up" and ought to see the President. An audience was promptly arranged. "He wasn't soft," Dole later concluded. "He just wanted to see the President because everyone else was." 30 no, 4 yes.

MISSISSIPPI. A caucus vote on Tuesday showed that its 30 alternates and 30 delegates divided 31 to 28 against the (one member was absent). Thus, under the unit rule, Mississippi committed itself to casting all of its 30 votes for Ford's position. Reagan had dispatched cases of cold Coors beer to the delegation's Ramada Inn East in Independence to no avail. Ford had lost one vote when he invited nine Mississippians to see him at Crown Center but his staff failed to send a car to pick up Retired Colonel James Egger.

That vote, however, by no means ended the courting and currying, phoning and photographing, fawning over and flattery of the Mississippians whose 30 delegate votes were equally critical to the following night's balloting for the presidential nomination. Tennessee Congressman Robin Beard had said earlier: "This is the only delegation I've seen that has its own make-up team." But scarcely 24 hours after the vital rules vote, the Mississippians decided to break the unit rule and cast 16 votes for Ford and 14 for Reagan.

The Making of a Fighting Speech

It is no mystery why Gerald Ford's acceptance speech was the best of his presidency and perhaps of his career. He and his staff had never worked harder on a speech or devoted more time to it. It was in a way a Fourth of July inspiration. Buoyed by the Bicentennial celebration, newly confident about his chances of winning a presidential term on his own, Ford on July 5 called for work to start on a fighting speech that would boldly confront the issues of his "accidental" presidency.

Robert Hartmann, White House Counselor and chief speechwriter, was given the assignment of collecting basic ideas from Cabinet members, senior White House staffers, campaign advisers, friendly Senators and Congressmen and old political pals like Melvin Laird and Bryce Harlow. Once the suggestions were compiled, Hartmann went over them with the President, who meanwhile had been studying every presidential acceptance speech since 1948 and jotting down ideas of his own on a yellow notepad.

Hartmann and five speechwriters on his staff shaped the raw material into six separate drafts. Ford read these and underlined in red pencil the passages he liked best. Then he picked went back

into the typewriter and emerged as a new, amalgamated version. Only two copies were made—one for Ford, one for Hartmann—in order to prevent leaks and staff kibitzing.

Two weeks before the convention, Ford and Hartmann began meeting several hours every day to sharpen the speech. First he read to an audience of three: Hartmann, his deputy Robert Orben and Media Consultant Don Penny, a former stand-up comic who played a key role in improving the President's pace and delivery. Then Ford started running through the speech before a camera connected to a video-tape recorder and played back the tape so that he could watch his own performance.

His coaches managed to minimize some of his idiosyncrasies—stumbling over words, dropping his voice to a melodramatic hush inappropriate to the context, exaggerating rhetorical flourishes in a way that made them seem artificial. The President took his video-tape unit to Kansas City to continue rehearsing right up to the beginning of the roll call of the states on Wednesday night. Practice made perfect—or almost. Concluded a satisfied Hartmann: "If he had two weeks to work off every speech, they'd all be that good."

language and cast it to fit the President's oratorical style. Sentences were trimmed, syntax simplified, demanding rhetorical devices eliminated. On Sunday, Aug. 8, Hartmann spent a long working session with the President at Camp David.

One week before D-day ("Delivery" day), as Hartmann labeled it, Ford began practicing his presentation of the speech. First he read to an audience of three: Hartmann, his deputy Robert Orben and Media Consultant Don Penny, a former stand-up comic who played a key role in improving the President's pace and delivery. Then Ford started running through the speech before a camera connected to a video-tape recorder and played back the tape so that he could watch his own performance.

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all along in his repeated vow that he would not accept the post if offered it.

By the time Thursday rolled around, many of the conventiongoers were thoroughly worn out. "I'm so tired right now," said Mississippi Delegate Malcolm Mabry, "I just wish someone would ring the bell." Yet Gerald Ford managed to recharge the delegates.

It was, fittingly, one of the President's finest hours. The ovation that greeted his appearance on the podium carried a rousing ring of enthusiasm. Speaking with unaccustomed fervor and a punchy delivery, the President effectively assailed, by biting implication, his Democratic opponent, Jimmy Carter. "We will build on performance, not promises; experience, not expediency; real progress instead of mysterious plans to be revealed in some dim and distant future." At another point he jabbed: "My record is one of specifics, not smiles."

While Ford harshly attacked the Congress that either "won't act" or acts wrongly when it does, he also cited it to legitimize his presidency. "I have been called an unelected President, an accidental President," he noted. Yet he had been confirmed for the vice presidency, he pointed out, by votes of 387 to 35 in the House and 92 to 3 in the Senate. "Having become Vice President and President without election, I am seeking either, I have a special feeling toward these high offices. To me, the presidency and the vice presidency were not prizes to be won, but a duty to be done."

In a speech that sounded much better than it reads, Ford directly addressed his large television audience: "You are the people who pay the taxes and obey the laws. You are the people who make our system work. It is from your ranks that I come, and on your side I stand." Again, quite personally, he predicted about the election: "The American people are going to say that night, 'Jerry, you've done a good job. Keep right on doing it.'"

After his speech, Ford motioned to his vanquished foe in the guest galleries to join him and Betty on the podium. When Reagan and Nancy had entered the hall earlier to a resounding ovation, there were rhythmic cries of "Speech! Speech! Speech!" Invited to the podium by Chairman Rhodes, Reagan initially declined. "This is someone else's night," he said to friends. But now he responded to Ford's beckoning. As he moved through the packed arena with Nancy, then took the microphone at Ford's bidding, the eyes of many delegates shimmered with tears.

Reagan delivered a capsuled version of his intended acceptance speech. He warned in moving terms of the erosion of liberty in the world, the dangers of nuclear annihilation and the need for America to lead the fight against both. Not once did he laud his party's newly nominated candidate for President.



DOLE AND FORD HUDDLING BEFORE THE TEAM IS ANNOUNCED

THE V.P. CANDIDATE

The Dole Decision

In his selection of Robert Dole as his running mate, Gerald Ford accomplished a tour de force of political theater, he surprised almost everyone (Dole included), and offended almost no one in the party's mainstream. Liberals in general and some moderate Republicans were disappointed by the choice. But even they acknowledged that Ford's problem was choosing someone who would appease the Reaganites without blatantly antagonizing other Republicans. Thus, once Ford unveiled his choice, politicians who only hours before had been touting "short lists" on which Dole's name did not even appear, began ticking off reasons why he made sense for the No. 2 spot.

It was exactly the sort of move with which the President was hoping to cap his nomination, and he prepared for it with a deft combination of openness and secrecy: he was demonstrably open to advice, but extremely secretive about his thinking as it evolved. As a Ford aide put it, in splendidly technocratic jargon: "His decision-making process was one of maximum input, zero feedback."

The input was massive indeed. Virtually everyone on a political list to the White House in recent months, or to the "Oval Office West" in Kansas City last week, had a plug or a blackball for some prospect. Ford's floor manager in Kansas City, Michigan Senator Robert Griffin, promoted Colleague Howard Baker (who, perhaps coincidentally, may be Griffin's chief competitor for the Senate minority leader's job next January). The First Family had its preferences too. Betty Ford urged more than token consideration for Anne Armstrong. Son Jack liked a mayor, Pete Wilson of San Diego, and two Governors, Christopher ("Kit") Bond of Missouri and Dan Evans of Washington. Henry Kissinger

promoted a lame-duck incumbent, his former mentor Nelson Rockefeller. Of the Cabinet members, only Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butte recommended Dole, highly—because of the Kansas's popularity in the farm belt.

Three weeks ago, Ford sent letters soliciting the opinions of nearly 6,000 G.O.P. delegates, party leaders and officeholders. A week later, two dozen fatter letters went out from the White House with detailed legal, medical and financial questionnaires to an array of possibilities, ranging from Northeastern Liberal Elliot Richardson to Texas Conservative John Connally. The two dozen receiving the bulky envelopes were officially under presidential consideration. Throughout the selection process,

FORD AND REAGAN DISCUSSING TICKET



and all that—the appearances on the Today show, the chauffeured limousines, the personal calls from the President, the invitations to view the Tall Ships from the deck of the *Forrestal* and to dine in the White House—came to an end.

NEW YORK. The overwhelmed Reagan faction was born less out of ideological fervor than an intraparty clash between the state's imposing, egg-bald party chairman, Richard Rosenbaum, 45, and the pugnaic chairman of Brooklyn's G.O.P., George Clark, 35. Clark had seized upon the Reagan candidacy to vent his resentment of Rosenbaum's iron chancellorship and Rockefeller's tight paternal grip. The two leaders had fought first in Kansas over whether Clark could have a Reagan telephone on the floor, then over whether Reagan should be formally invited to address the whole delegation. Rosenbaum vetoed both ideas. Complained Reagan Delegate Vito Battista: "This is like the Gestapo."

The state attracted excessive attention over an unseemly floor fuss in which Rocky grabbed a Reagan sign that he claimed North Carolina's Jack Bailey had been waving in his face. Utah Co-Chairman Douglas Bischoff (6 ft. 4 in.) intervened to get the poster back, but was challenged by Rosenbaum (6 ft. 1 1/2 in.). Bischoff thereupon ripped Rocky's white Ford phone out of its moorings. Rosenbaum galloped after Bischoff, normally a mild-mannered optometrist, shouting to guards: "Arrest that man!" Bischoff was detained for an hour by the Secret Service. The phone was retrieved and Rocky, displaying less than vice-presidential dignity, held it high for all to see.

Veiling belatedly, Florida's delegates split, 38 to 28, but that was enough to put Ford over the top. The 16c amendment was dead. From his control position on the floor, the normally soft-spoken Griffin shouted, "That dood it! That's it! That's it!" Final count: 1,180 no, 1,069 yes, 10 abstain.

A deeply disappointed John Sears sadly phoned his boss. Reagan asked sympathetically if there was anything he could do to help. "Well," Sears replied wryly, "if you could get me one of those tractors backed up to the tent and drag it out of here, it would be a help." As Florida cast its vote, Ford, watching the televised roll call with two aides, Jack Marsh and Richard Cheney, son of the late and the late, said quietly, "I think that does it." He meant that he was now certain to be the Republican nominee.

For the victorious Ford team, only one irksome conflict remained. Al-

though it was 11 o'clock, the platform had yet to be approved. Reagan's saddened troops were still determined to add a self-styled "morality" amendment that not very obliquely assailed the Administration's foreign policy. The code words included praise for Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the dissident Soviet writer whom Ford had refused to invite to the White House; criticism of pursuing détente—a word that Ford had banned—without insisting on concurrent Soviet concessions; an attack on "secret agreements, hidden from our people"; and a reference to "Helsinki," where Ford had agreed to the 35-nation pact ratifying the postwar boundaries of Eastern Europe.



A REAGAN SUPPORTER WEEPS AFTER THE DEFEAT

Vice President Rockefeller and U.N. Ambassador William Scranton urged the Ford campaign advisers to oppose the amendment. "Nelson and I both thought it was very bad, an attack on the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger foreign policy," Scranton said. In a conference in the sky suite, Burch, Tower, Senators Hugh Scott and Roman Hruska tried to still the urge for more combat. They reasoned that Ford had just won the big test, he might well lose a second, there was no need to dilute the night's good work. Nearly alone, Rocky sought some softening language. The Reaganites were in no mood for compromise.

On the convention floor, the cool-headed Ford operatives prevailed. At one point, Reagan Aide Keene told a group of delegates that Ford's assent to letting the amendment pass would mean

he was "willing to humiliate the Secretary of State." With a Cheshire grin, Ford Floor Whip Tom Korologos whispered in Keene's ear: "We accept." Then he stuck a photo of Kissinger on Keene's back and walked away laughing. When the morality amendment was introduced, the Ford forces were content to allow its approval on a voice vote.

With that, the nervous Ford operatives could relax. Despite hints of hidden grenades, no real surprise had been sprung by the Reagan strategists. Griffin had not even had to use the store of white caps he had kept in reserve in case the Reaganites flooded the floor with red and yellow hats to confuse the Ford floor operation. Nor had the Reagan plotters ever been able to unleash their "S.T.P." operation, in which any ruling from the chair that seemed unfair would be challenged by a "storm the podium" deluge of fist-waving protests and jeers, in an effort to turn the delegates against Ford's controlling convention officials.

Although the issues had been resolved, the delegates' spirit had not been squelched. Wednesday's session was so noisy that at one point Chairman John Rhodes growled in disgust: "You're sounding like a bunch of Democrats." Although the sentiment for Reagan among his backers needed little prompting, the big demonstration for him on nominating night was far from spontaneous. His delegates had been instructed to begin with "flags, sirens and horns," then, after two minutes, break into the chant "We need Reagan!" Texas and California delegations were to snake dance into the aisles two minutes later. At nine minutes the horns were to dominate the action. But it all went on much longer than planned.

Despite the din, the session was actually anticlimactic. Ford gained seven votes from the night before, winning, with little suspense, 1,187 to 1,070.

In his Crown Center suite, the President calmly checked off West Virginia—the state that put him over the top—on a tally sheet, then he accepted the handshakes of his aides in the room. "I guess we don't have to change the speech," Ford quipped to Media Consultant Don Penny.

Ford promptly traveled across midtown to speak to his defeated challenger. "Governor, it was a great fight," he said graciously as the two met in Reagan's hotel suite. "You've done a tremendous job. I just wish I had some of your talents and your tremendous organization." The two retired for a private 30-minute meeting at which they discussed the vice presidential candidates. Reagan had been deadly serious

Ford was noncommittal. Pressure, such as that mounted by the anti-Connally movement, he ignored or rebuffed. Says White House Special Counsel Michael Dukakis: "The President doesn't like to be pushed. He reminds me of a gyroscope: if you whack it, it will come right back, but if you move it steadily in a direction that makes sense, it will stay."

Ford came to Kansas City with a list in mind—but not on paper—of about a dozen "semifinalists." Even after this nomination was in hand, Ford still seemed to be considering at least half a dozen candidates. These he sounded out with Reagan, who commented favorably on Dole and said William Ruckelshaus and Richardson were completely unacceptable. Said a Reagan associate: "If either of them had been chosen, we would have unleashed our troops." Ford also talked about his list with nine top advisers over coffee and nightcaps in his hotel suite until shortly after 5 a.m. the night of his nomination. The nine: Griffin, Rockefeller, White House Chief of Staff Richard Cheney, Texas Senator John Tower, Campaign Pollster Robert Teeter, Campaign Strategist Stuart Spencer, Counselor John Marsh, former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and Veteran G.O.P. Presidential Adviser Bryce Harlow. When the consultants adjourned, exhausted, they were still uncertain whether the President had made up his mind. Not until they reconvened four hours later did Ford's final choice emerge, and then only obliquely: in his questions, the President kept coming back to Dole.

According to a White House official, Dole was Ford's "first expressed choice" as well as final choice, though some advisers may have erroneously thought that their preferences were at the top of the list. For instance, Griffin apparently believed that Baker was Ford's choice. But the President wanted a more slashing, hard-driving campaigner than Baker. Ford also concluded that Dole had the most assets of all the possible choices, even though advisers pointed out that the poignant circumstances of Dole's first marriage and divorce might be as much of a liability as the drinking problem of Baker's wife. After an hour, Ford was satisfied that Dole had a consensus of support in the group, and the decision was final. The first to be told of the choice—after Dole—was Reagan. Ford began zeroing in on Dole the week before the convention, but the only Administration insider who had a sense of how he was narrowing the field was Chief of Staff Cheney, his sole confidant for the decision. The tabulations of the party-wide popularity contest showed a cluster of obvious names near the top—Connally, Reagan, Baker, Richardson, Rockefeller—but no overwhelming standout whom the President could reject only at the risk of antagonizing the party.

In the end, according to advisers

who participated in the final stages of the selection process, Ford was persuaded by these considerations:

► Like Reagan, Dole is a conservative, but unlike Reagan, he is palatable to party moderates.

► Like Connally, he is a forceful campaigner, but unlike Connally, he is a longtime party stalwart apparently untainted by scandal.

► As a Midwesterner and a magnet for the farm vote, he can, Ford hopes, solidify the ticket's strength in those parts of the country where it stands the best chance. He may even be able to make inroads in the rural South.

► As a former party chairman, Dole won the gratitude of a broad spectrum of Republicans and has the support of the party machinery.

In the opinion of one man who was at the final meeting on the selection last Thursday morning, Ford also liked the idea that Dole was something of a dark horse. "You remember how the President used to talk about wanting to feel 'comfortable' with his 'guys,' his 'team'?" commented a close associate. "Well, in the final analysis, he just felt more comfortable with Bob Dole than with any others. Two years ago, when called upon to appoint a Vice President, his personal choice was Don Rumsfeld; his choice for the sake of the party was George Bush; but Rocky was the best man to bring the country together behind him. This time around he figures he's got all three in one." That remains to be seen. But at the very least, Ford is now in personal command of the party and its ticket.



DOLE'S EMOTIONAL HOMECOMING WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN RUSSELL, KANS.

Has Gun, Will Travel

Kansas Playwright William Inge might have written the script for the affair. The V.F.W. color guard lined up in the center of the street in front of the Art Nouveau county courthouse, hand by the Russell County farm bureau. The high school band was almost in tune as it entertained under the elm and locust trees. The ladies of the town grilled hot dogs and served potato chips and salad on paper plates. The sun was full and hot as the crowd of about 2,000 gathered to welcome back the local boy who was bringing to town the President of the U.S.

Suddenly the motorcade was there and Senator Robert Dole was moving easily through the crowd, introducing folks to Jerry Ford. When he finally made it up to the platform, Dole told how the President had called "and asked me if I would like to be on the ticket

with him. I thought about one second and said yes."

That drew a laugh. Dole has always drawn laughs, even growing up in Russell—but later, unexpectedly, his mood changed abruptly. "You can come from a small town in America and you do not need wealth to succeed," he was saying. "If I have done anything, it was because of what you did for me."

He was crying. His left hand shot up to wipe the tears away and he stood for a long moment, head bowed, unable to go on. He did not turn away from the crowd. Seated on the platform behind him, his mother, Bina Dole, his 21-year-old daughter Robin, Governor Robert Bennett and Ford stirred uncomfortably. Then Dole's old friends out front in the street began to clap. The President and the others rose to their feet, applauding. Slowly Dole regained his composure and went on, never alluding to the incident.