

**Statement of Patrick Sullivan**  
**Retired Secret Service Agent**  
**Before the House Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J Trump**  
**September 26, 2024**

Chairman Kelly, Ranking Member Crow and distinguished members of the Task Force, I am Patrick Sullivan, retired Secret Service agent with 23 years of service. I am honored to appear before you today.

I am a life member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Fraternal Order of Police. I am also a Board member on the United States Secret Service Association (USSSA). The USSSA is an organization consisting of retired, former and current Secret Service employees which supports the men and women of the Secret Service, provides scholarships to children and grandchildren of members, and financial assistance if a member suffers a catastrophic incident.

I served as a Secret Service special agent in many investigative, protective and supervisory related assignments. I was assigned to the Department of Justice, Organized Crime Strike Force in Brooklyn, NY, as the Secret Service representative where I arrested numerous members and associates of the five Mafia crime families operating in New York City, for counterfeiting and other financial crimes. I spent four years on the Presidential Protection Division (PPD) where I conducted numerous lead advances, both domestic and foreign. I was also assigned to Secret Service HQ as a supervisor where I coordinated security planning for a Presidential Campaign, the Democrat and Republican National Conventions, the Presidential debates, and the Inauguration. Finally, I was assigned to two major Secret Service field offices as the Assistant Special Agent in Charge, where I supervised the daily criminal investigations, protective intelligence investigations, and protection activities.

I truly believe the men and women of the Secret Service have the most difficult and unforgiving job in law enforcement. It is a “zero fail” mission. I have the utmost respect for those agents, Uniformed Division Officers and support staff who are currently facing the challenges. In some ways, the job today is even more difficult than when I was an agent, with the technological advances now available to a potential assassin.

Including the recent incidents in Butler and West Palm Beach, since 1865, there have been fourteen assassination attempts or successful assassinations against presidents and presidential candidates: President Reagan (1981), President Ford (1975), Presidential Candidate George Wallace (1972), Presidential Candidate Robert F Kennedy (1968), President Kennedy (1963), President Truman (1950), President-elect Roosevelt (1933), former President and Candidate Teddy Roosevelt (1912), President McKinnley (1901), President Garfield (1881) and President Lincoln (1865).

In fact, because of the murder of President McKinnley, Congress directed the Secret Service to protect the president. The Secret Service was at the time, a branch of the Treasury Department, and the only investigative law enforcement agency in the United States Government. It was not

until 1908 that the forerunner of the FBI, the Bureau of Investigation, was created when President Teddy Roosevelt transferred nine Secret Service agents from the Treasury Department to the Justice Department. And following the murder of Robert F Kennedy, Congress directed the Secret Service to protect presidential candidates.

I consider myself an expert on the relationship between the Secret Service and its state and local law enforcement partners.

For a Presidential visit, the Secret Service must provide 360-degree coverage, to include the sky above and the ground below. The Secret Service establishes an Inner, Middle and Outer perimeter.

- Inner Perimeter – These are the agents assigned to the shift who are next to the President. Their mission is to cover and evacuate the President in the event of a security incident. A shift agent would respond to an assailant with a gun or knife within arms reach of the agent.
- Middle Perimeter – This is the secure area where spectators have already been screened. It begins at the magnetometer check point(s). Generally, this is manned by Secret Service agents and some police officers. In some cases, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents staff some posts in the Middle Perimeter when there are not enough Secret Service agents.
- Outer Perimeter – This is the area outside of the secure area and includes the motorcade route. It is staffed by police officers and a limited number of Secret Service agents. The areas under observation for a long-range threat by the Secret Service C/S team is almost always in the Outer Perimeter. The Secret Service C/S Response Team (usually one agent and one local police officer) and the Secret Service Counter Surveillance Unit (CSU) operates in the Outer Perimeter.

The Secret Service does not have any helicopters of its own. It usually requests helicopter support from state or local police, or another Federal agency, such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

I will now discuss a typical Secret Service advance for a presidential visit in the United States.

Prior to the July 13 assassination attempt in Butler, what follows was only provided for the President, and to a limited degree, the Vice President. Now, it is my understanding this process is being used to protect President Biden, Vice President Harris, as well as former President Trump.

- The White House Staff, or in the case of former President Trump, his staff, informs the Secret Service about the date, location and itinerary for the trip.
- The Secret Service protection detail then notifies HQ Office of Protective Operations (OPO) and the Secret Service Field Office where the visit will occur.
- The Field Office then notifies the relevant state and local law enforcement agencies and schedules a police meeting.
- It is at the police meeting that the state and local law enforcement agencies meet the Secret Service advance team and Field Office supervisors and learn all available

information about the trip. Sometimes, the police meeting can get somewhat complicated if the President's itinerary has him stopping in multiple police jurisdictions on the same trip. During this meeting, counterparts for the Secret Service advance team and local police are identified.

- The Secret Service advance team usually consists of the following:
  - Lead Advance Agent
  - Site Advance Agent(s)
  - Airport Advance Agent
  - Motorcade Advance Agent
  - Protective Intelligence Advance Agent
  - Counter Assault Team (CAT) Agent
  - Counter Sniper (C/S) Team Officer
  - Magnetometer Advance Officer
  - Counter Surveillance Unit (CSU) Advance Agent
  - Technical Security Advance Components
    - Unmanned Aerial Surveillance (UAS) aka Drones
    - Explosive Detection
    - Hammer (Hazardous Agent Mitigation and Medical Response)
    - Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Detection
    - Critical Systems Protection against cyber attacks
    - Other classified elements
- After the counterparts are identified, the police and Secret Service work together on their assignments to develop a security plan for their site, or area of responsibility.
- Although rare, there are also sometimes rivalries and “turf issues” among local law enforcement agencies which can further complicate the planning process. For example, I did an advance for the President where Air Force One landed in the airport within the city limits. The President was then scheduled to travel via motorcade from the airport to downtown via an Interstate Highway that was the primary jurisdiction of the Highway Patrol. The city police initially refused to allow the Highway Patrol in the motorcade. I had to persuade the City Police to allow the Highway Patrol to join the motorcade, to ensure the overall safety and security of the President.
- The site agent and the local police counterpart will jointly determine the assets needed to secure the site, to include the number of police officers and Secret Service agent post standers. The Secret Service personnel doing the CAT and C/S advances will also work closely with the local police SWAT personnel to craft a tactical response plan. The site agent and the local police counterpart will be fully knowledgeable of the tactical plan.
- The Protective Intelligence (PI) advance works with the local police, and other federal agencies, to investigate any threats or threat related information. A PI team consists of one agent and one local police detective. PI teams are assigned to the motorcade and all sites.
- The site agent, in consultation with the lead advance agent, reviews the site security plan and presents it to the Field Office supervisor and protective detail supervisor, for concurrence.
- A request is then made to HQ OPO to concur with the requested post standers and other assets, and to order their travel to the site.

- The lead advance agent is responsible for ensuring all the protection activities are coordinated and in sync. This includes ensuring all components can communicate and respond appropriately during an emergency. Usually, there will be one overall Command Post (CP) for the visit, with each site having a Security Room, a scaled down version of a CP, where radio traffic pertinent to that site, is coordinated. State and local police are part of the CP and Security Room.
- The Secret Service lead and site agents do not have direct command and control of the state and local police officers. Their supervision and direction is always under the control of the designated police supervisors who are the counterparts to the Secret Service lead and site agents.
- Off the Record (OTR) sites are handled much differently than on the record movements. The Secret Service often does not know the President intends to visit a location until shortly before the event. For example, the President might decide to go with a family member to a sporting event, dinner or entertainment venue, within a short driving distance of the White House or other location where he is staying. The Secret Service will have a site agent conduct a brief advance to ensure there are no apparent security concerns. Generally other guests or spectators are not specifically screened by Secret Service until after the President arrives, and then additional security measures can be put in place.
- One must note that during Campaign season, candidates often set their travel plans shortly before an event. The Secret Service must be nimble enough adjust to these conditions, yet still provide protection. This sometimes means the Secret Service is required to conduct a full security advance over a period of two or three days, when it should take five to seven days during “normal” conditions.

I have reviewed the recently issued Secret Service Summary of the Mission Assurance Investigation into the attempted Assassination of Former President Trump. I concur with the findings. In my professional opinion, multiple mistakes were made in Butler, by both Secret Service and local police personnel. However, the Secret Service has taken full responsibility for the security failures that day.

In closing, I would like to suggest Congress consider expanding the statutory authority of the Secret Service, Title 18, U.S. Code Section 3056, to ensure the agency can make the most informed decisions possible. The United States is facing a hyperdynamic threat environment, and the Secret Service must be certain it is receiving all relevant threat information to protect the President, Vice President and former President.

Currently, there is no statutory requirement mandating federal, state and local agencies must report to the United States Secret Service information concerning threats against the President or others protected by the Secret Service. There are agreements in place and Memorandums of Understanding to allow the transfer of such information, but no legal mandate to do so. In my opinion, the law must clearly state such information must be immediately provided to the Secret Service to take whatever steps it deems necessary.

For example, Title 18, U.S. Code Section 1751(d), gives the FBI exclusive jurisdiction to investigate a conspiracy to assault or kill the President, before the attack takes place. Since the

Secret Service is responsible for protecting the President, it should be part of all threat investigations so it can take appropriate steps to prevent an assassination.

And finally, the FBI has the authority under law to seek the assistance of any Federal, state or local agency, including the military, to help investigate an assassination or assassination attempt against the President after the fact. I believe the United States Secret Service should have similar authority to call for such assistance to *prevent* an assassination or assassination attempt.

This concludes my statement.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may.

Thank you.