

Hinckley undergoes tests

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Hinckley, his alleged murder attempt upon Pres. Reagan reportedly spawned by infatuation with a teen-age film star, underwent psychiatric tests Wednesday over the objections of his new attorney, a partner of famed criminal lawyer Edward Williams.

The mental tests were conducted at the Quantico, Va., Marine base south of the capital, where Hinckley, 25, has been kept isolated and under constant surveillance since his arrest Monday following the attempted assassination.

The tests were administered to determine whether Hinckley, the son of a wealthy Denver oilman, is mentally competent to face trial on charges of attempted murder of the president and assault on a Secret Service agent.

Justice Department sources say investigators believe Hinckley was "infatuated" with teen-age movie actress Jodie Foster and wanted to do something that would attract her attention.

The sources said Hinckley wrote an unmailed letter to Foster in which he described his plans to shoot the president and

said "I'm going to do it for you." The letter was found by authorities, apparently at the downtown Washington hotel where Hinckley stayed the night before the attempt on Reagan's life.

Foster had portrayed a teenage prostitute in the film "Taxi Driver," in which a New York cab driver who is fascinated by guns plans to assassinate a Senate candidate.

Meanwhile, a switch in defense strategy developed Wednesday when one of Hinckley's new lawyers, Vincent Fuller, sought at a court hearing Wednesday to cancel the psychiatric tests.

However, U.S. Magistrate Arthur Burnett rejected the request.

Hinckley's original defense attorneys, who were appointed by the court, had asked for the mental tests. Fuller gave no explanation for why he opposed testing of Hinckley, who has been under psychiatric care in the past.

Thomas P. Decair, a Justice Department spokesman, said Hinckley was interviewed for three hours by a psychiatrist. Decair emphasized the session was not to determine Hinckley's sanity, but rather whether he is competent to understand his rights and help in his defense.

Fuller, a partner in the firm of Williams and Connolly, also told the magistrate that his client was willing to waive a preliminary hearing scheduled for Thursday morning and have the case go directly to a federal grand jury.

Brady improves; able to move, talk

WASHINGTON (AP) — The steady recovery White House press secretary James Brady is making from a bullet through the brain is "truly exceptional" and indicates he may regain more mental functions than earlier hoped, say brain specialists.

White House officials said Wednesday that Brady was conscious, talking, moving both arms and both legs and generally continuing to improve.

"Physicians continue to be cautiously optimistic as Mr. Brady's neurological condition continues to improve," Wednesday's report said.

However, he remains in critical condition at George Washington University Hospital.

Brady, 40, and his wife, Sarah, played catch with a ball of cotton or gauze Tuesday night, "demonstrating his ability to move in spite of his weakened condition," said a White House statement.

James Baker, White House chief of staff, said doctors believe Brady will survive and "that mental capacity will be there" despite damage caused by a .22-caliber bullet ripping through his brain.

However, it is unknown how much and what kind of mental capacity will remain following massive injury to the right side of Brady's brain and minor injury to the front lobe of the left side.

During five hours of surgery soon after Monday's assassination attempt on Pres. Reagan, doctors reportedly removed large amounts of brain tissue from the right frontal lobe of Brady's brain and a small amount from the left.

Dr. Daniel Ruge, the White House physician, said there was "minimal, but hopeful" movement on the left side of Brady's body, as well as continued movement of the right arm and leg reported earlier.

The left-side movement first reported Wednesday was characterized by deputy press secretary Larry Speakes as "a big development" since the badly damaged right side of the brain controls body movement on the left.

Brain specialists term Brady's progress "extraordinary" and "exceptional," but caution against premature optimism.

Jodie Foster 'shocked' by Hinckley's actions

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — Actress Jodie Foster said Wednesday she was "shocked" and "frightened" when she learned that the man who is accused of shooting President Reagan may have written letters to her.

She declined to say anything about the contents, except that they did not refer to the president and were not of a threatening nature. In fact, she said they seemed more like love letters.

The well-known Yale freshman came out of a 24-hour seclusion for a news conference limited to a few reporters at the university.

She said she had received a number of letters and notes signed either "JWH" or "John Hinckley" last fall and again last

month. She said she threw the earlier ones away.

The Justice Department reportedly found an unmailed letter addressed to Foster in Hinckley's Washington hotel room after his arrest Monday. It reportedly indicated he wanted to impress her by killing the president.

Looking calm and composed, Foster said she didn't want to establish any link between the shooting and the film, "Taxi Driver," in which she had a role as a young prostitute. A portion of the movie dealt with an attempted political assassination.

Foster said she received "several pieces of unsolicited correspondence" after she entered Yale as a literature major and "threw them all away."

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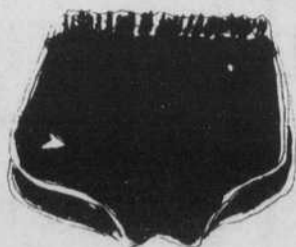
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