

# The Stanford Daily

## News

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### **Five students join Presidential motorcade - Stanford Democrats given the opportunity to be part of the advance team**

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By [Michael Kives](#)

It looked like an ordinary group of people gathered together chatting on an ordinary day. It was, however, 4 a.m. last Saturday morning, and the conversation was anything but ordinary.

Paul Woodson, the coordinating member of the White House advance team, was keeping up to speed four Stanford student volunteers.

With the procedures clearly explained and understood, Woodson proclaimed, "Gentlemen, it's time to get the President."

And with that, a convoy of more than 12 vehicles assembled and departed for the home of the wealthy Silicon Valley executive who was hosting President Clinton.

Most people consider themselves lucky to even catch a glimpse of the Presidential motorcade as it swiftly moves down the highway.

This past weekend, however, several Stanford students were actually driving in the caravan.

Seniors Brian Hughes and Steven Aronowitz, sophomore Nick Larson, freshman Cynthia Mata and Education master's student Ben Bolger, all active members of the Stanford Democrats, offered their services to the White House this weekend and were considered members of the advance team that coordinates President Clinton's numerous trips.

Bolger found himself driving the lead press van for the motorcade at a time when most people were sound asleep.

"The schedule of the President is truly impressive," said Hughes. "He has more energy than just about anybody I know. Can you imagine keeping these kind of hours everyday?"

For the students involved in the motorcade, the experience began Friday night. The student volunteers met at the Hyatt Hotel, where they were briefed by Secret Service officials on intensified procedures and security measures.

Security measures were intense, as the students were made well aware. "The safety of the President is the most important concern we have," said Secret Service Agent Jim Donaldson, the "point man," or head security officer, for the weekend.

"You should know that the government has performed extensive background checks on everyone on the advance team," Donaldson noted. "Our check on you was the cleanest one we have carried out in a while. It appears that none of you even had a traffic violation."

After the meeting, the students drove in the police-escorted motorcade to Moffett Federal Airfield to pick up President Clinton. "It is easier to contain activities here than at [the San Francisco International Airport]," said Donaldson.

Within 10 minutes after Air Force One landed, the convoy was traveling down a closed-off Highway 280.

By the end of the evening, the President was delivered to the private home where he would stay for the night. After returning members of the press to their respective lodgings, most of the Stanford students were ready for bed.

Bolger, who worked back-to-back shifts on Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon, said that the motorcade "is a great way to see how the pragmatics of American democracy play out on a real level. The logistics of getting the President from Palo Alto to the Sequoia National Park for him to talk about environmental protectionism are complex. Working with the motorcade makes you appreciate the tactical aspects of the President's daily schedule."

Bolger and Mata were also on hand to escort the President to the Stanford Golf Course for a round of golf. "Whoa, keeping up with the President is what I call hard to do," said Mata. "Right now, I feel really honored to be a part of all the excitement."

While sitting in the Stanford golf clubhouse, Bolger said, "I knew it would be a long weekend when I signed on. But, it's a great opportunity to help out the President. I did an internship with the President back in 1995, so this whole weekend brings back really fond memories of public service."

On Monday, the students had photographs taken with President Clinton, Senator Mark Bennet of Utah and the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"What a weekend," Aronowitz said. "Now it's back to the real world."

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