

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

All written transcripts are imperfect abstracts of spoken conversation. Variations in sound quality and in the aural acuity of listeners can and do produce wide variations in what is heard. Even though transcripts may be prepared at great effort and with great care, many points of ambiguity are inevitable, and erroneous interpretations from transcripts are always possible. Therefore, to ensure full confidence in any and all quotations from the presidential recordings, users are strongly urged to check all transcript renditions against the actual tape recordings before publication.

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

- * * * To indicate a pause in the recording while the speaker listens to the person speaking at the other end of the telephone. Used when only one side of a telephone conversation is recorded.
- [?] When the transcriber is not certain of what is said on the recording.
- To indicate a sentence which the speaker trails off without completing it.
- . . . When a speaker is interrupted before a sentence is completed.
- _____ To indicate the speaker's emphasis.
- [] Used to enclose editorial comments of the transcriber such as */Meeting appears to be breaking up/* or */Several speakers speak at once and none of the words are intelligible./*

Names:

The first time a name is mentioned, the full name is provided whenever it is known. "JFK" and "RFK" are used for President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, respectively. When the identity of a speaker is unknown, "Speaker?" is used; when the identification of a speaker is uncertain, a question mark follows the name. The heading of each transcript gives the names of all participants listed in the President's Appointment Books as scheduled to attend the meeting.

Preparation:

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the audiovisual research room in the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made.

Dictabelt 10B, Item 10B4

March 6, 1963

Voice: Yes, please?

JFK: Secretary Dillon, please.

Voice: Yes, Mr. President.

[there is a long pause of about 50 seconds]

Lincoln¹: Would you try to get Joe Fowler?

Voice: Yes.

[another 35 second pause]

JFK: Hello?

[some minor confusion on the line, with static and voices talking at once, for just a couple or three seconds]

Lincoln: Hello?

JFK: Yes?

Voice: Mr. Fowler on the line, Mrs. Lincoln.

Lincoln: Okay.

JFK: Hello.

Fowler²: Hello, sir.

JFK: Oh, Joe. Listen, uh, this God damn thing of Caplin's³ is causing us a lot of headaches.

¹ Evelyn Lincoln

² Henry H. Fowler

Fowler: I'm . . . I'm just rubbing my head from all over the place. Yes, I know.

JFK: What is . . . How can they be that dumb over there? Will you tell me that? I mean, Christ, to take something out of Scranton and put it in Boston . . . which is a depressed area . . . just making it easy for the governor down there and everybody in Pennsylvania to say that we're taking care of Teddy. Then . . . Are they out of their minds? What? To save a million dollars four years from now?

Fowler: Well, uh, . . .

JFK: He doesn't have any God damn sense. He may be a genius, but he doesn't have any sense.

Fowler: Uh, . . . We are, uh, . . . we're, uh, . . .

JFK: Eating it?

Fowler: The gut . . . we . . . The real question, I think, is whether I . . . My own suggestion, sir, would be this, that we get him to answer this tomorrow; let's see how much, uh, follow-up there is from, uh, from fellows like Cotton⁴ and, uh, Rockefeller, and see if this is a twenty-four hour wonder, and whether it passes off, . . . uh . . .

JFK: Scranton is the one that really bothers me, more than New York, because you know they got such a bad unemployment situation there.

Fowler: Well it's . . . it's . . . it's a very miniscule number. I'm getting him to . . . I've had him on the phone for the last hour, uh, getting me every fact I can get my hands on . . .

JFK: Wasn't he aware that this would have a bad repercussion? Or did he think everybody's gonna . . .

Fowler: Oh, yes, uh, we . . . we . . . went into this in great detail, about what the consequences would be, and I had him go up and see everybody in God's name about it. . . .

JFK: I wish he had talked to O'Brien. Did he talk to O'Brien?

³ Mortimer M. Caplin.

⁴ Senator Norris Cotton.

Fowler: I don't know whether he talked to O'Brien or not.

JFK: Will you tell him in the future to talk to O'Brien? Christ, I'm the one who gets all the hell on these things. Caplin doesn't. So I had . . . So the only problem, uh, . . . so make sure, uh, . . . then . . . then at least we got responsibility if it goes wrong. Now I think that, uh, we ought to consider tomorrow issuing a statement saying that, uh, . . . by the secretary . . . in which he says . . . of Caplin . . . that this matter is going to be, uh, reviewed, and there will be . . . that no action will be taken until the review is complete. Then you could put it to rest for a couple of weeks and then we could eat it if we had to.

Fowler: Well, uh, there is, of course, this line to take, . . . Let me just cite you the New York situation, just to take one take one.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Fowler: Actually, they've . . . there are seven hundred and seventy-six people in that New York office. Six hundred and two of them are going to be retained. One hundred and seventy-four are marked as surplus. No taxpayers' services are being transferred. And then, of course, this is all a part of a program for economy and efficiency. Now, that is the general line of answer that would be given to Rockefeller to his telegram to you.

JFK: Yeah.

Fowler: Uh, . . . Question of whether we get out a press release on . . . on that, uh, or whether, uh, . . .

JFK: I don't care so much about Rockefeller. He's always yelling about economy and efficiency in the government. . . .

Fowler: That's right. We could burn him.

JFK: Of course, the unfortunate thing is they are moving it to Massachusetts. . . .

Fowler: Wh-- . . . [recording skips slightly]

JFK: . . . that ties in . . . [recording skips] . . . But I'm more concerned a little about Scranton. That's got what? About a hundred and seventy people?

Fowler: Uh, no, I think it'll turn out to be, uh, just about . . . maybe less than that. I don't have the Scranton figures. I've asked . . .

JFK: Well, would you consider, uh, in any case then, that you . . . we . . . an announcement?

Fowler: Uh, I . . . would prefer . . .

JFK: Let's you and I talk about it tomorrow. But this is what . . . We might have either Caplin or the secretary say that this matter is going to be reviewed . . . there'll be no changes made until the review is completed. And, uh, that would, uh, that might, . . . then we could always eat it if we had to. But let's consider that in the morning.

Fowler: All right, sir.

JFK: I don't want to have a lot of people in Pennsylvania thinking we're screwing 'em for Teddy.

Fowler: Yeah, well, they . . . they . . . they couldn't really, on . . . on the, uh, . . .

JFK: No, but you know how these emotional matters get going.

Fowler: They go . . . It . . . It goes to Philadelphia and to Pittsburgh. The people from Scranton.

JFK: They go to Pennsylvania? They stay in Pennsylvania?

Fowler: They stay in Pennsylvania. The . . . so . . . And there are just a few, and not . . . and they . . . we keep an office there.

JFK: Yeah.

Fowler: And, uh, actually, I think that when I get the facts in hand, . . .

JFK: Well, get the facts on Scranton. That's the one that disturbs me most.

Fowler: . . . uh, I really think we can deal with that one.

JFK: Detroit we are going to take care of anyway, because we have a commitment on that. Uh, but I'll talk to you then tomorrow.

Fowler: All right.

JFK: Thanks a lot.

Fowler: Well, I'm on top of this just as fast as I can.

JFK: Okay.

Fowler: Have been, for the last hour or two when it hit me. I . . . I have been buried in the tax bill, so, uh, . . .

JFK: Right.

Fowler: I . . . I . . . I just wasn't on top of it.

JFK: Right.

Fowler: Right, sir.

JFK: Righto.

/phone hangs up/