

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.

Copyright:

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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 10A

Item 10A1

March 6, 1963

[completes conversation begun on 9B8]

RFK: . . . and, uh, if he has any, uh, instructions for me?

Lincoln¹: Yeah.

RFK: Now, that . . . I don't have to leave here 'til twenty-five of one, so if he's out by twelve-thirty it'd be all right.

Lincoln: Okay.

RFK: Thank you.

[phone hangs up]

¹ Evelyn Lincoln

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A2

March 6, 1963

/begins in mid-conversation/

JFK: Were there any Arkansas guard people?

Bundy²: There were more Alabamians, and I would guess that there were Arkansas, but not in . . . not in casualties.

JFK: No, but, none of them . . . no Arkansas people were killed, were there?

Bundy: No. Not that I know of. I'm pretty sure not.

JFK: */words missing/* . . . that only four were killed?

Bundy: That is right, and they were all Alabamians, as I understand it. Let's check it out.

JFK: Well, I'd like to find out about when these Arkansas people were recruited.

Bundy: Right.

JFK: Whether it was before . . . and they didn't fly any combat missions, as I understand, . . . or did they?

Bundy: */I haven't got . . ./*

JFK: Have we got any information?

Bundy: Let's find out. I don't know.

JFK: Is somebody looking that up?

Bundy: Yeah. I will check it.

² McGeorge Bundy

JFK: Would you call me right back?

Bundy: Yeah.

/phone hangs up/

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A3

March 6, 1963

JFK: Hello. Hello.

Bundy³: Sir? The, um, . . .

JFK: Hello.

Bundy: Nobody from Arkansas flew in combat. There were twenty-four from Arkansas.

JFK: Yeah. Did they fly that day? Were there any in the planes?

Bundy: None flew in combat over the Bay of Pigs. They were not, in other words, sent on those missions.

JFK: Oh, who, . . . Most of those were other fellows?

Bundy: All the four that were killed were Alabamians.

JFK: I knew that all the four that were killed . . . but, there were some other Americans, weren't there?

Bundy: There were . . . there were some others, and I am trying to find out what States, but so far all they have reported is negative on Arkansas.

JFK: Are they sure of that?

Bundy: Well, Dick Helms says he is sure.

JFK: I see, and what about, uh, . . . You don't know when they were recruited, do you?

Bundy: Uh, I got . . . I've gotta look . . . look up that memo.

³ McGeorge Bundy

JFK: Now, the question is whether . . . *[talks to someone off the phone, in the same room with him]* . . . He says that nobody from Arkansas flew in combat. . . . *[then back to Bundy]* . . . Uh, we're just figuring, maybe I'll get the Defense Department to say that.

Bundy: Or the agency? Or, uh, . . .

JFK: The agency has been reluctant.

Bundy: Yeah. I know they have.

JFK: I mean, Faubus is saying that I left Arkansas boys to die. *[appears to be quoting from a press account]* . . . Recruited in the na-- . . . were recruited but left hang by the administration of Kennedy. If that doesn't beat him, nothing would. *[end reading from press account]* . . . Okay, I'll talk to Dick Helms; Let me, just so I'll be sure.

Bundy: Right. Right.

[Bundy hangs up, but JFK immediately says . . .]

JFK: Will you get me Helms at the CIA, please?

Voice: Yes, Mr. President.

[There is little more than one second between the "Yes, Mr. President," above, and the beginning of the item below, in mid-sentence. Apparently, a flaw or damage in the original Dictabelt caused the needle of the playback device to skip a groove. The phone ringing is heard in the one-second pause, but then the recording jumps right to Helms in mid-sentence.]

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A4

March 6, 1963

Helms⁴: . . . involved. Absolutely not, sir.

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: I've just verified and reverified that.

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: That's absolutely certain.

JFK: What . . . Were they down in Nicaragua and, uh, . . .?

Helms: They were in Guatemala.

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: And there were eight of them who were, uh, officers; In other words pilots, navigators, planners . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: . . . who were involved in training the Cubans. The other sixteen were involved in ground crews - mechanics and things of that kind.

JFK: I see. How come they were recruited in the South and not the North? I notice Faubus said they couldn't recruit in the North.

Helms: Uh, I don't know why, sir

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: I think that was pure happenstance.

⁴ Richard Helms

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: Your states that were represented were Georgia; there was one from California; there were several from Washington, D.C.; and then there was Alabama and Arkansas.

JFK: Oh, I see. Now, these were recruited from . . . ?

Helms: All from national guard units.

JFK: I see.

Helms: And they totaled a hundred and twenty-four.

JFK: Recruitment . . . hundred and twenty-four?

Helms: Yes.

JFK: That they recruited. Okay.

Helms: And then we had some others . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Helms: . . . that were . . . some pilots from CAT⁵ that were rotated in and out, and so forth.

JFK: Okay. Good. Fine. Thanks now.

Helms: You bet.

[There follows about 3 minutes of blank tape - only machine noises and surface noise - before the beginning of item 10A5]

⁵ Civil Air Transport.

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A5

March 6, 1963

Voice: /Ready, sir./

JFK: Oh, hello. Larry?

O'Brien⁶: Yes.

JFK: They tell me, uh, . . . Mac here says that he hears that Armistead Selden's gonna have a report on what we're doing to stop subversion in Latin America, and it's going to be rather critical.

O'Brien: Um-hmm.

JFK: Now, we are working on this, and we got the Cottrell⁷ group and we got a program which we are presenting, and . . . as always, it takes a little longer than . . .

O'Brien: Yep.

JFK: . . . it seems to, but I wondered if we could, . . . I guess Fascell⁸ is on this committee.

O'Brien: Yep.

JFK: I felt we oughta try to mute the criticism.

O'Brien: Yep.

JFK: I think if they would suggest a program, . . . They don't need to . . . s- ... skin us on it. We're gonna . . .

⁶ Lawrence F. O'Brien

⁷ Sterling Cotrell.

⁸ Dante B. Fascell.

O'Brien: Well, if Selden has a degree of control there, . . . He has talked to Wilson⁹ and I last week along these lines and, uh, gave us, uh, . . . well, uh, I would have to say almost total assurance. And we are certainly in a position to review what he is going to do. If Mac wants to provide me with some thoughts that, uh, as to a . . . a line, hell, I . . . I think we can work it out.

JFK: Well, I think if you could, uh, would be available to tell 'em what we're trying . . .

O'Brien: Yeah.

JFK: . . . to do . . .

O'Brien: All right.

JFK: . . . and if we could answer any questions, and give 'em any material we've got on our program, which we could put forward, and to sell . . .

O'Brien: All right.

JFK: . . . the program, and urge us to carry out these actions. Just not to be awfully harsh about our not doing it, 'cause it's really up to these other countries . . .

O'Brien: Yeah.

JFK: . . . like Mexico and the rest of them.

O'Brien: All ri-- . . . I'll get moving on that, and, uh, I'll probably get back . . .

JFK: You didn't . . . Did you get M-- . . . Mahaffey?¹⁰

O'Brien: Yes, I talked to him, . . .

JFK: What'd he say?

O'Brien: . . . and he's going to talk to you. He hadn't even heard of it.

JFK: Yeah.

⁹ Henry Hall Wilson.

¹⁰ Not further identified.

O'Brien: He said that there . . . there was nothing in the early editions down there, so I reviewed it with him, and he said he just couldn't understand the damn thing at all, other than Faubus has been having legislative trouble down there this year for no good reason because he hasn't much of a program. But he said he's been holding on to his gut. He has got stomach trouble anyway, and been grouching pretty well. He spent, uh, day before yesterday with him and didn't hear a word about this sort of thing. Would get to him as fast as he could. He thought that it would be this afternoon and be back to me.

JFK: Yeah. You told him there were no Arkansas fliers . . .

O'Brien: Yeah. I went over the whole thing with him.

JFK: Yeah.

O'Brien: He said I will grab him and I will get back to you . . .

JFK: Okay.

O'Brien: . . . the minute I talk to him.

JFK: Right.

[phone hangs up]

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A6

March 6, 1963

[begins in mid-conversation]

Clifford¹¹: . . . well, uh, . . .

JFK: You heard about that?

Clifford: Well, it so happens that a . . . one . . . one minute ago, uh, uh, Mr. Jerry Seigel of the Washington Post, uh, called, and he's just this instant come into my office with something that he said he was to bring me from Phil.¹²

JFK: Right.

Clifford: Now, uh, . . .

JFK: Well, why don't you read it, if you would, and then perhaps you and I should talk, . . . the real . . . it's murderous . . .

Clifford: [unintelligible]

JFK: He's gonna really cause us [1 or 2 words unintelligible] with this one if he prints it. Evidently he wants to print it for Friday. Now, the question really is how we try to prevent him from printing it. Because it's . . . really, what he is doing is . . . this is really an attack on . . . Well, I don't know what it is, but it certainly is . . . It would be a helluva headache for me, which may be part of his mixed up purpose, but, uh, very bad for the corporation¹³ and the directors and everybody. Would you read it and call me back?

Clifford: Yes, sir. Can you hold . . . hold just a second here, [speaking to someone off the phone in his office] Um, now, . . . now did, . . . Jerry, did Phil say for you to bring this to me and then I was to read it and then . . . and then . . . what . . . [long pause] . . . I would know what to do? . . . [pause] Oh. . . . Oh. . . . Well, . . . Did he indicate in any way after I read it I was to get in touch with him? With Phil? Oh. . . . [pause] . . . yeah. . . . [pause] . . . oh., Oh, well,

¹¹ Clark Clifford

¹² Philip L. Graham.

¹³ Communications Satellite Corporation

when . . . when did you take it to Dungan?¹⁴ . . . [pause] . . . Oh, I see. Oh, yeah. Well, all right, um, . . .

JFK: Did they say that he has decided to print it or that he's susceptible to reasoning on it?

Clifford: Oh, . . . he . . . oh. That's right. Now, Mr. Seigel is saying that Phil is, as . . . as of the last word that they had from him, still seems determined to . . . to want to publish this

JFK: Yeah.

Clifford: . . . before the hearings start, uh, uh, and they start out on Monday.

JFK: Yeah.

Clifford: So, uh, uh, let me read it, and let me talk to Mr. Seigel, and then I'll have to . . . and then I'll be back in touch with you.

JFK: Okay. Fine.

Clifford: All right, Mr. President.

JFK: Thank you. Fine.

[phone hangs up]

¹⁴ Ralph Dungan.

Dictabelt 10A

Item 10A7

March 6, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Katzenbach¹⁵: Hello, Mr. President.

JFK: Nick, what do you think of the, uh, bomb Graham?

Katzenbach: Huh. Not very much.

JFK: Yeah.

Katzenbach: The, uh, . . . uh, . . . the problems that he raises or discusses in there are problems that, uh, uh, were thought of and discussed at length before we went ahead with this corporation, and every one of them is anticipated, or in the statute itself. Uh, and, uh, what he fears coming to pass could only come to pass if nobody, uh, did their job . . . nobody in the government did their job.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Katzenbach: That's the short answer to it, and that can be . . .

JFK: I wonder if we would have been better off with a government corporation?

Katzenbach: I, uh, think the one way of making sure that AT&T ran that would have been to have a government corporation.

JFK: Yes. They would have.

Katzenbach: Because you'd then had, uh, the one . . . the one . . .

JFK: */unintelligible/*

Katzenbach: . . . we have seventy percent of the use would have been on contract to AT&T.

¹⁵ Nicholas deB. Katzenbach

JFK: Yeah.

Katzenbach: And they just would of never had to invest, [several words over-ridden by JFK]

JFK: Well, I think we oughta . . . I tell you what . . . Graham is now . . . I mean, uh, uh, Clark Clifford's reading it. I think we oughta get up an answer, which Pastore might make, or which somebody else might make, that would sort of respond to these points, so we will have it available in case, 'cause I understand now he wants to print it Friday.

Katzenbach: Yeah. I hope he doesn't. For his . . . for his sake I really hope he doesn't.

JFK: Well . . . well, I really think it would be harmful for everybody, . . .

Katzenbach: Yeah.

JFK: . . . 'cause the hearings begin Monday. Now, the only thing . . . he does in his final suggestion is . . . It's awfully weak. He goes in like a lion and comes out like a lamb. His final suggestion is that we just . . . we have six directors who are full time. I mean, that's hardly a very adequate reform, and that's all he's suggesting, isn't it?

Katzenbach: Yeah. 'Course what I have wanted, and . . . and all along we have been pushing on, is to get management, because the director shouldn't be doing this, Mr. President. . . .

[end of belt; continued on 10B1.]