

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

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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 8A

Item 8A1

Thursday, February 28, 1963¹

Meany²: Hello?

JFK: Uh, I under . . . I'm going to be going up to that, uh, dinner they are having for the anniversary for the Labor Department

Meany: Yes. On Monday.

JFK: A week from Monday, is it?

Meany: No, it's this Monday.

JFK: This . . . I wondered whether if any of your people were going to come in, uh, I thought that I might have them for lunch or over for a drink. Uh, you gonna have many of your council here?

Meany: There'll be . . . there'll be quite . . . quite a few.

JFK: Otherwise we could do it at a later date, as we did last year.

Meany: Yes.

JFK: What'd be your judgment?

Meany: Well, I . . .

JFK: Are you gonna have any meeting of the executive council in Washington in March or April?

Meany: No, there isn't. No.

JFK: I see. Well . . .

¹ The playback speed of this item is very fast, and voices are pitched higher than normally recorded.

² George Meany

Meany: There'll be . . . there'll be quite a few of them in for this.

JFK: Good. Fine. Do you think they'd be in time for lunch Monday? Or, otherwise, I could have them over at the White House around six o' clock on S . . . Monday afternoon . . . by Sunday . . . uh, Monday . . .

Meany: The trouble with that is there's already a cocktail party that . . . that we're giving up at the hotel at six-thirty, you see.

JFK: Right. OK.

Meany: We're giving that for all of the people. That's the AFL-CIO's contribution to this thing.

JFK: Right. Good.

Meany: So . . . so that wouldn't work. And on the luncheon thing I don't really know.

JFK: Right, uh, . . . well, . . . the, uh, . . .

Meany: You'd have, oh, I guess you'd have a half . . . maybe a dozen of 'em in altogether, but that . . . that would be about its limit.

JFK: I see. I see. Well, uh, why don't we, uh, . . . why don't we might . . . we might let it go. What's your . . .? I'd be glad to have 'em come anytime, when, uh, . . . you, uh, you thought it might be . . .

Meany: I think . . . I think if you . . . I think, Mr. President, if you . . . if you were to set it up, even at anytime, like, oh, ten . . . ten days or so in advance, you'd get quite a few . . . quite a few of them. You know, there's a lot of 'em in and out of here anyway.

JFK: All right.

Meany: So suppose . . . suppose we kind of figure on it for, uh, about . . . what . . . give us about two weeks from now?

JFK: All right. Why don't we just, uh, . . . I tell you what; why don't we just get a tentative date and, uh, we'll do it in March. Uh, what's . . . what's a good day for them? A Friday, or a . . .?

Meany: No, generally a . . . generally a Tuesday.

JFK: A Tuesday.

Meany: We have meetings on Monday.

JFK: All right. Why don't we do it on, uh, March 26th?

Meany: 26th? That would, uh, . . . March 20 . . . 26 . . . Well, I'm afraid that is a bad one, too. There is a meeting on in New York.

JFK: 'Cause the 19th is, uh . . . March is, uh, well I'll be in Costa Rica. The 12th of March . . . Is that too soon?

Meany: That would be good, I think.

JFK: OK. Fine. Well, what . . .

Meany: Tuesday the 12th.

JFK: Do you think that you could get your secretary to send over a list of the fellows we might ask?

Meany: Yes.

JFK: And we will go ahead with it.

Meany: Yes.

JFK: Good.

Meany: Who'll I send it to over there?

JFK: Oh, if you could just sent it over to Mrs. Lincoln.

Meany: Fine.

JFK: And then I will get it out.

Meany: [All right?]

JFK: Good. Fine, Mr. Meany.

[phone hangs up]

Dictabelt 8A

Item 8A2

Thursday, February 28, 1963

[item begins in mid-sentence]

Edmondson³: . . . not a bit. [I] think Carl Albert told Larry O'Brien, or sent word, uh, through Larry O'Brien about the same subject, concerning this American-Eastern merger.

JFK: What's your position on it?

Edmondson: For it.

JFK: You're for it. Yeah.

Edmondson: I talked to Bob about it, uh, in some depth, but, uh, Bob has a different opinion about it, and we didn't go into it too deeply as a result.

JFK: Well, his only . . . Evidently every other airline in the United States, and this is literal, have come in objecting because they say it's going to smother them. It would be the largest airline in the world, and it will be too tough for competition.

Edmondson: Um-hmm.

JFK: And, uh, so we got Delta in, and Braniff, and United, and Western, and . . . and, uh, they've put up quite a case.

Edmondson: I have read, uh, a number of their briefs, and I have also the finding of the examiner. I don't think that there's any question about the bigness. But I think that there are two aspects of it that deserve, uh, consideration. The first one being the concessions that American and Eastern have agreed to make to, uh, somewhat limit their own activities in this regard, such as they agreed, uh, their offer agreement to limit advertising and also, uh, with respect to certain lines where they would be in this position of, uh, near monopoly, and, uh, they've al-- . . . they've already submitted those, uh, offer of concessions to the

³ [James Howard Edmondson—This speaker was previously identified as “Ed Edmundson,” and is now identified as James Howard Edmondson based on contextual information involving the state of Oklahoma, campaigning, and “Kerr’s” participation in politics.]

CAB. The other one, of course, is something that, uh, goes into it a lot deeper. And it's based primarily on some conversations that I have had with, uh, the former Chairman of the CAB, Del Rentzel, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: . . . who is from Oklahoma.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: He was a chairman under Truman.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And, uh, he pointed out . . .

JFK: What is his interest in the matter? Now, he has an airline out there, doesn't he?

Edmondson: Uh, he has an airline, but it's not involved in this because it's a completely cargo line.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And I was inquiring of him, . . . not, uh, ... he wasn't soliciting . . .

JFK: Right.

Edmondson: . . . my opinion about it. I just wanted to know what he thought about it as a former chairman of the CAB.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And his observations, I thought, were very interesting because he pointed out this: that, uh, some of the objections made by Justice to the effect that such a . . . a merger being approved would, uh, tend to, uh, eventually cause or set a pattern to cause six or eight major lines, and that would be it.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: Uh, he said that he thought that was probably true, but he also believed that this is probably eventually what should be done.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: And he went into it quite in depth, which I wouldn't want to burden you with . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: . . . at this time. But I . . . I certainly . . .

JFK: Who . . . What's the Oklahoma interest?

Edmondson: The Oklahoma interest is this. American is our largest employer.

JFK: [Oh, is it?] In the state?

Edmondson: Outside of, uh, Uncle Sam.

JFK: Is it?

Edmondson: It is the largest single employer and private employer in the state.

JFK: Why is that?

Edmondson: Because they have their big maintenance center there.

JFK: Oh, I see. Tulsa?

Edmondson: Right.

JFK: I see.

Edmondson: And . . .

JFK: OK. But it hasn't come to me, and I guess won't for some while.

Edmondson: No, I'm sure it won't, uh, but Carl, uh, said that he sent word to you through Larry, and I wanted to personally, uh, express my interest in it very favorably.

JFK: OK. Good. Uh, how're you doing otherwise?

Edmondson: Oh, fine. Doing a lot of campaigning.

JFK: Oh, yeah? How's Kerr doing?

Edmondson: Well, he's working, too.

JFK: Is he?

Edmondson: That's a problem.

JFK: How's he . . . What kind of speech does he make?

Edmondson: I've never heard him make one.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: He never, uh, participated at all in politics.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: I have no idea.

JFK: I think he'll find that name . . . boy, that really evaporates, as I said the other night, fast. Don't you think?

Edmondson: Um-hmm. That is what I'm hoping.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: Keep your fingers crossed for me.

JFK: OK. Good.

Edmondson: I appreciate it.

JFK: Righto.

Edmondson: Good to have been with you the other evening.

JFK: OK. Thanks very much.

Edmondson: Um-hmm.

JFK:

'Bye.

[phone hangs up]

Dictabelt 8A

Item 8A3

Saturday, March 2, 1963

[conversation begins in mid-sentence]

JFK: Yeah. Are they pretty mad at the others?

Kheel:⁴ Oh, they're furious . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . at Dorothy [Schiff], but, uh, . . .

JFK: 'Course Dorothy went through eighty days for nothing, didn't she?

Kheel: Yes.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: She should've done this a lot sooner . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . if she was gonna do it.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: However, I thought you'd like to know, very much off the record, that things look fairly good.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: The, uh, . . . I think the circumstances for a settlement are better now than they ever were.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

⁴ Theodore Kheel.

Kheel: I think it started with your statement, actually.

JFK: Oh, fine.

Kheel: There're a couple of things that've happened. First, uh, the prospect that the mayor might make a recommendation is something that the publishers don't want at all.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: We've indicated to them pretty much what we might do, and this has been a spur to get them, uh, moving.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: Now, I know, and the publishers don't know this, that the, uh, union executive council had a meeting out in Colorado Springs, and they voted to, uh, do everything to bring this thing to a quick conclusion.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: Now, uh, they're . . . they met yesterday, and they pretty much settled one of the thorniest issues, and that's this question of outside tape.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: You know, and . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . the automation issue, so-called.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: And they're going back at it today. Now, I think the publishers are a little, uh, . . . uh, . . . punch-drunk, almost, because of this Dorothy thing.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: They may not want to move too fast, so as not to give the impression that they're too eager for a settlement, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . but they're dying for one.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: And I think that, uh, . . . that . . . that it oughta come this weekend, or ver-- . . . very shortly afterwards.

JFK: What will they finally go for, about thirteen and a half?

Kheel: Well, . . . I think that they'll do better on the money, but they won't be able to settle it without the hours reduction.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: They finally got themselves around to that. Now what they're thinking about is, uh, a three-year contract instead of two.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: And they're prepared at this moment to offer the hours in the third year.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: And, uh, the, uh, . . . then to have some sort of an additional monetary amount in the third year. So the total settlement won't be bad. I think it could be under thirteen . . .

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: . . . for the two years, but it'll be more for the three.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: So, uh, . . . and, uh, . . .

JFK: All those papers will end up at ten cents?

Kheel: Ah, ha, ha, I don't know, I think this is one of the things that has been so, uh, difficult. There is, within the publishers organization, this fight going on between the Times and the News, and the Mirror and the Tribune.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: The Mirror and the Tribune wanted a dime before this began, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . and the Times and the News are the ones that can afford a settlement the best.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: So, uh, in effect the others are saying to 'em, unless you, uh, do something about the price of a paper, uh, you better not negotiate us out of business.

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: And, uh, . . . 'course, I . . . I . . . you know, these are things I suppose they don't like to talk about too much, and it indicated that they are talking about 'em.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: But, uh, I don't think there'll be any change immediately.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: Uh, they'll wanna do some reassessing, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was to come shortly afterwards.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Fine. Good, Ted. Well, uh, let me know. What . . . How's Phil Graham doing?

Kheel: Well, uh, he sorta quieted down at this end.

JFK: You haven't heard from him?

Kheel: Uh, no, I haven't heard from him for the last several days.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: Uh, there, uh, . . . you, uh, sense that he's around and about . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . and, uh, the publishers were . . . I think it . . . I think he's been helpful, too. They've . . . they've had so many blows in the last four or five days, uh, . . . When Rockefeller very stupidly sent his two fellows out to Colorado Springs, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . that built up, uh, Powers.⁵

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: He, uh, got his picture on the cover of Time , . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . you know, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Kheel: . . . uh, Phil Graham was here; now it's Dorothy Schiff.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: On the other hand, uh, the pounding they have taken as a result of your remarks, . . . they . . . while they put on a bold front on it, uh, they don't like that at all.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: And, uh, . . . Elmer Brown⁶ is here, not because we asked him to come, but because his man [Pilch?]⁷ suggested that we ask him to come, you see.

⁵ Bertram A. Powers.

⁶ Elmer Brown of the International Typographical Union.

⁷ Name indistinctly heard and not further identified.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: And, in other words, uh, . . . uh, we called [Pilch/Tilch?] the other evening, and he said isn't this the right time to bring Elmer back?

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: Then he called me the next day and he said that we had an executive council meeting in the union, and, uh, he said, I want you to know we're going to go . . . go all out to get this thing settled.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Good. Fine, well, gimme . . .

Kheel: So I think the atmosphere's a good one, and it, uh, and, uh, it . . . it was an outgrowth of the . . . the statements you made. The . . . the opportunity that we got from that, uh, to say, well, we are going to suggest, uh, a settlement, and the . . . the . . . the desire, really, of both sides . . . Elmer doesn't want a suggestion either; it is sort of a . . . it's an affront their great tradition of bargaining to a conclusion themselves.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: They don't want a recommendation. The publishers don't want one. They . . . they'll take arbitration but not a recommendation.

JFK: I see. [All right].

Kheel: They're afraid that it'll establish a new plateau.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Kheel: So that the, uh, . . . the pressure's on both of them to, uh, reach a settlement are really at the best at the moment.

JFK: Good. Fine, Ted.

Kheel: Hopeful, but we'll see.

JFK: OK. Good. Right.

Kheel: Goodbye.

[phone hangs up]

Dictabelt 8A

Item 8A4

Saturday, March 2, 1963

[item begins in mid-conversation]

McNamara⁸: . . . stop low level . . .

JFK: Yeah.

McNamara: . . . and we rebutted that.

JFK: *[reading]* Senator Goldwater said he was informed that the United States has suspended low level reconnaissance flights over Cuba and is using special, quote, electronic gear, unquote, planes to listen in from outside Cuban territory. Goldwater, an Air Force reserve major general, said in an interview that he was told the low level flights were discontinued February ninth, three days after Secretary Robert McNamara's television reports on the Cuban military situation. An informed government source said that this was in error. Source said low level flights were being carried out as need for them arose, etc.

McNamara: Right. Right.

JFK: *[continues to read]* Goldwater, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that, quote, electronic gear planes, unquote, are equipped with sensitive devices able to register details of what is going on in Cuba down to the point of detecting a generator in operation, *[finishes reading]*. I don't know how much truth there is to it, but I'm sure it's . . .

McNamara: There isn't any truth that I know of, but he shouldn't be talking about electronic gear.

JFK: I know it. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I mean that's fantas- . . . uh, somebody, . . . uh, if it's true it's a bad security thing, and i- . . .

McNamara: It is indeed. I'll check on that part. I saw the first part of the story. I hadn't seen the electronic gear. I talked to Mac about the . . . the, uh, statement that he made about low level flights and our rebuttal to it, and I suggested to Mac that

⁸ Robert S. McNamara

if this continues we oughta run a . . . a low level flight if necessary, just to refute him.

JFK: Yeah.

McNamara: We could pick out an isolated target and run it against that.

JFK: Yeah. Right. Well, uh, what, uh . . . The electronic stuff . . . Is there some new electronic . . . ?

McNamara: I . . . no, I'm certain there isn't, Mr. President. I'll look into that. I haven't, uh, . . .

JFK: Good. The other thing is the story of Mark Watson's in the Baltimore Sun about that . . . flying over those carriers . . .

McNamara: Yes.

JFK: . . . Now, he makes the point, uh, no, it's Paul Ward in the Baltimore Sun, [reading] Diplomatic authorities here [aside] this is Washington [continues reading] tended today to link the latest four Soviet flights over United States naval vessels to the current Kremlin campaign against the projected NATO multi-lateral force. Noting that the Kennedy administration recently has advertised a preference for using Polaris-armed surface ships instead of submarines to make up such a force, they suggested, one: the Soviet reconnaissance flights over the aircraft carriers Kitty Hawk, Enterprise, Princeton, and Forrestal, which Senator . . . Secretary McNamara said were designed only in part to collect military intelligence data; two: that the four . . .

[end of recording; continued on belt 8B]