

## 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 23B, Item 23B1

Date Unknown<sup>1</sup>

JFK: [Reading] “. . . due to your correspondence with various members of the government over the last eighteen months, it appears to me that you are experiencing serious worries that the United States is about to be attacked by the United Nations. This is, indeed, a serious condition. In order to be able to be of assistance to you, I am glad to inform you that the president will fulfill his oath of office and defend the United States from any attack. The president does not believe the United States would be attacked by the United Nations, Iceland, Chad or the Samoan Islands. But he does want you to clearly understand that regardless of the source of the attack he will meet his responsibilities under the United States Constitution.”

Smathers:<sup>2</sup> Right.

JFK: "While we have many other matters before us here, we want you to know that we are always glad to hear from you concerning any matters that are disturbing you."

Smathers: Fine, now that's very good. [Laughter] I think that's good, it's cute.

JFK: Is that all right?

Smathers: I think that's fine. And would you have him, yeah, let me have a copy, so . . .

JFK: All right, I'll put on, on the letter I'll put copy to Senator Smathers.

Smathers: Yeah, that'd be very helpful.

JFK: Okay.

Smathers: I think that's fine . . .

JFK: Okay. Thank you.

Smathers: . . . Mr. President, proud of you, [you go and get . . .] [Laughter] I got that word, uh, that's good, that'll, just enough, nice, that Samoan Islands.

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<sup>1</sup> Date unknown but probably between 7/10/63 and 7/17/63.

<sup>2</sup> George A. Smathers, senator from Florida.

[Laughter] But that, just what this damned fool needs to be told, see. Uh. . . .  
He can't show that letter, uh . . .

JFK: No . . .

Smathers: . . . and that'll stop that.

JFK: . . . he can't show this one. Okay. We'll get another one then. Okay.

Smathers: All right. Say, I got, I talked, uh, generally without, uh, you know, about this fellow . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: . . . negotiating. Southern<sup>3</sup> himself, Southern himself, that, uh, that his crowd and he, uh, will do anything. They'll take down their pants and let 'em do anything . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: . . . but they wantta try and get a settlement then and, uh . . .

JFK: Who's Southern?

Smathers: Huh?

JFK: Who's Simp-. . . . Well, you explained to them what I think their problem is?

Smathers: Yes, [words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: And they're conscious of it, are they?

Smathers: Yes, sir . . .

JFK: I see.

Smathers: . . . yes, sir, and they, they really, they all agree that this fellow shouldn't be there. I said, "Why in the hell did you get him there . . . "

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<sup>3</sup> Name unverified.

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: “. . . for Christ's sake?”

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: Well, he said, he was the man, I dunno, [some big?], a couple of big railroad presidents wanted him.

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: But, uh, there's, there's some real bright fellows and the one I talked to, uh, uh, is [bright?].

JFK: I'd let him work in the offices preparing the material, but I'd let some real charming fellow . . .

Smathers: That's right.

JFK: . . . be their front man.

Smathers: Dan Loomis<sup>4</sup> ought to do it, see. He's a . . .

JFK: Well, I don't think. . . . You know, they're not playing for marbles now 'cause we're in it.

Smathers: That's right.

JFK: So I, I don't think they oughtta worry about whether Wolfe's<sup>5</sup> feelings are hurt. If he's not the right fellow to accomplish what we want, then . . .

Smathers: That's right.

JFK: . . . they ought to get the guy with more charm than anybody else. I mean, let Wolfe mastermind it, but let this guy put it . . .

Smathers: You're right.

JFK: . . . in a much more gracious, graceful way. That's my judgment to 'em.

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel P. Loomis

<sup>5</sup> James E. Wolfe.

Smathers: Well, I'm not, I'm just making it my own judgment . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Smathers: . . . and at least leaving you out, if it's all right.

JFK: But I'd put it pretty strong.

Smathers: Well, I am.

JFK: Okay.

Smathers: All right, sir.

JFK: Right.

Smathers: That Star editorial doesn't bother you, does it?

JFK: Which one?

Smathers: Last night.

JFK: I didn't read it, fortunately.

Smathers: [Words unintelligible] Well, it's . . .

JFK: What was it on? You?

Smathers: No, it was on you. [Laughter] You know, you know, I. . . . If it was on me, I would scream early. [Laughter] As I said yesterday, oh, Christ, Drew Pearson is getting ready to write a mean one on me again about some colored property my father owned . . .

JFK: Oh, well, we don't even think about that crap. We got so many that I don't read all those.

Smathers: I know it. I think you're doing fine. I say you're strong. Goddamned, you're gonna carry Florida . . .

JFK: Okay, okay, see you later.

Smathers: Okay.

JFK: Okay.

Smathers: Bye, bye.

Operator: [Words unintelligible].