

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.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 19B

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and Orville Freeman

and

Dictabelt 19C

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Orville Freeman

May 22, 1963, 12:15 p.m.

President: Hello.

Sec. Freeman: Yes, sir, Mr. President.

President: Orville.

Sec. Freeman: You came through, I thought, very well in that press conference.

President: Well, I notice that [Karl] Mundt's put out a statement sugges . . . You know, you heard that [] Wilson question and I notice all the Republicans now are, uh, they suddenly got an agricultural program of their own and we are not going to punish the farmer. But that's going to be their line. We got to think of how to contend with that. Uh . . . I don't know what this supply management, uh, what their thing would cost, but I think that's what their line's going to be. I know I got a letter from some Congressman saying that they are introducing some bill dealing with voluntary whatever it is. But, of course, that's so expensive, I guess, isn't it?

Sec. Freeman: Well, it's all very, very expensive, and I, uh . . . my . . . uh . . . think the only way we can start quibbling about these . . . we are already analyzing what's been introduced and are lining people on the Hill up to hit back hard at this.

President: What are the proposals? What do they amount to, uh, Mundt's and whatever the one Wilson asked me about?

Sec. Freeman: Well, they amount basically to, well, to the so-called crop land adjustment program, which involves taking a 100 million acres out of production ad infinitum and a cost of about a billion dollars a year more.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: They don't really take this seriously. None of them take this seriously. They would apply the . . . the wheat program that we have, uh . . . uh this year, which is a very modest one, but because it got into effect late, which would be extremely expensive, uh, the same as the feed grain program. The Congress simply isn't and the people that we rely on in cities simply aren't going to support such a program.

President: Well, the Republicans may get behind some program which they would support it almost unanimously. 'Cause then that would be the Republican bill, wouldn't it?

Sec. Freeman: That would be a Republican bill, but you see it isn't going to, uh, in my best . . . we have got to watch these bills and go after them. But they just don't have the . . . I think the bills, uh, each one of them can be exposed if they are on their merits. And the solid position I think instead of getting involved in a picking contest on this, that, or the other, is to say just directly that the school of thought has won an election to have a free market to see what it is going to produce.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: They are entitled to it now and they have earned it. That puts the monkey on their back and we don't have to quibble about it.

President: That they get the free market.

Sec. Freeman: They got the goddam thing.

President: Now, somebody wrote me and said that farm income in certain was the lowest it has been since '39. Would that be wheat?

Sec. Freeman: Farm income in what?

President: [Interruption] Hello. Uh . . . wait a minute now . . . it says, "I submit, three months of this year stood at the lowest for any first quarter since '39. That's in comparison to the . . ."

Sec. Freeman: This is parity for prices unrelated to net income.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: It is a relation between the cost of what you buy . . .

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: . . . and what you sell. And it is only one of a measuring criteria. It has gone up since then . . . since this figure was cited some.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: But the net income figures as you cited them on [Begin Dictabelt 19C, Conversation #3] television are absolutely accurate. And farm income is higher. And net farm income, particularly because there are fewer farms, is substantially higher than it has been. And wheat farmers are the best off of any farmers in the country.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: And that is one of the reasons why this was a bitch to have to go to an election.

President: Yeah. That's right.

Sec. Freeman: But it was another one of those things that, uh . . .

President: We got to get our public relations so that for the next week or so, when they keep saying that we are punishing the farmers now and we ought to get a good bill by. We got to have a slogan saying, uh, you know . . . this is . . . we got to get a good way of getting our story out.

Sec. Freeman: Right, and this is what we are working on.

President: O.K.

Sec. Freeman: To the victor goes the spoils, and I think that they won the election, now they are entitled to it. We will keep pounding at it.

President: If there is any new bill it just would be farmers have chosen, uh, right, O.K., fine, Orville.

Sec. Freeman: O.K., thanks. O.K.