

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.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt XXB

Conversation #1: Evelyn Lincoln and Jerome Wiesner's Secretary

White House Operator: [unintelligible]

Mrs. Lincoln: Dr. Wiesner, please.

White House Operator: Thank you.

Secretary: Dr. Wiesner's office.

Mrs. Lincoln: This is Evelyn Lincoln. Would you tell Dr. Wiesner that Mister [name unintelligible because of echoing; garbled] is here? [name Sarnoff-- presumably Robert Sarnoff-- is mentioned]

Secretary: O.K., O.K., I'll tell him. Thanks.

Mrs. Lincoln: O.K. O.K.

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Dictabelt XXB

Conversation #2: Voices in Office

[Sounds more like operators talking. Indistinct and unintelligible.]

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Dictabelt XXB

Conversation #3: Unidentified Woman and White House Operator

Woman: Hello?

White House Operator: Mrs. Lincoln?

Woman: Um, she's . . .

White House Operator: Stanley Tretick is calling Fiddle. [/]

Woman: Yeah. She's in with the President.

White House Operator: Um-humh. You want to talk to him? . . . Hello?

Woman: Hello? Can she call him back, please?

White House Operator: All right. Fine. Um-humh.

Woman: Thanks.

[disconnect]

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Dictabelt XXB

Conversation #4: President Kennedy and Roswell Gilpatric

[begins in mid-conversation]

Sec. Gilpatric: . . . called to say that he was in complete accord with your action. He'd like, with your permission, to call a meeting of the governors down here Thursday for the kind of briefing which was given to the legislators and to the press.

President: Is he the head of the governors now?

Sec. Gilpatric: Yes. He's now the chairman.

President: I see. I see. Uh, yeah, well, I think that's . . . *[breaks off, laughing]* . . . that's alright, if he's the appropriate fellow to do it. I didn't -- You're sure he's the chairman, is he?

Sec. Gilpatric: He told me he was.

President: *[laughs]*

Sec. Gilpatric: Now--now, this is civil defense . . .

President: Oh, the ci--Oh, he wants--Oh, I see. Well, now, wait a minute, uh, I tell you what we oughta do. Let's find out who the head of the governors are *[SIC]* and, uh, probably the . . .

Sec. Gilpatric: He feels he has jurisdiction over this, you see.

President: Does he?

Sec. Gilpatric: Yeah.

President: 'Cause it's civil defense.

Sec. Gilpatric: I'd like to tie it down, but, uh, . . . I tell you, why don't you, um talk it over . . .

President: Well, I don't really . . . no, but I don't, uh . . . Let me just call you back. Let me find out who the head of the governors are *[SIC]* . . .

Sec. Gilpatric: Yeah.

President: . . . and see whether we oughta . . . and the only other thing I thought, Ros, is that if we are gonna have to do anything further than what we're now doing, we really ought to get some civil defense arrangements in those communities which are within range of these things.

Sec. Gilpatric: That's where the governors would be helpful. We're working on that with Ed McDermott--*[Stuart]* Pittman is.

President: Is he?

Sec. Gilpatric: Yeah.

President: I'd like to get a report on that. I wonder if we could get him to come in--the two of them, at that six o'clock meeting, and just tell us about that, 'cause if we ever were going to carry it out all the way, we ought to have those cities evacuated. Well, it's fine with me. Why doesn't . . . Let me just call you back. I want to find out who the head of the thing is.

Sec. Gilpatric: Alright.

President: And then I'll be back in three minutes.

Sec. Gilpatric: Alright.

President: O.K.

[disconnect]

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Dictabelt XXB

Conversation #5: Voices in Office

[Begins poorly, with voices fading in and out, only snatches clear; then there are a few clear places.]

Voice: You know, Life magazine is turning itself inside out between now and the time . . . *[fades]* . . . They want the film. *[fades; unintelligible]*

Voice: Another thing that Hank Suydam *[fades]* . . . if they can't do films to do the drawings.

President *[?]*: That's right. We hope to be able to film *[fades]* . . .

Voice: I talked to their man Hoolihan, and I also talked to Suydam about New York. And he said it can't help but be all-out favorable. The guy that's editing this issue is an admirer of yours, for one thing, and this has been their policy. But I didn't try to fill it in very much 'cause I didn't know Hoolihan. I didn't know how much to give him. *[fades]* He's a good writer, and he's *[other voices interrupt and override; unintelligible]* . . . I acted like I never heard *[fades]* Tuesday, to, you know, Sunday--Monday morning.

President: Yeah.

Voice: What he needs is the *[?]* process. If he didn't bug any of the tough questions, they're just accepting what--what's going on. The only question he raised that I knew nothing about was the AI Friendly thing. *[Fades and mumbles]* . . .

[Some words are intelligible in here, but not enough to string together]

Voice: . . . I think Mac--If you wanted to have a fuller story *[fades]* . . . let Mac do it.

Voice: Right. That's what I think, *[fades]* . . . tell Mac. . . . 'Course, Time magazine'll be scurrying around . . . *[fades]* . . .

[long pause] [telephone rings]

[President appears to be dictating]

President: . . . however, it does seem to me . . . regrettable . . . that on so few occasions that--No, no.--it does seem to me regrettable, comma, in view of my, uh, persistent support . . . of the concept of national independence and sovereignty . . . in Africa . . . the [?] countries of Africa . . . as well as my long interest in Ghana, comma, that Ghana finds itself unable to support on so few occasions the positions taken by the United States in the U.N.--the United Nations . . .

[phone rings]

President: . . . *[unintelligible]* . . . experience this . . . state of disappointment . . . I believe that Governor Williams' remarks *[phone rings]* were intended, comma, not as a, uh . . .

Mrs. Lincoln: *[in background, answering phone]* Hello.

President: . . . accusation, comma, but as a reflection of our, uh . . . disappointment and concern . . . I hope that you will *[fades]* . . . I shall look forward to seeing you in the not too distant future.

[Evelyn Lincoln and President exchange words too faded to hear clearly.]

Mrs. Lincoln: Here's a letter from *[unintelligible]*

President: For whom?

Mrs. Lincoln: Me.

President: . . . *[unintelligible]* . . . McCone?

Mrs. Lincoln: O.K.

President: *[well off in distance]* Hello?

[office noises]

Mrs. Lincoln: The President would like to speak to General Lucius Clay.

[pause]

[recording ends]