

## FOREWORD

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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 #1: President Kennedy and Clinton Anderson

May 22, 1963

*[Continued from Dictabelt 19A, Conversation #5]*

President:           Wouldn't it . . . without having the controls on the production, though, wouldn't that be awfully expensive?

Sen. Anderson:    I don't think so.

President:           Don't you?

Sen. Anderson:    No, I don't. I think if the price is at all reasonable, you get, uh, I mean I would make the price considerably better than the . . . than the opponents of the bill have been predicting.

President:           Yeah.

Sen. Anderson:    It is going to go way, way, way down at a dollar wheat. I would make it somewhat better. But I wouldn't make it good enough to be stimulant to production.

President:           Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson:    In other words, I could have kept my farm if I had known this was going to fail. I had to give it up because I wouldn't produce wheat. Couldn't produce wheat and sell it at high prices and throw a lot of it out of production. Now, I think, that you can remedy it by sitting down with a group of folks, and I would be very happy to be helpful. I wouldn't want to be a leader in it because my views are too well known. But I would be happy to help. I like Orville *[Freeman]* very much and would like to help him in any way I could. But I think that you ought to get a small group together at the White House

someday and say, what could you men come up with that the Congress will pass and the country will take.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: It is possible to do that.

President: You feel this idea that a . . . that a . . . when that wheat goes, uh, when they over-produce and we have this terrific surplus that a . . . that a . . . they won't decide that they don't want that free market they keep talking about?

Sen. Anderson: Well, they will just blame the Administration for it. They did that all the way through. I went back and studied the history of price legislation, uh, price support legislation; and when Henry Wallace came in and proposed that they plow under every third row of cotton, why, they knew that was going to help them, but oh, my, what they did to him. They just butchered him all across the country. Even though his proposal was sound. And I think that is the situation now.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: If you let the price of wheat go away down to the bottom, then they will say, "that guy Kennedy is just a Wall Street banker. He didn't pay any attention to the farmers."

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: That isn't true and I know it isn't true, but it's what people believe is what counts in this world.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And I think if you made one final move and put that up to the Congress as something that the Administration would finally agree to support, you would find that it would have a much easier sledding from what you've had thus far.

President: What is our timing? What timing would we have to have on a legislation?

Sen. Anderson: Well, you've . . .

President: When do they start planting?

Sen. Anderson: I would do it the next two or three weeks.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: I wouldn't go beyond that.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: Well, I would call my group together soon. This is the day after the referendum, and I would just call them together and say, "now can't you men who are in this room who have divergent points of view" -- [Senator] Spessard Holling the one man I am thinking of particularly, because he is a very good man. He and I have been together on all these farm programs, but he has got a good point of view, and he is on the committee and willing to help -- "Can't you people come up with a . . . with a . . . program that the country will take and the Administration can support." Saying this frankly, this is a second position we are driven to because of the action of the farmers themselves. And I think you could then keep more heat on the farmers and have them realize they made their own mistakes.

President: [ ] Schuman, what about Schuman. He's . . .

Sen. Anderson: I don't want this to sound improper, but I think I can get Schuman to take a pretty sound point of view.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: He called me two or three times and tried to get me in this wheat debate and I wouldn't . . .

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: . . . get in. Because I am not trying to help the opposition.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: Even though I can't vote for it. But I can talk to Schuman and I am sure that he will help.

President: What is your, uh, well, I think today we will just say that we just have to wait and see.

Sen. Anderson: That's right.

President: That is fine, good. I will follow up on that.

Sen. Anderson: I think that you ought to get a strong, uh.

President: Who would you get, [Richard] Russell, [Allan] Ellender, [Harold] Cooley.

Sen. Anderson: Oh, yes . . .

President: [Spessard] Holland.

Sen. Anderson: Holland; don't leave him out. And Olin Johnston. You have to have Milton Young almost in any big program.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And he is alright.

President: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And fellows of that nature and sit down around a table. All [Harry S.] Truman did when he got, uh, and I keep going back just because I had experience with it in '49. We turned down the [ ] Brannon plan. There was naught but one vote in the whole committee for it. And that was the chairman of the committee, [ ] Thomas. Everybody else in the Senate committee was against it. Truman then said, well, here we are with a new farm program that got kicked in the teeth, and he invited this group down to the White House and put them in the Cabinet room and had about 25 people there. We discussed the general broad lines of what a bill might be that could succeed, and he said, alright, I designate Clint in charge of drafting it and presenting it; and we are going to pass it. We did pass it in both houses and it went on right along. We had no great difficulty with it because these men were committed to it.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: You get Dick Russell committed to it and he can get around to his Southern group, and they will all lay off voting against it. They will all vote with it, then.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And the same thing with Milton Young, he can influence a lot of folks. And the same thing with [George] Aiken, as far as that is concerned. Now, Aiken has been off reservation recently . . .

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: . . . but I think that he can be brought back to the fold.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And I wouldn't have the Farm Bureau people actually in the meeting the first time.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: I would have them waiting in wings.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: But I think that you ought to make one final effort to salvage it, and then if it goes down the drain, you certainly got something that you can stand up and tell the farmers about.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: That you have been misled by their farm people, and you were into an indefensible position.

President: Yeah. Good, fine. Well, we can just keep that to ourselves then I will get working on it. Thanks, Clint.

Sen. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. President.

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## **Dictabelt 19B**

### Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Orville Freeman

May 22, 1963, 10:30 a.m.

President: Hello.

Sec. Freeman: Yes, sir.

President: Orville.

Sec. Freeman: Yes, sir.

President: I wanted just one more conversation with you before the meeting. I talked to Hubert [Humphrey] and Hubert said that of course we ought to keep this wheat off the market to help keep the price up.

Sec. Freeman: Yeah.

President: And that he thought that it would stay up to 1.60 or 70 if we kept the wheat off the market.

Sec. Freeman: What wheat off the market?

President: The wheat we've got stored.

Sec. Freeman: Well . . . I don't think that he is right on that, Mr. President. No, I don't think he's right on that. But we've already in the statement that I have (excuse me for interrupting) . . .

President: Yea, I saw where you said that you would keep it 5 percent above the market price.

Sec. Freeman: Right, according to law there will be no dumping, and that we hope this program would work.

President: I see. Well, now, I saw [ ] Hoovens said that we will be fighting to get a new bill. I don't want to say we won't have a hill today. Just say I don't know, it seems to me the farmers has made their choice. I haven't heard of any other proposal that's being made. I think that we ought to let them all set for awhile, because I think that they are going to be a little sick about tomorrow.

Sec. Freeman: Right, this is . . . you're absolutely right. I tell you . . . I am very pleased that you called. I was going to try and reach you before the press conference also. What I said today in addition to this because of the press guys around here were scrambling around and I wanted to get the initiative on this. I said, "Well, now, look, there has been a big debate. This is going to be a contribution, in a sense, to the question of whether a so-called free market is gonna operate or not. Now, this is the Farm Bureau position, this position of the opponents. And they said they didn't want controls and that the wheat farmer would be better off, and the wheat farmer agreed with them. Now we are going to find out. They won the election. They are entitled to the results of that victory. And we hope they are right . . . "

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: ". . . We are going to cooperate with them in every way we can. We are going to break our back for the wheat farmer. But, uh . . . this decision has been made." If they come up there knowin' . . . I don't think, uh, there are going to be some jumpy people on the Hill, Mr. President. But I really think, the first place, there aren't very goddam many wheat farmers that are Democrats. Those that are are still going to be with us.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: They are not going to be affected very much. Secondly, a clear, firm hand in connection with this says alright, let's find out. We submitted this to them, I think that will be . . . will be respected. And thirdly, if we are going to meet this problem in the long run, and we are going to have to, this over-production problem, we are going to have to give these guys some of, uh, in a nice way without getting ourselves burned, what the tobacco guys got. You recall the story in '38 the tobacco people voted overwhelmingly against any kind of a program and, goddam, there is tobacco barns standing through the South yet, and today they vote 98 percent for it. They . . .

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: . . . bled and hurt and learned. They did the same thing.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: So I quite agree with you that you know how not to be obstructionist, but I think it could be said in a positive way and said that the people that won this election were the Farm Bureau and the people who had this philosophy in mind. Let's see how it works.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: Many people entertain it. I think that it is entitled to a chance if the farmers voted for it.

President: Yeah, good, O.K., fine, Orville.

Sec. Freeman: I will be watching.

President: Righto.

Sec. Freeman: Very good.

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### **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.