

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 14A

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy

JFK: Hullo.

RFK: Oh, Jack?

JFK: Yeah. How'd you think Newsweek was to you?

RFK: Oh, well, I thought that it was alright. They didn't say anything very new, did they?

JFK: No, but I thought it was fine. I thought it was good.

RFK: Did you?

JFK: Sure. If you read Time magazine . . . you read them yet?

RFK: Ye god, that's me?

JFK: Yeah. I saw Harry Luce today.

RFK: Had you seen Time at the time you saw him?

JFK: Yup,

RFK: D'ja say anything?

JFK: Oh, yeah. I gave it to him for forty-five minutes. He says, "Well, I've been out in Phoenix and it doesn't seem that bad to me," I said, "Well, listen, looks bad to me,"

RFK: I thought they were bastards.

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: They really went out of their way on that damn thing, didn't they?

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. But, isn't that peculiar? You see, it shows that there's . . . he's really losing his grip. Here he's in to see me to ask me to come up to that dinner, you know . . .

RFK: Yeah,

JFK: . . . and he's coming in--the morning he comes in you'd think that at least he'd have given me a soft soap that would've been much more difficult.

RFK: Yeah. What'd you say to him?

JFK: Oh, I left it with him in the morning sort of, uh, let's get a few m--uh, good ones out of you. But then I decided, uh, you know, and said I'll let you know later if I can come, but I just thought I don't want to leave it in doubt, 'cause aft--you know, he will write a couple of good ones, and then I'd have to go, and I think, uh, the Newsweek and Graham and everybody would think that was a--and in addition I think probably for me to be up there for Time after what was obviously been--would we look like a . . .

RFK: Yeah. We wrote out the mistakes they made on the--just on the one thing, which was on the Cuban prisoners and--just incredible! I mean, how many . . . they just . . .

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

RFK: . . . they just didn't want to make an effort, do they?

JFK: No. It's you know, it's a real--I mean they're just mean as hell up there. But I don't think it registers on them, or something.

RFK: He doesn't consider it--he doesn't see--

JFK: I don't think it registers on him. No, you know, they're awfully fair during--they were good in the campaign, and that was because--/[Ferbringer?]'s the real--

RFK: Yeah.

JFK: He's a--he's the son-of-a-bitch up there. And he--you see, he was out in the campaign, and they were pretty good, so I mean I don't think Luce is . . . hostile; I think he just, you know, he hasn't got any sensitivity, he doesn't probably like the thing much anyway, but he hasn't got any sensitivity, he couldn't--he didn't think--seem to think this was bad even though there were five letters to the editor that all stunk. So, anyway, I thought I'd just write and tell him I didn't think I'd go.

RFK: Was he jolly?

JFK: Oh, yeah, he's very agreeable, very pleasant.

RFK: Ah, what I called you about is this damn school construction.

JFK: Yeah?

RFK: You know, for the schools down--in these bases?

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: Uh, it--Had you wanted the schools to be put up?

JFK: No, I haven't really given this matter any thought at all.

RFK: Umh.

JFK: I--I just--

RFK: They understood over at HEW--you know, uh, Ribicoff announced it last March . . .

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: . . . and as I understood that you weren't . . .

JFK: That's right.

RFK: . . . exactly happy about that.

JFK: Well, I didn't know what--that's right.

RFK: And then, they, uh, . . . and it's quite ridiculous actually, but then--and then they announced back in January, because they understood from Ted Sorensen that you wanted an announcement. But I--I, I--They were going to put two more schools out, and they've announced six, but, for instance, Fort McClellan--they're gonna erect a school for--well, no, here's one, Fort Rucker. Uh, grades one to six, 892 on-base children, a total of fourteen Negro children, and the estimated cost is \$742,000.

JFK: Just because of the fourteen?

RFK: Yeah. Ft. Stewart's 23 children--That's \$297,000. Robbins Airforce Base is 8 Negro children, \$594,000. Ft. Jackson, 18 children, \$234,000.

JFK: Ft. Jackson where? Where's Ft. Jackson?

RFK: Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. Myrtle Beach is . . .

JFK: And what is your suggestion?

RFK: Well, and then they're gonna put two more, so it's eight. It's gonna cost about three million bucks. We got a court case, you see, at the present time.

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: Uh, . . . And, uh, which probably won't be resolved for another year, or a year-and-a-h--maybe two years before it perhaps goes to the Supreme Court which will resolve all of these matters. What they will do by spending for these eight places--they'll spend about three million dollars and, um, and, um, they'll get maybe an extra year for about fifty or sixty children . . .

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: . . . uh, Negro children. Well, they've been going all this long period of time--ah--it just seems like a hell of a lot of money. Now, ah, uh, . . .

JFK: Well, the problem is a political problem, I suppose, isn't it?

RFK: Yeah. Having made the announcement.

JFK: Yeah. But, you know, was Ray--Roy Wilkens criticizing the way HEW did it first?

RFK: Yeah. Well, now, can I--can--can we see what, uh, . . .

JFK: What we should've done is just left with the . . .

RFK: That's right.

JFK: . . . legal case. I don't know how we got beyond that.

RFK: Well that's what, uh, was a mistake . . .

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: . . . which was made at the end of January,

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: But I told 'em over there that . . .

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: . . . make sure we have coordination on these damn things.

JFK: Yeah.

RFK: Ah, well, can we leave it that, uh, i- if you don't have any strong feeling about it . . .

JFK: I want to talk to Ted Sorensen, 'cause he's been working on it.

RFK: Alright.

JFK: Let me find out--'cause he may know some of the problems that I don't know on it.

RFK: Well I--What I'd like to do is to see if I could work something out, and, uh, which would be satisfactory to everybody. Maybe it's not possible, but they are . . .

JFK: Or maybe you can . . .

RFK: Ah,--ah--[Anthony] Celebreeze thought that you had been personally interested so I want to . . .

JFK: No, I'm not. I don't care. Just a real question of trying to deal with a political problem.

RFK: Well, what a--whatever we do, we'll talk to Ted first.

JFK: O.K., fine. I'll talk to him. Right,

[disconnect]