

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 18B

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Edith Green

May 7, 1963

[Continued from Dictabelt 18A, Conversation #7]

President: That's really is what I think the whole dilemma that I see is. Even though I think your bill has got the best chance and still we don't want to . . . we want to get a majority for it at the right time.

Mrs. Green: Well, not only as a supporter of yours for a long, long time, but also as a supporter of education, I am anxious to get as much of your program . . .

President: Right.

Mrs. Green: . . . through as I can. The decision was not made by me on the higher education bill, but rather by the Chairman of the full sub-committee, Chairman . . .

President: Yeah. Yeah. What do your see as the time schedule on these education bills?

Mrs. Green: Well, we did report out the higher education bill yesterday afternoon, and it was my understanding that this would be the wish at the White House and at the Department *[HEW]* and of the leadership here in the House.

President: It is now in the full committee?

Mrs. Green: It would be before the full committee if they wish to take it up next Thursday.

President: I see.

Mrs. Green: But this would be a decision for them.

President: I see.

Mrs. Green: I think because we have strong bi-partisan support, and because of the very large majority that we secured one time, I think it could be passed. And I don't think that we have the political pressures on Lister Hill this moment, as we did have before.

President: What is your judgment as to how, uh, you know, considering what happened last time, when the NEA got the Baptist groups and all the others, how do we prevent that repetition?

Mrs. Green: Well, I wrote the NEA a three page letter the other day mainly to put them on the spot in regard to their stand on the religious . . . on the religious issue. And received a very unresponsive letter and then had a visit by their head, Lumly, of their Congressional Liaison Office. And as far as the Baptists are concerned, I have accepted three or four speaking engagements at church groups, specifically on the theory that I might be able to help on this religious issue. I am going out there to Detroit next weekend.

President: Yeah.

Mrs. Green: And I think maybe this has decreased, . . .

President: Yeah, yeah.

Mrs. Green: . . . I don't know. It would be my judgment that there won't be the pressure that there was. If we could keep the rest of the bills in an omnibus packages, then again, I think that your program would win the support of the Congress and certainly would reflect favorable on the Administration.

President: Oh, well, as I say, that I think that this is the best chance we have--this bill. And the only problem, as I have said, is how to prevent or keep the NEA so that at least they can't charge that they were, uh, that their point of view was not given a reasonable consideration.

Mrs. Green: They are being invited on Wednesday to testify on NDEA [National Defense Education Act]. Well, anyhow, I don't want to take more of your time.

President: No, no, I think if we could ever get this thing through, it would be probably one of the two most important measures we can get through. So I am awfully anxious to see us do it.

Mrs. Green: Well, I just wanted to assure you that I, uh, the language in the New York Times is a rumor.

President: Thank you very much, though, Edith. I appreciate that.

Mrs. Green: Thank you, Mr. President.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 18B

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Dean Rusk

May 8, 1963

Sec. Rusk: ----- including some of our close allies like the Greeks. The Greeks went along with us last time, but they say that they just can't do it again.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Rusk: Uh . . . I would recommend that we, uh, as far as you are concerned, uh, the White House is concerned, you let the State Department simply take this one. We will not change our own view, but we won't force a vote of the sort that would give us a big defeat. Uh . . . and then if it comes up later, you can say, if you are questioned in a press conference, that we, uh . . . that the State Department was faced with this situation and made a judgment as how best to handle it.

President: How will we indicate our opposition?

Sec. Rusk: Well, this would, uh . . . this would, uh . . . be made perhaps in the course of comments in the general committee . . . in the committee.

President: There won't be a roll call, you mean.

Sec. Rusk: It probably won't come to a roll call vote. But we can speak in the credentials committee.

President: I see.

Sec. Rusk: Uh . . . But a . . .

President: I think we probably ought to be on the record against it. And you say if we asked for a vote, we'd be beaten.

Sec. Rusk: There is no question we will be beaten this year, or this time. And this is chiefly because there have been enough changes in Hungary . . .

President: Yeah.

Sec. Rusk: . . . so that the, uh . . .

President: Well, I would like to be able, uh . . . just for our own protection, to indicate our opposition.

Sec. Rusk: Right, right, well, we will, uh . . . we will find a way to record it.

President: Well, maybe, it's, uh . . . I think White could say it at the right time or some way up there.

Sec. Rusk: Right.

President: Ok.

Sec. Rusk: Thank you.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 18B

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and RFK

[Extremely poor recording, though audible. Volume is acceptable, but there appears to be very bad echo, similar to the "print-through" phenomenon found in audiotape. Almost impossible to transcribe accurately. About one minute into the recording, it suddenly becomes clear. The-early portion is RFK talking about Bill Orrick not working out at the State Department, and problems with appointments there. Clearly distinguishable pieces of this garbled portion are indicated below. This should in no way be taken as a definitive transcript; it is merely roughly representative.]

President: Hello.

RFK: Jack?

President: Yeah.

RFK: Well, you know, uh, Bill Orrick's having difficulty over at the State Department . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . Evidently, it hasn't worked out, uh, very well . . . *[garbling]* . . . he's in a key position . . . *[garbling]* . . . that you should have somebody in that job, but, uh, . . . uh, . . . *[garbling]* . . . Rusk has been . . . *[garbling]* . . . so I don't think you've got a great deal of support . . . *[garbling]* . . . and, uh, perhaps that we hoped that he would. So, uh, . . .

President: *[garbling]*. . . everybody's . . . *[garbling]*

RFK: Well, I think, uh, everybody . . . *[garbling]* . . . Rusk . . . *[garbling]* . . . administrate . . . *[garbling]* . . . get the job done . . . *[garbling]* . . . do that at all. George Ball's off where he is . . .

President: Anybody else at the State Department . . . *[garbling]* . . . ?

RFK: [garbling] . . . one person makes, goes to somebody else, gets reversed, and that undermines people, and then they . . . [garbling] . . . higher-up who doesn't have confidence . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . [garbling] . . . [remainder of this is almost unintelligible, although Dean Rusk's name is mentioned] [then, suddenly, it becomes clear . . .] . . . um, Lee Loevinger . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . in the anti-trust division . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . And we talked about putting him over in the FCC . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . as a member . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . And then, uh, maybe bringing Bill Orrick back and making him head of the anti-trust division.

President: O.K.

RFK: That alright?

President: Fine. There's a vacancy, is there?

RFK: In the FCC.

President: You mean when, uh, our friend Newt [Newton Minow] leaves?

RFK: Uh, yeah.

President: I see. I don't know exactly . . . [the next appears to be off phone to someone with him in the room] Do you know when Newton Minow's gonna leave?

[Space for an answer that is not heard on the tape.] In other words, you're ready to go any time. I'll just find . . . I'll have Kenny find out when Newt's gonna leave.

RFK: Alright.

President: O.K.

RFK: Now wait, h--

President: Then we'll go ahead with Henry as the chairman.

RFK: Yeah.

President: Right.

RFK: Now, one other thing. Uh, . . . I've had some conversations the last couple of weeks with a fellow by the name of [Eduardo] Mondlane . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . who's from Mozambique.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And he's the fellow that's leading the effort to, uh, make Mozambique independent. He--a terrifically impressive fellow.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And, uh . . .

President: That's Portuguese?

RFK: Yeah.

President: Uh, . . . He, uh, . . . uh, . . . Some of his people have gotten . . . He's the head of it, but some of his people have gotten some aid and assistance from Czechoslovakia and Poland. He needs help from the United States for two reasons. Number one, so that he can indicate to them that there are people in the West at least sympathetic to his efforts, and, uh, number two, just to keep 'em going. And, uh, the figure that he's mentioned, that they'll need for a year

is a . . . uh, . . . is quite reasonable. First, he needs fifty thousand dollars for help with the refugees. Uh, . . . I think that they . . . It's a possibility that they can get the second fifty thousand dollars from the Ford Foundation. At least they're working on that. Carl Kaysen is. Uh, but he'd need at least fifty thousand dollars from us. Now, uh, Dean Rusk has felt that . . . uh, that he wants to be able to sit down with the Portuguese and say none of these people are getting any money. Uh, . . . if he turned this over to somebody like Averell Harriman or John McCone, just to use their own judgment, uh, . . . the he wouldn't have to kn--get involved in it . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . or know anything about it. Uh, . . . I think it would be damn helpful. Now, we've had discussions on these things for the last week and Carl Kaysen can fill you in on it. But this fellow's going back Wednesday--Monday--and he's gonna meet with the heads of all these African nations at this meeting, I guess next week.

President: 'Course, we wouldn't want him to be saying that he got anything from us.

RFK: No, but you wouldn't have that, you see. You'd have it through some private foundation.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Then they could have cut-outs on it.

President: I see.

RFK: And John McCone can handle it. So it wouldn't come from the agency.

President: Well, now, what does it depend on . . . Uh, you think we ought to give it?

RFK: Yes.

President: O.K., well, then, what do we give it?

RFK: Well, if--maybe if you call to Carl Kaysen about how it should be handled, because if it's to be handled so that Dean Rusk is happy and . . . and, uh, Averell Harriman feels very strongly it should be given.

President: O.K.

RFK: But, uh, I think if it could be handled so that . . . maybe you could explain to Dean Rusk he doesn't have to know about it directly.

President: Should we tell Dean Rusk?

RFK: Well, um, Carl Kaysen got all the facts on it, and he'll have a suggestion as to how it should be handled.

President: Now, uh, . . . uh, do you know what time those troops got there, according to my information?

RFK: Isn't that terrible?

President: Eleven-nineteen?

RFK: Yeah. And not all of them.

President: Not all of them?

RFK: Uh, he told that--He told me, uh, uh, Nick said that five planes were still in the air at eleven-thirty.

President: Well, when I called them at one, they said the first units got there at eleven-nineteen. But, uh, . . . uh, but, I mean, how--and I get notes here which says was gonna get there at seven-thirty.

RFK: Yeah. That's terrible. And the fellow [two words garbled] . . . We--and then saying that they were in the air at the time I talked to them. I don't know how you could screw it up like that.

President: Well, . . . I thought I'd write a memorandum to McNamara about it and ask him what time and everything and then say did they get in when they said they were going to, et cetera.

RFK: Because to have it happen this time as well as last time . . .

President: Yeah. Yeah. O.K.

RFK: That's shocking.

President: I'm gonna write a memo on it. O.K.

[disconnect]