

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.

Dictabelt 21A

Item 21A1

June 3, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Operator: [The?] president.

JFK: Hello, yeah.

Davis¹: Hello.

JFK: Governor?

Davis: Mr. President, how you feeling?

JFK: Well, I'm, uh. . . . [Laughs.] We're getting rained on up here, but otherwise I'm all right. How are you?

Davis: Oh . . . [Tape skips and repeats itself.]

JFK: . . . all right. How are you?

Davis: Oh . . .

JFK: . . . all right. How are you?

Davis: Why don't you send some of it down here.

JFK: How are you?

Davis: I'm o-. . . . Well, I had a rough night. I had indigestion all night for the first time in a long time. I ate a bunch of stuff yesterday . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: . . . that got me.

¹ James H. Davis, governor of Louisiana.

JFK: Well, I hope that, uh. . . . I appreciate the chance to talk to you, governor. I'm concerned on this, uh, independent electors because, uh, it always seemed to me that, uh, when we go down there we end up, uh, I don't know maybe in the House and then everybody has a helluva time.

Davis: Yeah, well, I'll tell you. Here's what's up. I talked to Russell² this morning, he called me up, we've been missing each other. Now he may call you and ask that you, uh, call me, but disregard that because I decided to go ahead and call you.

JFK: Well, I'm delighted to talk to you. As a matter of . . .

Davis: [W-] . . .

JFK: . . . fact I, I knew Larry³ had talked to you and I didn't like to call you unless you felt it was, uh, agreeable. We, uh . . .

Davis: It was. This, uh, [unfortunately?] down here, I'm going to get hurt in the thing myself, but I'm going to handle it.

JFK: Oh, well, that'll make a helluva difference, I tell you that.

Davis: And, we can, uh, I'll handle it one way or the other, but I'm not, nobody knows it but you.

JFK: Yeah. Well, I must say, governor, I'm most, uh. . . . I can't imagine it. Because I think if Louisiana went, then we'd have a helluva time in Florida and, uh. . . .

Davis: Well, that's the point, it's going to spread all over. Now I'll tell you another, another day when it came up in the House, we had colored people, just a few radicals, down here marching around, all that kind of stuff, you know.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: And I don't know [about you?], but I hope [words unintelligible]. . . . People don't know how good a relationship we do have among most of them, it's so fine. That's all I have. . . . I have one managing my own farm, you know.

JFK: Yeah.

² Russell B. Long, senator from Louisiana.

³ Lawrence F. O'Brien.

Davis: And I, I hope that something happens sometime, either we have federal orders to stop some of these demonstrations, marches, and if we don't, I think it is going to spread until it gets really, uh . . .

JFK: Well, it's going to, it's going to be up north, is where. . . . You know, this isn't any more just a southern matter, and, uh. . . .

Davis: When it gets up there, I'll tell you, now if, it will be black against white. Down here they have the ties that bind, I mean they're a lot of them that are very close, like that's all that I have on my farm. A colored man runs it. He sells my cows, he buys and he does everything.

JFK: Yeah.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: And a very fine person. And if, that's true with so many people. And, uh. . . . Of course, the demonstrations are the bad thing.

JFK: Well, I know. That's the problem we're dealing with up here now. And, of course, it isn't just Jackson. It's it's Philadelphia, and it's going to be Washington, D.C. this summer, and, uh, we're trying to figure out what we can do to put this stuff in the courts and get it off the street because somebody's going to get killed and it is going to get . . .

Davis: It's going to be the bloodiest thing. It's going to be a civil war. Now there's a colored woman called me--I know the difference in the voice--from Washington. She said, "For God's sake don't do what we did up here in our city, because, you know, I'm a mother of thirteen children," and, uh, said, "I've lived here" but, uh, she said, "We can't handle it among ourselves. Our race never could," and so on and so forth without going into a lot of stuff.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: But that's the problem. I know that you're concerned about it just as much as I am and I, it really gives me a lot of worry. Now on this thing down here, I've been up day and night, I made myself sick. But anyway between you and me, I'm going to handle it one way or the other.

JFK: Well that'll be. . . . Governor, when is the matter going to come up?

Davis: Well, it'll be up for Tuesday.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: But, uh, like I told Russell, no use him getting hurt, let me get hurt.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: Because I'm going out.

JFK: Yeah, well, listen, governor, I'm most appreciative because it'll make a big difference.

Davis: It will make a big difference because [of the pressure?] so much, all these other governors are calling me, you know, but I'm not talking to 'em because some are friends of mine.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Davis: Now I'm a personal friend of Ross Barnett. I've known him for a long time. He had a law suit one time, I was on one side and he was on the other.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: But, I mean, we're, nevertheless, we're friends.

JFK: Yeah.

Davis: And a lot of the other fellows, some of the fellows, and, uh, but, uh, [wouldn't?] go into all that, but I know what they're calling about. But I've got to handle this thing down here and I don't think that, uh, I'll get hurt any myself, a little bit maybe. But, nevertheless, I'll, just, just, uh, just forget it, between you and me.

JFK: Governor, that's very good. I appreciate that very much. How about coming up here later on?

Davis: Well, I hope I can. I'm, I'm gonna try to get up there. I haven't had a vacation yet. I have been working, uh, I've been here over three years and I've been battling [laughs] all kinds of, going at it and I know how [you are?]. I'm sitting here, I had a fellow in this room and he said, "I want to eat in, sit in the,

uh"--one of the LSU⁴ board members--"I want to have a seat in the Kennedy rocker." You know, the one you sent me.

JFK: /Laughs./ Yeah.

Davis: I have it here in my bedroom.

JFK: /Laughs./ Yeah.

Davis: How's, how's your family?

JFK: Oh, they're in good shape.

Davis: How's your back? I mention back because I'm a back guy and can write a book on the backache.

JFK: Well, I, it's, it's, you know, when it's, these days when it rains, it's not so good, but I'm getting along pretty well.

Davis: Uh-huh. Well, it's nice to talk to you, Mr. President, and, uh, so, uh. . . . So far as this part of it, I mean, just you rest easy. And if Russell should call, why you can tell him you talked to me.

JFK: Okay, governor. Well, listen, I'm most, uh, this is, uh, I appreciate very much because it's a big help. And I hope we get a chance once you get this out of the way, I want to talk to you anyway about some other stuff.

Davis: Well, that's very fine. I'll be happy to see you and I appreciate getting a chance to talk to you.

JFK: Okay, thanks, governor.

Davis: Tell your folks, "Hello."

JFK: Very. . . . Thanks an awful lot.

Davis: Bye, bye.

JFK: Righto.

⁴ Louisiana State University.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 21A

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson

June 4, 1963, 4:10 p.m.

LBJ: -----knew he was going to. But all I know is he had never talked to me. [C. Douglas/ Dillon told me that he thought that it was important that we make an announcement soon.

President: I know it, but I mean, my God, I only got your report last weekend. Did [Juan T./ Trippe ever know that we were about to go ahead on this thing.

LBJ: I don't know. I assume that Dillon, uh . . .

President: Were there any conversations with Trippe on this?

LBJ: Not with me. He never talked to me. He talked to Dillon. Dillon had a conversation with him.

President: I think it's very pec . . .

LBJ: I believe [Robert/ McNamara talked to him.

President: I think that it is very peculiar that he would announce that today at a time when he knew that the government was about to go ahead.

LBJ: [Najeeb/ Halaby urged him not to. He told me he had had to do it to protect his interests. But I think Dillon had the same impression. Halaby and Dillon had financial discussions with him and, why, Dillon told me that he was going to talk to you yesterday, and again this morning at the Indian Embassy, he asked me if I had discussed it with you any further, and he said yes, and I hope that you would announce it maybe tomorrow. He said that he thought it very important because Trippe had told him they have some, uh . . .

President: But, I mean, my God, we been, uh, your group has looked at it for a couple months. And we get this thing last weekend, I don't understand why Trippe feels he has to go ahead just when we are about to do something about it.

LBJ: I don't know, I haven't talked to him. Trippe talked to Halaby and talked to Dillon. And the only thing I know about his company position is what he has told Dillon.

President: Well, this makes it, uh, I think we have to take it along now, it's rather stupid of us putting it out tomorrow, if he is already buying a European plane, it would make it look as if we don't know what the hell our market is. Fine, ok. Well, I will see you at five, then.

LBJ: Is he on the . . . is he on the wire with it?

President: He's put it out, yeah. That they are buying, uh, "Pan American World announces that it has ordered six new Concorde supersonic jet transports which will fly to the United States in two and half hours. He made the announcement. They will be equipped . . . will be built jointly." Now, that is very peculiar for him to do that at a time when he knew we were about to do it. So there's something . . .

LBJ: See, what . . . he's . . . he's been negotiating them with Halaby, I think you can get your story better, though, from Dillon. They may have some interest together. I don't know what it is. Dillon got this and got it in the greatest confidence, and in some degree accelerated our action.

President: Yeah, yeah.

LBJ: He stepped it up and McNamara agreed to work over the weekend. But he may have told McNamara, but I know that he discussed it with Dillon. I don't know, but he never discussed anything with me. Dillon may tell you what is behind it. There may be some motivation. Maybe trying to hold his position or maybe trying to pressure us. Maybe trying to influence you. I don't know.

President: Right. Ok, fine.

LBJ: Thank you.

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Dictabelts

Dictabelt 21A

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and Najeeb Halaby

June 4, 1963, 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Halaby: -----leak of the story, it varies about two hours ago.

President: Well, that doesn't mean that he has to do it. Didn't he know we were about to put it out here?

Mr. Halaby: Yes, he did.

President: Well, is this deliberate?

Mr. Halaby: I can't tell.

President: You can tell him he has given me the best argument for not having one airline represent the United States that I have ever heard. And I am going to spend the next time I'm here really getting a screwing to Pan American. Because that sticks it right to us. How can we possibly go ahead now with our program, to which we are going to spend an awful lot of money, which was very important to the United States, which affected the balance of payments in the hundreds of millions of dollars? And I am going to put all this out and then go ahead about 24 hours before we are about to make our announcement.

Mr. Halaby: Yes, sir.

President: Didn't you have an understanding with him that he would wait?

Mr. Halaby: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

President: Well, now, will you give him this message from me and make it very clear that I think he ought to retract that. That he ought to wait now and see what the United States is going to do. Otherwise, it is going to be very clear that Pan Am is contributing in a significant way to the United States being in a

secondary position in the air and also to our balance of payments problem. We will give him all the trouble he wants, because there isn't going to be anything that is going to make me more excited than doing that.

Mr. Halaby: Right.

President: Thank you.

Mr. Halaby: Yes, sir.

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Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 21A

Conversation #4: President Kennedy and Dave Bell

June 4, 1963

President: Hello. Hello.

Mr. Bell: Mr. President.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: I just had a call from Bill Gould in Paris . . .

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: . . . reporting on this Indian consortium.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: Other countries are doing not much better than we anticipated. The British did come through . . .

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: . . . with the same amount as last year.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: Response to your cable, obviously.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: The other countries are likely to pledge about 310.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: The bank has about 200 to 220 . . .

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: . . . in its pocket.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: The question is, what should we do? If we match the 310 pure and simple, this would bring the total to around 820 . . .

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: . . . which is close to the 400 million shy of where it should be.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: Furthermore, that restricts . . . that keeps us to this rigid exact matching. Now, I have had a long talk with George Wood, and he has persuaded me, as others of my staff have, that we should get away from the exact rigid matching pattern, because it puts us too much in the hands of other people.

President: Well, I accept it's one of the ways we get them to do a little more. Otherwise, they think the United States is always going to take up the slack.

Mr. Bell: Well, that's . . . we do not want to do that. And, therefore, the proposition we have is the following. We would say tomorrow the pledges by these other countries are disappointing and they don't recognize India's needs. There are some other funds available to India outside the consortium, and in view of this and in view of the urgency of the Indian requirement, the United States is prepared now to pledge a minimum of (and here we would propose) 375 million.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: We recognize this does not make a total that meets India's needs and we suggest that those countries which pledged less than last year, which is the Germans, the Italians, the French and ourselves, (under this proposal) would meet again under the auspices of the bank in thirty to sixty days.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Bell: We would be prepared to do more as a part of a joint effort, to enlarge the total.

President: Ok, very good, fine, Dave, bye.

Mr. Bell: Thank you, sir.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 21A

Conversation #5: President Kennedy and C. Douglas Dillon

June 4, 1963

President: Hello.

Sec. Dillon: Yes, Mr. President.

President: Doug, did you see what Juan Trippe did?

Sec. Dillon: No, I did not.

President: He put out an announcement this afternoon that he is going to buy six planes from the British and the French. How could he do that when he knew we were about to go ahead?

Sec. Dillon: Oh, I don't know. He'd said, apparently to Halaby, I haven't talked to him recently, that he was under pressure from the British and French governments to . . .

President: Well, what kind of pressure, because the goddam plane isn't going to be ready in six years, and here the United States government is about to go into a major program. And where does that leave us? I mean, didn't we have any understanding with him that he wouldn't go ahead while we were trying to come up with our proposal?

Sec. Dillon: I don't think that there was any, uh . . .

President: Didn't anybody tell him?

Sec. Dillon: I think Halaby did tell him. Halaby has been with him today.

President: Did you have any talks with him?

Sec. Dillon: I only had that one that I sent a memorandum to you. It was over about a week ago, and I haven't talked with him since then.