

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 25A, Item 25A2

July 31, 1963

Long:¹ . . . that, uh, this state compliance with this integration business.

JFK: What's that? What order is that?

Long: That's, that's your eleven-one-one-four, it's eleven-one-fourteen. Now that's, now here's the big difference . . .

JFK: Now wait a minute, that's. . . . Wait a minute now. Let me. . . . Tell me again what you're talk-. . . . What is that, the . . .

Long: Th- . . .

JFK: . . . executive order to provide state compliance on what?

Long: Well, right now it's on highways, but it's a general order and it would, it would have effect with regard to, uh, I guess all federal agencies. [Th-?] . . .

JFK: Now is this the thing that's in our, uh, civil rights bill?

Long: Yes, it is. [I?] . . .

JFK: You mean that's the provision in our civil rights bill?

Long: Well, it's in your civil rights bill, but you got an executive order, uh . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . with regard to which, uh, the highway, which the highway boys feel that they've got to enforce right now.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And that says, uh, the real th-, the thing that's . . .

¹ Russell B. Long, senator from Louisiana.

JFK: [Talking to Mrs. Lincoln in the room.] Would you have [words unintelligible] come in, Mrs. Lincoln?

Long: . . . [words unintelligible],

JFK: Whadya say?

Long: Uh, the thing that's gonna really cause, uh, an explosion as far as Louisiana is concerned is this provision where, uh, a federal agency is to undertake to require that the state agency be the policeman. In other words, uh, as far as our highway director down there and the governor are concerned, uh, uh, this would require them to be, to be another Bobby Kennedy.²

JFK: [Laughs] You mean only one, one's enough.

Long: [Laughs] Well, well, from that point of view, [laughs] uh, uh, they don't want that burden and they can't take it. And, uh . . .

JFK: Well, now wait a minute, I'm gonna get this fellow in here who's working on that. Wait just a second. Now what would they like to do?

Long: Well, their position is this, they've got in their contract on a federal highway right now, they've got this stipulation that this contractor shall not discriminate . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . and that his sub-contractors shall not discriminate.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And there, and, and, uh, there's not much cause to worry about this anyway on, on their part because these, uh, workers on the highways are 80 percent colored anyhow.

JFK: That's right.

Long: And so, it's just . . .

² Robert F. Kennedy.

JFK: But let me just, that's why I want to find out a little more about what, uh, what their plans are around here. Wait just a second, then I'll get you some word on this. [Pause while JFK speaks with someone in the room.] Yeah. [Speaking to Long.] I'm getting the order, Russell. Tell me what they would . . .

Long: [Words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: . . . like to do.

Long: . . . now, here's the problem . . .

JFK: Wait just a second. [Pause while JFK speaks with someone in the room.] [Speaking to Long.] Okay, la-, uh, now I got some background on it. Now, uh, Russell, I'm here, they tell me that the provision which we've got in is, uh, that, uh, the Bureau of Public Roads has had an anti-discrimination provision in for four or five years, before we came in here.

Long: That's right.

JFK: So what is it they're worrying about?

Long: Well, the change that this thing proposes to make, it, it, it expands upon the, upon the discrimination part and that's, that's, they aren't concerned about that.

JFK: Right.

Long: The change that they're concerned about is that, that this would un-, that your change would undertake, I mean you've got several changes, but the one that upsets them is that you would undertake to make them be the Sherlock Holmes and make them be . . .

JFK: The state shall, I see. I see.

Long: . . . the, uh, the, the, the, the attorney general. And make them, make them be the fair opportunity boys . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . and that, uh, that from their point of view, that's something they can't do. They just gonna have to say, No, we just can't do, that's how it's got to be, we c-. . . . Even with a hundred million dollars, we just got to say, No.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And, uh, now their position is this. Uh, they don't care to make a lot of noise about it, but they feel that, uh, uh, that, uh, what you oughta do if you want to do that, you, you enforce it, uh. . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: Now, whoever undertakes to do that, uh, is gonna be mighty unpopular, but you've assumed that burden anyhow . . .

JFK: Yeah, yeah.

Long: . . . understand? And so, but, but as far as they're concerned, they can't sign that and they can't enforce that. In other words, you've got to enforce it. [Words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: Well, now, are they discriminating now?

Long: No, there hasn't . . .

JFK: Right.

Long: . . . been a complaint filed, uh, you understand? [Laughs]

JFK: Yeah, I understand.

Long: There just hasn't been and probably won't be, but the point is that if they, that if they're to be told that they have got to go and, uh . . .

JFK: Accept that, I understand. Okay.

Long: . . . [enforce these damned?] violations of one thing or another . . .

JFK: Yeah, they don't want to be in that position.

Long: . . . they can't do it. Now, uh, frankly, as far as this present impasse is concerned in, in Louisiana tomorrow, uh, this fellow's got to advertise his lettings.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And if he's got, and he can't advertise these lettings because the federal fellow down there says, "You've got to sign this thing" and he's going to be the Sherlock Holmes and the attorney general . . .

JFK: I see.

Long: . . . of the United States.

JFK: All right. Let me go into it and then I'll be back to you.

Long: The point being, Mr. President, that, uh . . .

JFK: I understand. I understand. They don't want to get, I understand. Let me go into it and then I'll be back to you.

Long: Fine. Thanks so much.