

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 11A

Item 11A1

March 6, 1963

Operator: I'm sorry to keep you waiting, uh . . .

Ball:¹ That's quite all . . .

Operator: . . . Mr. Ball.

Ball: Yes.

Operator: He'll be right with you.

Ball: All right. Thank you.

Speaker ?: *[Words unintelligible]*

JFK: Hello.

Ball: Hello, Mr. President.

JFK: George, how are you? Did you ever. . . . We've got some information, you know, that Joxe's² visit has been canceled to the United States by de Gaulle.³ That he didn't want him coming around here. That French minister would be misunderstood. That lends a special interest again to Adlai's⁴ trip. Have we ever found out what the genesis of that was?

Ball: Yes, I, I spoke to him yesterday. He's coming down tomorrow, uh, to be here Friday.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: What he said was this. That he's going over to a, NATO War College has a, a session . . .

¹ George Ball.

² Louis Joxe.

³ Charles de Gaulle.

⁴ Adlai E. Stevenson.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: . . . and he's, had been asked to go over and, and give a speech. And, uh, he had simply mentioned to, uh, the, uh, French delegate at the U.N. in New York that he was going to do this and this fellow had said, "Well, I hope you'll go see Couve⁵ while you are there," and, uh, uh, Stevenson said, "Well, I don't have any particular business to do." And he said, "Well, I think he'd like to see you." And so, uh, uh, this fellow went back to Paris and apparently he arranged a meeting with Couve. But I don't get, didn't get the sense from Adlai that there had been anything firm arranged with the general.

JFK: Oh, I see, okay, fine.

Ball: That this fellow had simply said that, uh . . .

JFK: Well, as long as we keep on that basis, that's fine.

Ball: Yeah.

JFK: Just . . .

Ball: He's going to be down on Friday and I think he could . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: . . . we could either have him . . .

JFK: When does he go? When does he go?

Ball: Oh, at the end of the month, at, uh . . .

JFK: Right. Okay.

Ball: . . . a couple weeks to go anyway.

JFK: Good, okay, thanks, George.

Ball: Right. Thank. . . . Thank. . . .

⁵ Maurice Couve de Murville.

Dictabelt 11A

Item 11A2

March 7, 1963

JFK: Well, you see the Pentagon also pointed out. . . . "Defense Secretary Rob- said at the news conference that there were no U.S. military personnel operating in the invasion." That's the point that I didn't want to make 'cause if they make that generalization, then it looks like the distinction between a guardsman and not a guardsman's the key thing.

Clifton:⁶ Right.

JFK: I thought we went into that.

Clifton: We did and he, when I heard the statement it was flatly that no Arkansas national guardsmen were there.

JFK: The fact of the matter is that former U.S. guardsmen, military guardsmen from Alabama were in combat operations.

Clifton: Right.

JFK: So what's the sense in pointing. . . . Then that looks like there's some tricky distinction here.

Clifton: Right. I'll . . .

JFK: I thought I'd made that point to 'em.

Clifton: You, you did and, uh, this. . . . General Wilson⁷ didn't put out anything but what you said. I s-. . . . They read it to me over the phone.

JFK: Will you have somebody ask 'em what they mean by saying that about McNamara,⁸ "no U.S. military personnel?" Because the fact of the matter is we know that. Nobody has said that. They're talking about former guardsmen.

⁶ General Chester V. Clifton.

⁷ Major General Winston Peabody Wilson.

⁸ Robert S. McNamara.

Clifton: Right. I . . .

JFK: I thought I . . . But the point is, General, I told the three of you that, that I didn't want these two things joined together because one then looks like the key word is guardsman.

Clifton: Right. And, uh, that's. . . . Sylvester⁹ had it absolutely clear and he put it out clear, but I'll check up and see what McNamara did.

JFK: I know McNamara didn't put out anything.

Clifton: All. . . .

JFK: It says the Pentagon. It's the same thing.

Clifton: Well, I'll check on [words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: I'd like to find out why they included that statement. Because how does that. . . . Then what does that mean that. . . . Yeah, but what do you call the Alabama group.

Clifton: Right.

JFK: They're not U.S. military personnel but then it then looks like what we're doing is separating guardsmen from other people. And the fact of the matter, nobody did it.

Clifton: Nobody did it and nobody has used it.

JFK: That's what I told everybody.

Clifton: Well, they had it straight when I, when they called me.

JFK: All right. Let's find out about it.

Clifton: I'll check on it right away.

JFK: . . . find out about it.

Clifton: I'll check on it . . .

⁹ Arthur Sylvester.

Operator: Ready.

Dictabelt 11A

Item 11A3

March 7, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Fisher:¹⁰ Yes, sir.

JFK: Oh, how'd ya. . . . You read Mr. Dodd's?¹¹

Fisher: Yes, I did.

JFK: What'd ya think of it?

Fisher: Well, I, it, it's temperate and about as good a presentation of that point of view as you can get. I'm debating whether I should answer it again.

JFK: Why don't you get another one ready and let me look at it?

Fisher: All right, fine.

JFK: I think you might point out two or three. . . . One point is that if we'd gotten an agreement four years ago, you wouldn't have perhaps had these tests.

Fisher: I think that's right.

JFK: And, uh . . .

Fisher: If we'd an agreement four years ago, we'd have been a lot better off [right?] now.

JFK: If we'd not been. . . . If we'd been able because, uh, the fact of the matter is it isn't, uh, we tested, uh. . . . He gives the impression in that letter that if the Soviet testing that's closed the ga-. . . . As if we didn't test.

Fisher: Yes.

¹⁰ Adrian S. Fisher.

¹¹ Thomas J. Dodd.

JFK: The fact of the matter is that we were ahead. The more they test, the more we test, even if we each ran a hundred tests . . .

Fisher: We tend to equalize.

JFK: . . . we tend to equalize. And so that will be with anyone else who begins to develop. They'll start way behind and if each country continues to test, because you can't make those kind of extraordinary advances you made at the beginning and the fact of the matter is if we'd gotten the agreement back in '59 or whenever it was we started, but if, if it had prevented this last series of tests, we would've been better off. The second thing is that neutron bomb. He's a nut on the neutron bomb. Two years ago, I think, he was making some speeches about it was right around the corner, wasn't he?

Fisher: Yes. Yes.

JFK: The fact of the matter is I don't see the neutron bomb as making any specific difference.

Fisher: Uh, neither do I. And, . . . I've got to write. . . . I think I . . .

JFK: See if you can write a letter.

Fisher: . . . got a tone, if it is agreeable with you, Mr. President, that, that. . . . Arguing with Tom Dodd is better than arguing with a Republican on this. It just so happens that Dodd and I are friends.

JFK: Yeah, why is it bet- . . . I'm not.

Fisher: [Words unintelligible] cordial note.

JFK: Yeah, all right. Well, let's see what you get.

Fisher: I'll get it over to you.

JFK: And then let me look at it.

Fisher: Right, sir.

JFK: Okay.

Fisher: Okay. Okay.

Dictabelt 11A

Item 11A4

March 7, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Ball¹²: Hello, Mr. President.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: There's a piece in the Washington . . .

[Tape skips.]

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: . . . a piece in the Wash- . . .

[Tape skips.]

Ball: . . . seen of a [close-up?] interview with this fellow Frederick Erroll who is president of the Board of Trade.

JFK: Yeah, I saw that. Yeah.

Ball: And I wanted you to understand that as far as the department is concerned, we hit him very, very hard and he had no basis for saying he got any sympathy.

JFK: He said not only on the woolens, but the other thing is that we understood, we were sympathetic about his trade with the Soviets.

Ball: Well, that's what I mean, no . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: . . . on, on the Soviet trade.

¹² George Ball

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: I talked to him myself and we've never been rougher with anybody. So I've gotten, getting David Ormsby Gore in and we're going to have him send a message to London that if Erroll hadn't, got any such idea he's, he's completely mistaken. That this is a matter we feel deeply and strongly about and it's gonna cause great trouble here.

JFK: Is this on the pipe or just generally?

Ball: On the pipe. Uh, on the dif- . . .

JFK: Did he bring up the pipe?

Ball: Well, I brought up the pipe, I brought up the ship for oil deal and I brought up the sale of the Viscounts. All three.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: We hit him very hard. I told him that on the pipe that that they weren't gonna get anything out of the pipe, but they were gonna break the line and the Germans were gonna get the orders. But it would be very hard to, to, uh, enforce anything under, uh, uh, on the Western embargo after this and that, uh, furthermore, the, this was something that was really hurting the Soviet Union, as it made clear to us. And that if they went ahead with this, I foresaw very great problems in this country on cooperation on a lot of other things and on the ship for oil deal, that this was the beginning of Soviet penetration, oil penetration that was gonna cause trouble in the Middle East. Gonna cause great trouble here and so on.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: So that there was no doubt that he got the point and this is a, this is c-, rather a crude play on his part . . .

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

Ball: . . . to, to try to put us in this position.

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: So when the secretary has his press conference tomorrow, why, we're gonna cook up a question and let him hit it hard there, too.

JFK: Right. Right.

Ball: So that there'll be no doubt back in London as to what the . . .

JFK: I thought Walt Lippmann¹³ had a good article this morning.

Ball: Well, I think that's useful to begin . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Ball: . . . to get this out. He, he misconstrued a little what, what Hallstein¹⁴ was saying but, I think, the more we create the impression of concern here on this, why the, the stronger our position will be. So it doesn't . . .

JFK: Right.

Ball: . . . doesn't worry me a bit.

JFK: Okay, fine, George.

Ball: Right, bye.

¹³ Walter Lippmann.

¹⁴ Walter Hallstein.

Dictabelt 11A

Item 11A5

March 7, 1963

Operator: [Words unintelligible.]

Speaker ?: Is it real bad?

JFK: What about that decision he joined in on that Mississippi, on that Louisiana statute about the race being on the ballot?

Katzenbach:¹⁵ Uh, that was not good.

JFK: Yeah.

Katzenbach: And, uh, his handling. . . . He reopened Skelly Wright's¹⁶ school business. But actually that's worked out better than, uh, than I thought it was going to.

JFK: Yeah. He hasn't been too bad?

Katzenbach: And he hasn't been impossible, no.

JFK: Yeah. Which one, the one from Mississippi has been?

Katzenbach: Uh, Cox¹⁷ has not been good.

JFK: Wh- . . .

Katzenbach: He's been sitting on a great many things.

JFK: Yeah.

Katzenbach: Uh, our other appointments down there have, uh, uh, have done pretty well . . .

JFK: Are they?

¹⁵ Nicholas deB. Katzenbach.

¹⁶ J. Skelly Wright.

¹⁷ William Harold Cox.

Katzenbach: . . . [really?]. I don't think we have anything to be embarrassed about on that.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Katzenbach: Uh, we had as much trouble from, from Republican appointees down there as we do . . .

JFK: Have we?

Katzenbach: . . . from, from the Democrats. Sure.

JFK: All right. All right.

Katzenbach: Of course, they're all. . . . In Mississippi, they're all Eastland's¹⁸ anyhow.

JFK: Yeah, why don't we see if we could get somebody. . . . Could you get one of your boys to get up a memo on sort of the Republicans and Democrats 'cause I, this might get to be one of those issues they keep talking about?

Katzenbach: Sure.

JFK: So I'll be able to talk about in case it comes up again.

Katzenbach: Will do.

JFK: Thanks a . . . What about the, uh, uh, the Interhandel?¹⁹ I see Drew's²⁰ on that again.

Katzenbach: Well, I didn't see it this morning [words unintelligible]. Well, I knew he would be.

JFK: Yeah.

Katzenbach: For sure. Yeah.

JFK: All right. Okay. Good.

Katzenbach: He's a . . . It's a matter of principle with him.

¹⁸ James Eastland.

¹⁹ Interhandel AG.

²⁰ Drew Pearson.

JFK: Yeah. Okay.

Katzenbach: He never settles.

JFK: Righto.

Katzenbach: Okay.

[Sound of phone being hung up.]

Operator: Hello.

Dictabelt 11A

Item 11A6

March 7, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Speaker ?: Hello, Mr. President . . .

JFK: How are you?

Speaker ?: . . . how are you?

JFK: Very good. Fine. Fine

Speaker ?: Yes. I just have some sad news. Tom Shanahan²¹ in New York passed away this morning.

JFK: Oh, did he? Did he.

Speaker ?: Yes. You know he was in an automobile accident.

JFK: I didn't know that.

Speaker ?: Yes. About two weeks ago he went right through the, uh, windshield and they had an awful time. He really had his purgatory here on earth . . .

JFK: Did he . . .

Speaker ?: . . . the last two weeks.

JFK: Was he, was he unconscious?

Speaker ?: No, he was conscious all along, uh, just towards the end, I guess. Uh, first it was his leg and he was on the operating table about, from 8:30 'til 10:30 at night and, uh, they, they thought they'd remove his leg and then his ribs were all crushed and then he, uh, then the kidneys got involved. So, I guess that's what killed him . . .

²¹ Thomas J. Shanahan.

JFK: Yeah.

Speaker ?: . . . then, then. He was a really good friend of yours . . .

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. That's too bad.

Speaker ?: . . . from way back.

JFK: Has his wife. . . . He's got a widow?

Speaker ?: Yes, and children.

JFK: I didn't know he was even sick or I would have sent him something. I'll tell you. . . . Well, I'll send her. . . . Would y-. . . . Let me put you, uh, on to some girl.

Speaker ?: Yeah.

JFK: Would you give 'em where I can send something, a message? Wait just a second.

Speaker ?: Yes, all right.

JFK: *[Words unintelligible].*

Speaker ?: Thank you, Mr. President.

JFK: *[Speaking to someone in the room.] Uh . . .*

Speaker ?: *[Words unintelligible].*

JFK: *[Speaking to someone in the room.] [Evelyn?],²² you get this. You take [it on line 2?]. [Please.]*

Lincoln: Hello.

Speaker ?: Hello.

Lincoln: Yes.

²² Evelyn Lincoln.

Speaker ?: Hello. Mr. Shanahan. That's Thomas Shanahan. Mrs. Thomas Shanahan.

Lincoln: Uh-huh.

Speaker ?: And it's at, at, uh, the one [words unintelligible]. I don't have the exact address.

Lincoln: Uh-huh.

Speaker ?: Beach one-hundred and forty-, uh, third street, one-forty-second street. Beach one-forty-second. That's B-E-A-C-H one-forty-second street, uh, Nepon-, Belle Harbor 94, New York.

Lincoln: Uh-huh.

Speaker ?: And his wife's name is Anne. A-N-N-E, I guess.

Lincoln: Okay.

Speaker ?: And, and they have children. They have, uh, have children, have, uh . . .

[Continued on item 11B1.]