

## 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 #1: President Kennedy and Harold Hughes

March 9, 1963

*[Continued from Dictabelt 13A, Conversation #2]*

Gov. Hughes: I haven't told anybody I was calling you. I don't want any publicity on it at all. It is just a matter between you and I, and the man's attorney knows that I am calling and that's all.

President: Right. Okay. Good, Governor. I'll talk to you Monday or Tuesday, but it's your feeling that we ought to commute him to life?

Gov. Hughes: My personal feeling is that you ought to commute his sentence to life. I would greatly appreciate it if it could be done, but it is your judgment to make, I know.

President: Right, okay, Governor, I'll call you.

Gov. Hughes: Thanks a lot.

President: Thank you, I am glad to talk to you. How are you doing otherwise?

Gov. Hughes: Oh, I've got a million problems here in Iowa, but I really think things are looking fairly good out here as far as your own position is concerned.

President: I must say, you were, you and Frank Morrisson, I don't know how you did it. Having some experience with Iowa, uh, I couldn't believe it when I saw the results of that election.

Gov. Hughes: I have got a real battle, but I think we can make progress here. I would like to talk to you about it sometime later, and see what we think we can do next year here.

President: Good, Governor, thanks a lot, and I will be in touch with you.

Gov. Hughes: Thanks a lot.

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## **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]*

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## **Dictabelt 14A**

### Conversation #3: President Kennedy and Edwin Martin

March 9, 1963

President: Hello.

Mr. Martin: Ed Martin here

President: Oh, Ed, on the Latin American, those six Presidents gonna issue some statement on Cuba before we get there?

Mr. Martin: Not to my knowledge.

President: Well, there was some talk about that on the idea that they would say something so that it wouldn't look like we had dragged them into it. On the other hand, given the disposition of one or two of them, we don't want them to look like they are sort of challenging me to come up with something. We didn't want that interpretation to be given to it.

Mr. Martin: We'll double check it. I think . . . I haven't heard anything. Mr. Collins is just back this morning from down there and did not mention this, but I will double check it.

President: Wait a second, Pierre is here. Well, now Henry . . . told it to Pierre. I know that they are getting there the day before. Now, there was some talk with the foreign minister of Costa Rica. So at that time we didn't want to make it look like we had pushed them into it. But now that I think about it, it may look a little like they are son of challenging.

Mr. Martin: Yeah, no, we are planning to have a meeting with them on Sunday with respect to the communique, but I know of nothing they are planning to put out, but we will double check it. I do think it would look like they are challenging us.

President: Okay, well, now, are we, uh, when will we meet again on Costa Rica?

Mr. Martin: We are meeting with the Secretary tomorrow with a talking paper for you. It is just what you say at the meeting, and we ought to meet again, say Wednesday or Thursday.

President: Okay, can you check this matter, then, and see if there is anything to that?

Mr. Martin: I will let you know.

President: Okay, thanks.

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## **Dictabelt 14A**

Conversation #4: President Kennedy and Arthur Sylvester

March 11, 1963

President: Is it closed or open?

Mr. Sylvester: I believe it is a closed session.

President: What are they going to ask you about? Is it this supposed remark on Friday?

Mr. Sylvester: Yes, they want me to bring the transcript of, uh, we keep a transcript of the remarks of the uh . . .

President: What exactly did you say?

Mr. Sylvester: I haven't got it in front of me. I didn't question their fairness at any time, so I have answered it tonight. We have been pressured day after day for some comment on the hearing, and I have refrained until last Friday, when during that period at the end of last week, when the thing got worse and worse. Bob [Robert S. McNamara] and the rest of us, we thought we would go ahead and make some response for a change. So they were asking the question again by asking me if I had any comment to make about the inaccuracies. And there was some conversation, and in the course of it, I made no reference to any Senator's personal fairness at all. I did say that it was unlikely where state interest was involved, and that we would get a judicial rendering because the Senate hearings and House hearings are not judicial procedures, and I've never heard of anybody who said they were. If they were, they couldn't achieve some of the great things they have done. [laughter]

President: Alright. Balls, but go ahead. So then, what are you going to say?

Mr. Sylvester: Well, that's what I said there at the, uh, I did say that reading . . . All I'm . . . My point is that all I did was to read from the transcript. I do have a news clipping from the Chicago Daily News, which I am taking with me, if they ask

me what is it based on, in which committee investigators are quoted in the direct that they have made up their minds, and this was a bad decision, and the quotation of the committee investigator who said what McNamara did means that if the Russians took the other plane, the one he turned down, and they would shoot down all the American planes that he selected. This is a direct quote.

President: I wouldn't eat too much crow for those bastards.

Mr. Sylvester: Well, I didn't want to. Bob [Robert S. McNamara] was insisting, uh, I didn't have a chance to talk to him, but he left directions that I should write a letter this afternoon. I wrote sort of, if you read it, it is a pretty equivocal letter. I didn't say that I was apologizing to him, I said that I was sorry if somebody interpreted the remark. And I don't believe I should, myself, and I haven't really any intention of doing that. I don't see where I should back water on it.

President: Yea, just say I don't think we have had a chance to express our case.

Mr. Sylvester: I am just going to say that the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Secretary in his letter today that the thing is fragmentary, confused. That our side had not been brought out and, quote, a couple of these stories in which it's made us look very bad, which stories are attributed to committee sources.

President: Okay, that is fine. That will be closed, won't it? Then they will come out and say.

Mr. Sylvester: That the transcript will be made available, because there won't be anything classified.

President: Okay, fine, righto.

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## **Dictabelt 14A**

Conversation #5: President Kennedy and C. Douglas Dillon

March 12, 1963

President: -----account thing of Mortimer's [Kaplan] and I don't know whether . . . what it's doing to us, but it seems to be an awful lot, a . . . That was all they talked about at the legislative breakfast this morning.

Sec. Dillon: I don't even know what they are talking . . .

President: Well, they are complaining about the way the Internal Revenue had been handling this in such a way that, uh, you know we are having a fight with every hotel, restaurant, business man around. Now, I don't know whether, uh, this was pretty strong this morning.

Sec. Dillon: Well, the real thing that's happened, Mr. President, is that, uh . . . it's somewhat complex. What's happened is that they haven't put out any rules yet. And there is a lot of pressure on them to put the rules out. And they'll be coming out preliminarily in about two weeks. And then have hearings on them for that.

President: Oh, didn't they do that? What did they put out in December?

Sec. Dillon: Oh, that was just accounting procedures, and I think that now that has settled down and was reasonably well accepted.

President: Well, don't they have this business about the \$25.00 and after that you have to give the, uh . . .

Sec. Dillon: That is part of the accounting procedure, yes. Generally, that hasn't, so far as we have seen, caused as much trouble as whether certain parts of meals are deductible, whether you can take the wife and all that sort of thing, which there hasn't been any rule on.

President: Well, we ought to, uh . . .

Sec. Dillon: One of the problems with that . . . that's why I say it is complex, is that laws that existed prior to last year is far stricter than probably a lot of people realized. So we are trying to divide this thing strictly into what was last year's law, which isn't very bad, and then into . . .

President: The only trouble is . . . we're gonna get all . . . we got . . . all of this comes sort of on us. I don't know how much money we are going to collect as a result of all this, and whether it is worth the heat that these people are able to put on.

Sec. Dillon: It is coming from New York, I know that. They're a . . . Actually, restaurants, hotels and everything are doing awful well in Florida, for instance. But in New York, it is a lot of noise about it from the big ones. You know, 21 Club, and, uh.

President: Toots Shor's and those things. How much are they down? Do we know?

Sec. Dillon: Well, 21 said that they are down about 10 percent. But I think a thing like Caesar's might be down twice as much. But their problem is largely they are complaining that they don't know what they can do, and we think that they can do a lot more than the people think. General scaredness of this is more than actual revenue.

President: Well, whatever we are going to do, would you let me know over here so we can take a look at it, because I think that there is no sense getting into a lot of unnecessary, uh.