

FOREWORD

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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 19B

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Orville Freeman

May 22, 1963, 10:30 a.m.

President: Hello.

Sec. Freeman: Yes, sir.

President: Orville.

Sec. Freeman: Yes, sir.

President: I wanted just one more conversation with you before the meeting. I talked to Hubert [Humphrey] and Hubert said that of course we ought to keep this wheat off the market to help keep the price up.

Sec. Freeman: Yeah.

President: And that he thought that it would stay up to 1.60 or 70 if we kept the wheat off the market.

Sec. Freeman: What wheat off the market?

President: The wheat we've got stored.

Sec. Freeman: Well . . . I don't think that he is right on that, Mr. President. No, I don't think he's right on that. But we've already in the statement that I have (excuse me for interrupting) . . .

President: Yea, I saw where you said that you would keep it 5 percent above the market price.

Sec. Freeman: Right, according to law there will be no dumping, and that we hope this program would work.

President: I see. Well, now, I saw [] Hoovens said that we will be fighting to get a new bill. I don't want to say we won't have a hill today. Just say I don't know, it seems to me the farmers has made their choice. I haven't heard of any other proposal that's being made. I think that we ought to let them all set for awhile, because I think that they are going to be a little sick about tomorrow.

Sec. Freeman: Right, this is . . . you're absolutely right. I tell you . . . I am very pleased that you called. I was going to try and reach you before the press conference also. What I said today in addition to this because of the press guys around here were scrambling around and I wanted to get the initiative on this. I said, "Well, now, look, there has been a big debate. This is going to be a contribution, in a sense, to the question of whether a so-called free market is gonna operate or not. Now, this is the Farm Bureau position, this position of the opponents. And they said they didn't want controls and that the wheat farmer would be better off, and the wheat farmer agreed with them. Now we are going to find out. They won the election. They are entitled to the results of that victory. And we hope they are right . . . "

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: ". . . We are going to cooperate with them in every way we can. We are going to break our back for the wheat farmer. But, uh . . . this decision has been made." If they come up there knowin' . . . I don't think, uh, there are going to be some jumpy people on the Hill, Mr. President. But I really think, the first place, there aren't very goddam many wheat farmers that are Democrats. Those that are are still going to be with us.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: They are not going to be affected very much. Secondly, a clear, firm hand in connection with this says alright, let's find out. We submitted this to them, I think that will be . . . will be respected. And thirdly, if we are going to meet this problem in the long run, and we are going to have to, this over-production problem, we are going to have to give these guys some of, uh, in a nice way without getting ourselves burned, what the tobacco guys got. You recall the story in '38 the tobacco people voted overwhelmingly against any kind of a program and, goddam, there is tobacco barns standing through the South yet, and today they vote 98 percent for it. They . . .

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sec. Freeman: . . . bled and hurt and learned. They did the same thing.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: So I quite agree with you that you know how not to be obstructionist, but I think it could be said in a positive way and said that the people that won this election were the Farm Bureau and the people who had this philosophy in mind. Let's see how it works.

President: Yeah.

Sec. Freeman: Many people entertain it. I think that it is entitled to a chance if the farmers voted for it.

President: Yeah, good, O.K., fine, Orville.

Sec. Freeman: I will be watching.

President: Righto.

Sec. Freeman: Very good.