

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.

Copyright:

The donors assigned copyright that they might have in the recordings to the United States; however, copyright of the donors does not extend beyond statements uttered by John F. Kennedy, his minor children, and the donors themselves. Statements uttered by officials of the United States government in the course of their duties are considered to be in the public domain. Users of this material are cautioned, however, that not all persons recorded were members of the Kennedy family or government officials. A number of the people recorded were, at the time of recording, private citizens. Therefore, those intending to quote from this material beyond the accepted limits of fair use are cautioned to determine the copyright implications of any intended publication.

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 8A, Item 8A2

Thursday, February 28, 1963

[item begins in mid-sentence]

Edmondson¹: . . . not a bit. *[I]* think Carl Albert told Larry O'Brien, or sent word, uh, through Larry O'Brien about the same subject, concerning this American-Eastern merger.

JFK: What's your position on it?

Edmondson: For it.

JFK: You're for it. Yeah.

Edmondson: I talked to Bob about it, uh, in some depth, but, uh, Bob has a different opinion about it, and we didn't go into it too deeply as a result.

JFK: Well, his only . . . Evidently every other airline in the United States, and this is literal, have come in objecting because they say it's going to smother them. It would be the largest airline in the world, and it will be too tough for competition.

Edmondson: Um-hmm.

JFK: And, uh, so we got Delta in, and Braniff, and United, and Western, and . . . and, uh, they've put up quite a case.

Edmondson: I have read, uh, a number of their briefs, and I have also the finding of the examiner. I don't think that there's any question about the bigness. But I think that there are two aspects of it that deserve, uh, consideration. The first one being the concessions that American and Eastern have agreed to make to, uh, somewhat limit their own activities in this regard, such as they agreed, uh, their offer agreement to limit advertising and also, uh, with respect to certain lines where they would be in this position of, uh, near monopoly, and, uh, they've al-- . . . they've already submitted those, uh, offer of concessions to the CAB. The other one, of course, is something that, uh, goes into it a lot deeper.

¹ [James Howard Edmondson—This speaker was previously identified as “Ed Edmundson,” and is now identified as James Howard Edmondson based on contextual information involving the state of Oklahoma, campaigning, and “Kerr’s” participation in politics.]

And it's based primarily on some conversations that I have had with, uh, the former Chairman of the CAB, Del Rentzel, . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: . . . who is from Oklahoma.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: He was a chairman under Truman.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And, uh, he pointed out . . .

JFK: What is his interest in the matter? Now, he has an airline out there, doesn't he?

Edmondson: Uh, he has an airline, but it's not involved in this because it's a completely cargo line.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And I was inquiring of him, . . . not, uh, ... he wasn't soliciting . . .

JFK: Right.

Edmondson: . . . my opinion about it. I just wanted to know what he thought about it as a former chairman of the CAB.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: And his observations, I thought, were very interesting because he pointed out this: that, uh, some of the objections made by Justice to the effect that such a . . . a merger being approved would, uh, tend to, uh, eventually cause or set a pattern to cause six or eight major lines, and that would be it.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: Uh, he said that he thought that was probably true, but he also believed that this is probably eventually what should be done.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: And he went into it quite in depth, which I wouldn't want to burden you with . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: . . . at this time. But I . . . I certainly . . .

JFK: Who . . . What's the Oklahoma interest?

Edmondson: The Oklahoma interest is this. American is our largest employer.

JFK: [Oh, is it?] In the state?

Edmondson: Outside of, uh, Uncle Sam.

JFK: Is it?

Edmondson: It is the largest single employer and private employer in the state.

JFK: Why is that?

Edmondson: Because they have their big maintenance center there.

JFK: Oh, I see. Tulsa?

Edmondson: Right.

JFK: I see.

Edmondson: And . . .

JFK: OK. But it hasn't come to me, and I guess won't for some while.

Edmondson: No, I'm sure it won't, uh, but Carl, uh, said that he sent word to you through Larry, and I wanted to personally, uh, express my interest in it very favorably.

JFK: OK. Good. Uh, how're you doing otherwise?

Edmondson: Oh, fine. Doing a lot of campaigning.

JFK: Oh, yeah? How's Kerr doing?

Edmondson: Well, he's working, too.

JFK: Is he?

Edmondson: That's a problem.

JFK: How's he . . . What kind of speech does he make?

Edmondson: I've never heard him make one.

JFK: Yeah.

Edmondson: He never, uh, participated at all in politics.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: I have no idea.

JFK: I think he'll find that name . . . boy, that really evaporates, as I said the other night, fast. Don't you think?

Edmondson: Um-hmm. That is what I'm hoping.

JFK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Edmondson: Keep your fingers crossed for me.

JFK: OK. Good.

Edmondson: I appreciate it.

JFK: Righto.

Edmondson: Good to have been with you the other evening.

JFK: OK. Thanks very much.

Edmondson: Um-hmm.

JFK:

'Bye.

[phone hangs up]