

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.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 12B

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and W. Averell Harriman

March 8, 1963

President: Governor?

Gov. Harriman: Yes, Mr. President?

President: How are you? Listen, I've gotten a call from the Justice Department about this merger of the B&O [Baltimore & Ohio Railroad] and C&O [Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad].

Gov. Harriman: Yes, sir.

President: And evidently, the unions are opposed and the companies are for, and I am wondering what our position ought to be on it. You got any knowledge about this one?

Gov. Harriman: Not specifically, because I thought this thing had been pretty well agreed to.

President: Agreed to?

Gov. Harriman: I say I thought that, uh, I don't know what the Justice said, but from our point of view, I would have to double check it, Mr. President, I'd have to be sure, but I don't see any objection to it.

President: I see.

Gov. Harriman: Does the Justice feel that they had something?

President: I guess the unions are hard on it.

Gov. Harriman: They would always be on any of these mergers.

President: Yea, well I didn't know enough about it, and evidently they are trying to get the government into it, and I didn't know whether they had any validity, and I guess it has some effect on the future mergers. I tried to get [] Martin, but he is over in Holland, dedicating some fair.

Gov. Harriman: I sent him over there. They asked for Franklin D. [Roosevelt, Jr.], Mr. President, they had to have a top man, so I sent Martin for the weekend over there.

President: Right.

Gov. Harriman: But now, how soon do you need to know this, by Monday morning?

President: Yea, well, maybe you can give me a call Monday on it.

Gov. Harriman: I'll have a call to you Monday morning, and I will try to get it before that, but I'm not sure I can reach the other men.

President: Oh, good, thank you.

Gov. Harriman: I'll let you know Monday morning.

President: Right. Thank you.