

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.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A1

July 31, 1963

JFK: Hello.

Dillon:¹ Yes, sir.

JFK: Oh, hi, Doug.

Dillon: [Yes?].

JFK: Oh, I just wanted to talk to you about what Kenny² already has probably talked to you about. Was that the United³ situation?

Dillon: Oh, about Patterson.⁴

JFK: Yeah.

Dillon: Yes, I put in a call to him. He's on his way from New York to Chicago, so I'll get him when he gets there.

JFK: They seem rather pleased, uh, at Douglas⁵ with the fact that we said we would go ahead.

Dillon: Yeah.

JFK: And they have. . . . That gives them some hope. So if we can give 'em any help, then we . . .

Dillon: Oh . . .

JFK: . . . ought to try.

¹ Douglas Dillon.

² Kenneth P. O'Donnell.

³ United Air Lines.

⁴ William A. Patterson.

⁵ Douglas Aircraft Co. Inc.

Dillon: . . . I'll do everything I can with [words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: Good. I got your note on Peru. I sent a note to Bell⁶ ask for a recommendation.

Dillon: Yeah.

JFK: Uh, that was, uh, those bastards. [Laughs]

Dillon: Well, I mean they're using our aid money just to buy gold. That's all that happens, but, uh . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Dillon: . . . [they don't trust?]. . . . They always ask that question in Congress and when that [all?] comes out, as it may not this year, but it will next year and it just could cause real trouble.

JFK: That's what they really are doing I guess, aren't they?

Dillon: Of course. [Of course?].

JFK: What will happen if Bell, uh, puts it on 'em, uh, right away? Will that . . .

Dillon: Well, I mean, I think that, uh, they'll quit buying gold.

JFK: Yeah.

Dillon: And they'll say, What's this all about? And we'll say, With this balance of payments position so strong, you're, uh, oh, buying all this gold, uh, you don't need any of this so . . .

JFK: It's an insane system, isn't it, to have these dollars floating around which people can cash in for very limited supply of gold, isn't it?

Dillon: That's right. And, uh, then what, they oughta, then they'll say, Well, what little they do. . . . And what I would. . . . The best thing that could happen is if, without our suggesting it, if they, uh, oh, oh, got around to the idea of, uh, selling that ten million back to us sometime this quarter, uh, so it will not appear in the statistics that we publish . . .

⁶ David E. Bell.

JFK: Yeah.

Dillon: . . . then, uh, then the Congress will never, uh. . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Dillon: . . . pick it up. That's, that's the thing that I would, I would rather hope.

JFK: Yeah. Well, let me talk to . . .

Dillon: Uh, that, that would only come so that through the AID⁷ people, oh, talking to them, just say we have a policy that, that countries are this strong with strong with balance of payments, we can't continue, uh, uh, giving them soft loans.

JFK: Yeah, okay, I'll get him.

Dillon: All right.

⁷ Agency for International Development.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A2

July 31, 1963

Long:⁸ . . . that, uh, this state compliance with this integration business.

JFK: What's that? What order is that?

Long: That's, that's your eleven-one-one-four, it's eleven-one-fourteen. Now that's, now here's the big difference . . .

JFK: Now wait a minute, that's. . . . Wait a minute now. Let me. . . . Tell me again what you're talk-. . . . What is that, the . . .

Long: Th- . . .

JFK: . . . executive order to provide state compliance on what?

Long: Well, right now it's on highways, but it's a general order and it would, it would have effect with regard to, uh, I guess all federal agencies. [Th-?] . . .

JFK: Now is this the thing that's in our, uh, civil rights bill?

Long: Yes, it is. [I?] . . .

JFK: You mean that's the provision in our civil rights bill?

Long: Well, it's in your civil rights bill, but you got an executive order, uh . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . with regard to which, uh, the highway, which the highway boys feel that they've got to enforce right now.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And that says, uh, the real th-, the thing that's . . .

⁸ Russell B. Long, senator from Louisiana.

JFK: [Talking to Mrs. Lincoln in the room.] Would you have [words unintelligible] come in, Mrs. Lincoln?

Long: . . . [words unintelligible],

JFK: Whadya say?

Long: Uh, the thing that's gonna really cause, uh, an explosion as far as Louisiana is concerned is this provision where, uh, a federal agency is to undertake to require that the state agency be the policeman. In other words, uh, as far as our highway director down there and the governor are concerned, uh, uh, this would require them to be, to be another Bobby Kennedy.⁹

JFK: [Laughs] You mean only one, one's enough.

Long: [Laughs] Well, well, from that point of view, [laughs] uh, uh, they don't want that burden and they can't take it. And, uh . . .

JFK: Well, now wait a minute, I'm gonna get this fellow in here who's working on that. Wait just a second. Now what would they like to do?

Long: Well, their position is this, they've got in their contract on a federal highway right now, they've got this stipulation that this contractor shall not discriminate . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . and that his sub-contractors shall not discriminate.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And there, and, and, uh, there's not much cause to worry about this anyway on, on their part because these, uh, workers on the highways are 80 percent colored anyhow.

JFK: That's right.

Long: And so, it's just . . .

⁹ Robert F. Kennedy.

JFK: But let me just, that's why I want to find out a little more about what, uh, what their plans are around here. Wait just a second, then I'll get you some word on this. [Pause while JFK speaks with someone in the room.] Yeah. [Speaking to Long.] I'm getting the order, Russell. Tell me what they would . . .

Long: [Words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: . . . like to do.

Long: . . . now, here's the problem . . .

JFK: Wait just a second. [Pause while JFK speaks with someone in the room.] [Speaking to Long.] Okay, la-, uh, now I got some background on it. Now, uh, Russell, I'm here, they tell me that the provision which we've got in is, uh, that, uh, the Bureau of Public Roads has had an anti-discrimination provision in for four or five years, before we came in here.

Long: That's right.

JFK: So what is it they're worrying about?

Long: Well, the change that this thing proposes to make, it, it, it expands upon the, upon the discrimination part and that's, that's, they aren't concerned about that.

JFK: Right.

Long: The change that they're concerned about is that, that this would un-, that your change would undertake, I mean you've got several changes, but the one that upsets them is that you would undertake to make them be the Sherlock Holmes and make them be . . .

JFK: The state shall, I see. I see.

Long: . . . the, uh, the, the, the, the attorney general. And make them, make them be the fair opportunity boys . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: . . . and that, uh, that from their point of view, that's something they can't do. They just gonna have to say, No, we just can't do, that's how it's got to be, we c-. . . . Even with a hundred million dollars, we just got to say, No.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And, uh, now their position is this. Uh, they don't care to make a lot of noise about it, but they feel that, uh, uh, that, uh, what you oughta do if you want to do that, you, you enforce it, uh. . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Long: Now, whoever undertakes to do that, uh, is gonna be mighty unpopular, but you've assumed that burden anyhow . . .

JFK: Yeah, yeah.

Long: . . . understand? And so, but, but as far as they're concerned, they can't sign that and they can't enforce that. In other words, you've got to enforce it. [Words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: Well, now, are they discriminating now?

Long: No, there hasn't . . .

JFK: Right.

Long: . . . been a complaint filed, uh, you understand? [Laughs]

JFK: Yeah, I understand.

Long: There just hasn't been and probably won't be, but the point is that if they, that if they're to be told that they have got to go and, uh . . .

JFK: Accept that, I understand. Okay.

Long: . . . [enforce these damned?] violations of one thing or another . . .

JFK: Yeah, they don't want to be in that position.

Long: . . . they can't do it. Now, uh, frankly, as far as this present impasse is concerned in, in Louisiana tomorrow, uh, this fellow's got to advertise his lettings.

JFK: Yeah.

Long: And if he's got, and he can't advertise these lettings because the federal fellow down there says, "You've got to sign this thing" and he's going to be the Sherlock Holmes and the attorney general . . .

JFK: I see.

Long: . . . of the United States.

JFK: All right. Let me go into it and then I'll be back to you.

Long: The point being, Mr. President, that, uh . . .

JFK: I understand. I understand. They don't want to get, I understand. Let me go into it and then I'll be back to you.

Long: Fine. Thanks so much.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A3

Operator: [Words unintelligible],

JFK: Hello.

Operator: Uh, Mr. President . . .

JFK: Yes.

Operator: . . . I'm sorry, uh, the Speaker's going to talk to Mr. O'Donnell.¹⁰

JFK: Oh, I see, thank you.

Operator: Right.

[Phone disconnects.]

¹⁰ Kenneth P. O'Donnell.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A4

Operator: [Words unintelligible].

Speaker ?: Oh, outside, please.

Operator: Thank you.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A5

August 6, 1963

JFK: . . . better qualified whites.

Desautels:¹¹ Yes, sir, in Philadelphia.

JFK: Uh, well, I thought it was Tennessee that. . . . Where'd it first come out of?

Desautels: Philadelphia, I believe they were gon-, supposed to conduct a, uh, hearing, a field hearing. Go up to Philadelphia and look into the situation.

JFK: Yeah, well, I think somebody also oughta gather together some of those figures and show relatively how few Negroes hold high level jobs in the government. Do they have any case of where Negroes were given preference?

Desautels: I don't know. That's, that's what they're supposed to investigate. I can check with John Macy¹² and, uh, people at the Post Office, Mr. President.

JFK: Yeah, but I think, uh, we oughta sort of watch it 'cause it could be mean if it, uh, got out of hand.

Desautels: Yes, sir.

JFK: I think if we go to show, you know, what the discrimination problem is and what we're trying to do about it in a reasonable way and not let them pick on one or two cases of where some Negro got a job where he shouldn't have gotten it. There is really [words unintelligible] . . .

Desautels: I think the first item on their schedule, they're supposed to conduct a field hearing in the Philadelphia situation which, you know, Congressman Nix¹³ has been having a problem with Mr. Moore¹⁴ of NAACP¹⁵ up there.

JFK: Yeah.

¹¹ Claude Decautels.

¹² John W. Macy, Jr.

¹³ Robert N. C. Nix, congressman from Pennsylvania.

¹⁴ Cecil B. Moore.

¹⁵ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Desautels: And I think they're supposed to go up there, I believe it was originally scheduled for Thursday of this week to go up and have a field hearing into the Philadelphia situation.

JFK: Yeah.

Desautels: But I'll check the story of last night and, um, and then contact the people at Post Office and the Civil Service Commission.

JFK: Yeah, okay, fine.

Desautels: Fine. Bye, Mr. President. Fine.

Dictabelt 25A

Item 25A6

August 7, 1963

[Phone rings. Begins mid-conversation.]

JFK: . . . that.

Griffiths:¹⁶ Well, of course, I'm the fourteenth vote, there are three others.

JFK: Well, they tell me now that, uh, it may not be [laughs] that wide a margin. So we just wanted to, uh, I think that we're in good shape we get that straightened out.

Griffiths: My problem, Mr. President, is that from my district all I receive is letters saying, "Please stand pat."

JFK: I know they want you to stand pat, but I think when you, when they see what's being done for them in corporation tax reductions and rate reduction, they're gonna be so well pleased and so happy and we're gonna have a bill that we can get by. I, I just hate to get a bill out of there which labor or somebody is going to charge is a rich man's bill and all the rest, and then I, we have a terrible time trying to deal with the problem, explain that it isn't . . .

Griffiths: [Sure?].

JFK: . . . and we end up, uh, much worse off than we are, when, in my opinion, we've got the best issue we could possibly have and we've got the best means of insuring that 1964 isn't a recession year. That's why I'm hanging on . . .

Griffiths: I am . . .

JFK: . . . so tight.

Griffiths: . . . I am absolutely for the tax cut, I mean . . .

[Continued on Belt 25B.]

¹⁶ Martha W. Griffiths, congresswoman from Michigan.