

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 12A

Conversation #4: President Kennedy and Robert F. Wagner

and

Dictabelt 12B

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Robert F. Wagner

March 8, 1963

President: Hello.

Mayor Wagner: Hello.

President: Yea, Bob, how are you?

Mayor Wagner: Good evening, Mr. President, how are you ?

President: Very good.

Mayor Wagner: Well, I got a couple of hours sleep.

President: What did you do up there, finally?

Mayor Wagner: Well, we got it straightened out.

President: You did?

Mayor Wagner: It was a rough one, all night. That fellow [] Powers was something. Elmer Brown was very good. We had something worked out, I guess, as Bill Wirtz got a message to you. I said he was the only one who is going to sleep with some peace. He thought everything was straightened out when he did. We got the publishers to go along with my recommendations and then Brown

and his International Council of the Typographical Union voted unanimously for it and then this bird Powers; 'cause he's got his local committee here, his boys, although they weren't happy at the time. He came in and said, oh, no, he couldn't take it.

President: He didn't want to settle?

Mayor Wagner: No, he didn't want to settle on my recommendations. And Brown, of course, said, well, he would throw /Begin Dictabelt 12b, Conversation #1/ the weight of the international behind it. All their rules and regulations and everything else. And [] Osdale and myself worked on him for about an hour or two and then he finally said, well, okay, they would approve it because the international had, and would recommend it to the membership. So it would . . .

President: What would it finally amount to?

Mayor Wagner: 12.27 for two years.

President: Well, that's pretty good, isn't it?

Mayor Wagner: Yea, it's pretty good. I mean, I think they did very well and the publishers did pretty well, too. And they got two year agreement. They go to the thirty five hours in the second year, which to these boys, the printers, doesn't mean much, because they can take it out of wash up time. Right now, they are working with the other unions. They got the wage package and I think the extra . . . and the publishers calculated that in the second year, that will mean about thirty eight cents more, go into the thirty five hours. And so, it's about a . . . we say it's a . . . 12.27 which runs about 12.60.

President: Does Dorothy /Schiff/ . . . does . . . does she have to pay this, too?

Mayor Wagner: I assume, yea. That was the agreement, that she will have to come in. He says that he has no deal with her, but I assume they will go in and they can do it alright. Boy, they were a sad lot. You know, too, that they have an association but everyone's watching each other, you know.

President: When do they start publishing?

Mayor Wagner: What?

President: When do they start publishing?

Mayor Wagner: Well, they got to clear up a few items with Powers' union. Which are the clean up items you know about; how this affects vacation and so on. I am sure that will be fast and they can clean up these other unions, and then they have a vote I understand some of Powers' fellows are stalling a bit but, I think we can get Brown to get them moving. And they ought to get going, I should think in three or four more days.

President: Oh, good.

Mayor Wagner: But, it's all over now, and we kept our friend in Albany out of it. He was dying. He had a fellow there all the time who was ready to move in.

President: You ought to be pleased. That was a good job, Bob. I think everybody thought that it was.

Mayor Wagner: Well, I wanted you to know that we followed, you know . . . your suggestion on the third party mediation, and, uh, and, uh, everything worked alright, and I wanted to assure you, though, that our main concern was to get it settled. I talked to Dick Donahue up here last Saturday at the dinner I had to run through Joe . . . and I told him we would get it straightened out and we will keep that boy in Albany out of here. He's dying. He's dying up there.

President: Yeah, [laughs] I am glad they are starting to print about him again.

Mayor Wagner: Oh, yea, but he is getting it on the radio all the time. But he was just, uh, you know, he and Javits are constantly in touch with these fellows. But they realized, they are practical business fellows, and they realized they were not going to get anywhere with him and this is the best way to do it. So, we got that out of the way for you, and we will get your papers for you.

President: Okay, that's good. That's terrific, Bob.

Mayor Wagner: I talked to Bobby yesterday, and I am going to see him up here tomorrow. Right, okay, fine, Mr. President.

President: Okay.

Mayor Wagner: Take good care of yourself.

President: Good work.

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.