

## 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.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

## **Dictabelt 17B**

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Robert S. McNamara

April 3, 1963

President: Hello.

Sec. McNamara: Bob McNamara, sir.

President: Good morning. How are you?

Sec. McNamara: Fine, sir.

President: Did you talk to Gene Zuckert?

Sec. McNamara: I talked to him last night, after you.

President: Oh, fine. Well, I talked to, uh, I had Pierre [Salinger] call [Arthur] Sylvester because I was concerned about the stories. What is your judgment about what we ought to do now, because it may come up in my press conference this afternoon.

Sec. McNamara: I think that it ought to be said that the Committee, uh, the pressed us to determine the source of the leak and the Air Force was seeking to answer the Committee's interest in it.

President: Right.

Sec. McNamara: And drop it at that if you can. Now, if they say, is it customary to request people to take polygraph tests, I think the answer to that is that no such request has been made here. The specific . . . no such request has been made. The specific request, as I understand it, made by the Air Force Inspector General of the individuals he talked to was, "would you voluntarily take such a test if it was indicated that, uh . . . it was desirable."

President: Was that part of the routine?

Sec. McNamara: I am checking on that. And I am told that it is. As a matter of fact, I have had underway for about three or four weeks here an investigation of polygraphs. Bob [Robert] Lovett in 1952 investigated this and it hasn't been looked into since that time. And just as a normal routine here about four weeks ago, I had a general counsel's office start. And I have a partial report of their work to date and it has been quite customary, not only here but elsewhere in the government. To both apply the test, but more particularly to ask the individual . . .

President: I see.

Sec. McNamara: . . . if they would be willing to volunteer for the test.

President: I tell you what I wonder if Sylvester or who would you suggest that we could get some details. Pierre thought that the Air Force ought to put out some statement this morning so that the story would be ended so that I wouldn't have to be the one to end it.

Sec. McNamara: I think that's wise. I'll work with Sylvester and we will get it out.

President: Perhaps Sylvester and Pierre could talk, uh.

Sec. McNamara: I will do that and I will get a copy of it over to you.

President: The other thing was whether, uh, do you think that this was an effort by the Air Force to embarrass everybody. That is why they put . . . a pushed it this hard, because, after all, uh.

Sec. McNamara: I don't think so, Mr. President.

President: You think they just . . . he's presses the button were pressed and they conducted what they consider the routine.

Sec. McNamara: That is right. I think also there has been so many claims and counter claims by the Committee and others on this question they honestly wanted to get at the bottom of it. And they went about it with an excessive zeal. If they would apply that much zeal to some of the others [laughter], they would solve them damn fast.

President: You mean the Air Force did an excessive zeal.

Sec. McNamara: Yea. This chap, you don't know the Inspector General, but I happened to serve with him during the war, he is a wonderful individual, but he is a combat pilot. He is a three star general now. He looks like a thug. He just went about it that way.

President: Ok, well, perhaps Pierre and Sylvester can work out something.

Sec. McNamara: And I will see that it is handled before your press conference that you have a note of what we have done.

President: Ok. Good. Thanks a lot, Bob.