

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.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 18B

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and RFK

[Extremely poor recording, though audible. Volume is acceptable, but there appears to be very bad echo, similar to the "print-through" phenomenon found in audiotape. Almost impossible to transcribe accurately. About one minute into the recording, it suddenly becomes clear. The-early portion is RFK talking about Bill Orrick not working out at the State Department, and problems with appointments there. Clearly distinguishable pieces of this garbled portion are indicated below. This should in no way be taken as a definitive transcript; it is merely roughly representative.]

President: Hello.

RFK: Jack?

President: Yeah.

RFK: Well, you know, uh, Bill Orrick's having difficulty over at the State Department . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . Evidently, it hasn't worked out, uh, very well . . . *[garbling]* . . . he's in a key position . . . *[garbling]* . . . that you should have somebody in that job, but, uh, . . . uh, . . . *[garbling]* . . . Rusk has been . . . *[garbling]* . . . so I don't think you've got a great deal of support . . . *[garbling]* . . . and, uh, perhaps that we hoped that he would. So, uh, . . .

President: *[garbling]*. . . everybody's . . . *[garbling]*

RFK: Well, I think, uh, everybody . . . *[garbling]* . . . Rusk . . . *[garbling]* . . . administrate . . . *[garbling]* . . . get the job done . . . *[garbling]* . . . do that at all. George Ball's off where he is . . .

President: Anybody else at the State Department . . . *[garbling]* . . . ?

RFK: [garbling] . . . one person makes, goes to somebody else, gets reversed, and that undermines people, and then they . . . [garbling] . . . higher-up who doesn't have confidence . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . [garbling] . . . [remainder of this is almost unintelligible, although Dean Rusk's name is mentioned] [then, suddenly, it becomes clear . . .] . . . um, Lee Loevinger . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . in the anti-trust division . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . And we talked about putting him over in the FCC . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . as a member . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . And then, uh, maybe bringing Bill Orrick back and making him head of the anti-trust division.

President: O.K.

RFK: That alright?

President: Fine. There's a vacancy, is there?

RFK: In the FCC.

President: You mean when, uh, our friend Newt [Newton Minow] leaves?

RFK: Uh, yeah.

President: I see. I don't know exactly . . . [the next appears to be off phone to someone with him in the room] Do you know when Newton Minow's gonna leave?

[Space for an answer that is not heard on the tape.] In other words, you're ready to go any time. I'll just find . . . I'll have Kenny find out when Newt's gonna leave.

RFK: Alright.

President: O.K.

RFK: Now wait, h--

President: Then we'll go ahead with Henry as the chairman.

RFK: Yeah.

President: Right.

RFK: Now, one other thing. Uh, . . . I've had some conversations the last couple of weeks with a fellow by the name of [Eduardo] Mondlane . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . who's from Mozambique.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And he's the fellow that's leading the effort to, uh, make Mozambique independent. He--a terrifically impressive fellow.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And, uh . . .

President: That's Portuguese?

RFK: Yeah.

President: Uh, . . . He, uh, . . . uh, . . . Some of his people have gotten . . . He's the head of it, but some of his people have gotten some aid and assistance from Czechoslovakia and Poland. He needs help from the United States for two reasons. Number one, so that he can indicate to them that there are people in the West at least sympathetic to his efforts, and, uh, number two, just to keep 'em going. And, uh, the figure that he's mentioned, that they'll need for a year

is a . . . uh, . . . is quite reasonable. First, he needs fifty thousand dollars for help with the refugees. Uh, . . . I think that they . . . It's a possibility that they can get the second fifty thousand dollars from the Ford Foundation. At least they're working on that. Carl Kaysen is. Uh, but he'd need at least fifty thousand dollars from us. Now, uh, Dean Rusk has felt that . . . uh, that he wants to be able to sit down with the Portuguese and say none of these people are getting any money. Uh, . . . if he turned this over to somebody like Averell Harriman or John McCone, just to use their own judgment, uh, . . . the he wouldn't have to kn--get involved in it . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . or know anything about it. Uh, . . . I think it would be damn helpful. Now, we've had discussions on these things for the last week and Carl Kaysen can fill you in on it. But this fellow's going back Wednesday--Monday--and he's gonna meet with the heads of all these African nations at this meeting, I guess next week.

President: 'Course, we wouldn't want him to be saying that he got anything from us.

RFK: No, but you wouldn't have that, you see. You'd have it through some private foundation.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Then they could have cut-outs on it.

President: I see.

RFK: And John McCone can handle it. So it wouldn't come from the agency.

President: Well, now, what does it depend on . . . Uh, you think we ought to give it?

RFK: Yes.

President: O.K., well, then, what do we give it?

RFK: Well, if--maybe if you call to Carl Kaysen about how it should be handled, because if it's to be handled so that Dean Rusk is happy and . . . and, uh, Averell Harriman feels very strongly it should be given.

President: O.K.

RFK: But, uh, I think if it could be handled so that . . . maybe you could explain to Dean Rusk he doesn't have to know about it directly.

President: Should we tell Dean Rusk?

RFK: Well, um, Carl Kaysen got all the facts on it, and he'll have a suggestion as to how it should be handled.

President: Now, uh, . . . uh, do you know what time those troops got there, according to my information?

RFK: Isn't that terrible?

President: Eleven-nineteen?

RFK: Yeah. And not all of them.

President: Not all of them?

RFK: Uh, he told that--He told me, uh, uh, Nick said that five planes were still in the air at eleven-thirty.

President: Well, when I called them at one, they said the first units got there at eleven-nineteen. But, uh, . . . uh, but, I mean, how--and I get notes here which says was gonna get there at seven-thirty.

RFK: Yeah. That's terrible. And the fellow [two words garbled] . . . We--and then saying that they were in the air at the time I talked to them. I don't know how you could screw it up like that.

President: Well, . . . I thought I'd write a memorandum to McNamara about it and ask him what time and everything and then say did they get in when they said they were going to, et cetera.

RFK: Because to have it happen this time as well as last time . . .

President: Yeah. Yeah. O.K.

RFK: That's shocking.

President: I'm gonna write a memo on it. O.K.

[disconnect]