

## 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 16A**

### Conversation #1: President Kennedy Speaking to Unidentified Group

President: -----stock market is way up. The problem, it seems to me, is for the business community to make a judgment based on their needs and the country's needs as to what fiscal and monetary policies we should pursue. We've gotten into this discussion during the present tax bill. How much should the Federal Government spend? What should be our tax policies? What should be the policies of the Federal Reserve Board? How do we prevent a . . . recurring recessions? We had a recession in '58. We had a recession in '60. How do we prevent another recession? What steps should we take to lessen our gold drain? These are all very sophisticated questions which require very new answers. I don't think we can answer them with our automatic party reactions or reactions of prejudice, but really need the most careful and sophisticated judgments because we're all interested in maintaining a prosperous economy with adequate profits, with full employment, which is going to be a particularly difficult problem with nearly 26 million new people coming into the labor market in this decade at the very time when automation is putting people out of work. We therefore need, I think, the closest communion between the business community and the national government, and I am particularly glad that you have an opportunity to study at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], particularly in the field of economics, to come to Washington and talk to some of our people about some of these problems, because our interest is certainly a common one and we all want the best for our country. Thank you very much, and we are glad you are down here.

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## **Dictabelt 16A**

### Conversation #2: President Kennedy and RFK

March 26, 1963

RFK: -----said that he would work on that.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And I talked about getting a summary of the, uh.

President: So, you're going to have a hearing tomorrow?

RFK: I didn't get into that. I don't know what he has scheduled for tomorrow. Um . . . I'll tell you this, I think we are much better off than we were 48 hours ago, in any case. Because I think it is psychologically indicated, uh, and that is a pretty reasonable letter that was written to them. They could proceed with the hearings and all the rest. So I think psychologically it has taken away from him the bitterness issue. And, hell, we tried to be cooperative and . . .

President: What about the a . . . tomorrow's hearing. Are you going to call the Secretary?

RFK: Yea, I will call and tell him this. I don't know . . . They would have to have ordered the witnesses before now.

President: Oh, to have one tomorrow. It would be good you could get a . . . let it go this week. Take a few days off. Ok.

RFK: Ok.

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## **Dictabeit 16A**

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and Robert S. McNamara

March 26, 1963

Sec. McNamara: We took care of that one man that we talked of last night. I think that he'll be alright tomorrow. We have other problems, however, that we are working on and a . . .

President: What is that Anderson and a . . .

Sec. McNamara: Ashworth. Anderson has not yet been called for tomorrow, but Admiral Ashworth, the Navy Source Selection Board Member, has been called, and we have some real problems with him, but we are working on that now.

President: Why is he . . .

Sec. McNamara: Well, his written statement is a difficult one for us and it is contradictory to previous positions of the Navy, but I, uh, as Bobby and I talked we finally agreed I would go up and see McClellan tomorrow morning and show McClellan the problem and ask McClellan to ask questions. We'll see how this will work.

President: Well, I think you know John loves to be soft soaped.

Sec. McNamara: Well, I will soft him.

President: So, if you can just give him the impression that you and John are working for the country, uh.

Sec. McNamara: I will kiss his (laughing).

President: Are you going to be able to take a couple days. You are not going to be able to go West.

Sec. McNamara: I, I may go Thursday night or Friday.

President: I think you would go Thursday night for a few days. I think that you will find when you get out of Washington that nobody knows what the TFX is. That's my experience.

Sec. McNamara: I am not going to tell them, I can tell you that.

President: Well, I'll tell you . . . We are not getting a letter over here about it. So that is fine. Ok.

Sec. McNamara: Thanks very much.

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## **Dictabelt 16A**

### Conversation #4: President Kennedy and RFK

[Begins in mid-conversation. Follows hard on the heels of the conversation with McNamara (conversation #3) on the tape. Some pause between, but not much.]

President: . . . Yeah, and was going to reconsider it, and we want to restudy the contract, and all that crap.

RFK: I don't know how they can . . .

President: I know--I wouldn't--I think probably a lot of that stuff comes out of McClellan, or out of that goddamned staff up there, don't you think? . . . acknowledge the right of the Senate to review the contract--some crappy stuff. But I just wanted, uh, I just figured that we'd just go ahead. I was just talking to Senator (SIC) McNamara, and he says everybody says McNamara's right, so . . .

RFK: Yeah.

President: . . . I think we can let Jerry Adlerman [McClellan Committee staff] proceed.

RFK: Well, I--Yeah, I think that that's clear.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Yeah.

President: Well, it's a--[How] is McNamara.

RFK: Well, I think he's fine. Uh, you know, I think he's fine. He's so mad. [laugh]

President: Well, John's a real bastard, isn't he, with his . . .

RFK: Yeah.

President: . . . mealy mouthing. Who do you think he spoke to after . . .

RFK: Well, I think he spoke to Scoop [Henry M. Jackson].

President: To Scoop? And Scoop says . . .

RFK: and who would be the other Democrat? Sam Erwin [SIC]. Sam Erwin.

President: Yeah.

RFK: He's gonna talk to [Claiborne] Pell. Then Sco--Scoop must've said--and wouldn't--you know, he doesn't pay that much attention to Jerry Adlerman. Scoop must've said, uh, we can't take this, and this is the review by themselves, so we won't do that.

President: Yeah.

RFK: So, then he gets in and then we come see him and he gets these questions.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Well, then the, uh, they say, well, why ask the questions? That'll prove you're on their side.

President: Unh.

RFK: This is what I imagine.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And, uh, . . . and, uh, and then, you know, you're--so, well, why--it's--so, you see, 've got a foot in both camps--ah, take the questions, and then he doesn't ask them, and then . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . uh, so that nobody up there's gonna criticize--now he's gonna be bellyachin' around the Senate: "I have all this pressure from all sides. I'm just tryin' to be fair, and I haven't made up my mind, and I'm, you know, I have the pressure one side, and then . . .

President: Yeah, but I just want to wait and then just let that Dynasoar [NASA project comparable to the Space Shuttle program of the 1970s] go right down the hopper. Scare ol' Scoop.

RFK: I hope you are, aren't you?

President: Yeah.

RFK: Hunh?

President: I'm sure gonna talk to somebody about that. Scoop. Right.

RFK: They've been real bastards.

President: Yeah, but . . .

RFK: Hey, Jack . . .

President: Yeah?

RFK: I just taked to John McCone, and we got the thing down pretty much where the--the--all the--they're not certain yet where the ship went from, but at least the ammunition, et cetera--these guys were very original. But they got it--the, uh, ammunition, here in Alexandria.

President: Virginia?

RFK: Yeah. And then they got a small boat with two outboards on the back. Went fifty-five miles an hour.

President: [*incredulously*] Fifty-five miles an hour?

RFK: Yeah. And then they got a little smaller boat. This--their boat was about, I guess, twenty-five or twenty-six . . . and then they got a little smaller boat, put a small outboard on it, filled it with explosives, and ran up alongside the ship and started the outboard motor and ran it into the ship.

President: And where'd they . . . jump off?

RFK: Well, either that or they ran it off, see, from their own little bigger boat. There're five of them.

President: Yeah?

RFK: So they had some guts. But I spoke to them about . . .

President: Did they blow the boat up?

RFK: Yeah, well, I guess--either that--I think they might have sunk it.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Uh, . . . I spoke to him about prosecuting these fellows.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And I guess it's quite clear they violated the law.

President: Yeah.

RFK: And he said he got a call from Dick [Richard B.] Russell yesterday--was sore as hell that--uh, I hope nobody's planning to take any action against these people. . . . Because, he said, you people launched an invasion back in 1961 that wasn't successful and now these people are doing something and it is successful and what're you tryin' to do?

President: That's typical of him, isn't it?

RFK: Yeah. So, at least you know that side of it.

President: Yeah, but ones against Cuba--I don't mind if they blow up some Cuban ships, but if they blow up a Russian ship.

RFK: Yeah, or went into Cuba and caused some, uh . . . and . . . uh.

President: Yeah.

RFK: But, not to come back and keep saying about the fact that it comes from the United States. You know,--or that they--their plans originate in the United States.

President: Is that what they announced?

RFK: Well, that's what--you know, they had the press conference and all the rest of the business.

President: They have another one? They have another press . . . ?

RFK: No, but the first group . . .

President: The first one . . .

RFK: And then they publicize it. You know, everybody knows about this. I think that's the . . . There're two things: first, that the--fact that it's against Russian sh--uh, Russians; and the second thing, that they give it such wide publicity that they're doing.

President: Yeah, [two or three words indistinct] But, isn't that typical of Russell? What did John McCone say?

RFK: Well, he said--I don't know what he said to him. He was a little . . . But, uh, he agreed that they weren't doing any good, anyway.

President: Yeah.

RFK: But, anyway, I'll let you know later on today.

President: What would be, uh, I hate to prosecute these fellows . . .

RFK: But . . .

President: . . . but I just want to make it goddamned sure that they don't do it any more.

RFK: But I don't see how you can do it . . . make sure.

President: Unless you do?

RFK: Yeah. And I--and, uh, Hell, I don't see how you can do it. I mean, they-- you know, this--this happened a week after the last time you said that.

President: Yeah.

RFK: We made it quite clear to the other people.

President: Was this a different group?

RFK: Yeah. It's a rival group.

President: Oh, it's a rival group.

RFK: Um-hmmh.

President: Yeah. They ought to just stay out of the United States, shouldn't they? What would you arrest them for?

RFK: I guess the Logan Act.

President: Yeah. Here--You could about--wait about three days 'fore you do it.

RFK: Well, in any case, I--uh, you know, I'll talk to you first, but I'll--then . . .

President: But we oughtta have a John McCone brief, so if anybody speaks--'cause they'll all be talking to him, and John ought to endorse our course of action. I mean, I don't want him saying, yeah, I didn't want him to do it.

RFK: Well, then I think that, uh, . . . But, you see, the [Sterling J.] Cottrell Committee had a meeting on this, and I just found out about it last night.

President: Yeah.

RFK: What they should do. And I don't think it ever came out very clearly.

President: Yeah.

RFK: Wo, it might be that you'd want to bring, uh, the four or five people involved together and just . . .

President: McCone and you and Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense?

RFK: Yeah. And I got a call from Secretary of State last night, and he said, I hope you prosecute them.

President: Yeah.

RFK: So I think everybody should get their views over.

President: Yeah. O.K. Righto. O.K.

*[disconnect]*

Papers of John F. Kennedy

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Dictabelts

## **Dictabelt 16A**

Conversation #5: President Kennedy and William Tyler

March 28, 1963

President: Bill.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, sir.

President: On this [Walt W.] Rostow paper business, I see [John] Diefenbaker said that it's completely false. That he is carrying a secret administration document. And said, "that is the 'root cause of much of his bitterness' toward the United States. It was carried by the Southern News Service, a Canadian agency. The denial was published by the Winnipeg Tribune, a Southern . . . Southam newspaper together with the report written by Charles Lynch from Ottawa." Now, then, it goes on and makes the document look much worse than it is. Said Lynch wrote the document secret as a White House working paper and brought to Ottawa by President Kennedy's party in May 1961. The story said it is reported it come to Diefenbaker's hands "through carelessness on the part of the Kennedy entourage." It was prepared, Lynch wrote, by Walt Rostow, one of Kennedy's advisers, that guarded for the President in his talk with Diefenbaker and his speech in the Canadian Parliament in May 1961. The story said the Canadian Prime Minister had read . . . had had the documents for almost two years. That the U.S. State Department press release taking issue with his defense policy speech in the Commons early this year "cause him to retrieve the document and threaten to make it public." Lynch's story said according to these reports, the document advised the President that Canada should be "pushed" to accept nuclear weapons under joint control, to join the OAS (that is accurate), to decrease their trade with China and Cuba and ratify the Columbia River Treaty. (That's not in it at all, is it?)

Mr. Tyler: No.

President: Possible pressures to be brought to bear in achieving these objectives were the threats of cuts in U.S. defense production sharing and the possibility of quotas or increased tariffs against Canadian gas and oil, lead and zinc and timber

products entering the United States market. (Of course that is completely untrue.) Now, it sounds to me, though, as if he might have leaked this; Diefenbaker.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, it occurred to me when I heard that.

President: Because the way it is leaked, it makes us look lousy and explains his bitterness. Instead of saying the reason that Kennedy is bitter at Diefenbaker is because he stole it through the carelessness and uh, but now he has issued statements saying that this is wholly false. Of course he is a liar. Now the question really is what reaction this is having up there and what we ought to do about it.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, I think we ought to get some reaction from Ottawa.

President: Do you want to get in touch with them. And say, uh, of course, the story's here, uh, this is #194 on the AP.

Mr. Tyler: #194 on the AP.

President: Course, the story makes it look like, uh, it is a garbled version of our paper, making it look worse than it is, number one. Number two, it makes it look like it is explaining why Diefenbaker is sore, instead of why we are sore. Number three, it looks like carelessness instead of like maybe they stole it. I mean, there is none of that. And it is just the question of what reaction it is having. If it is helping Diefenbaker, we ought to think about knocking it down and the question would be how. It ought to be just Canadian. We ought to get the actual, uh, perhaps consider whether they ought to leak in Canada the true version of what it said. Plus Diefenbaker's threat to release it last year because I invited [Lester] Pearson to the Nobel dinner and so on and so forth. Or maybe we just ought to shut up. That, I don't know.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, we will get the reaction from Ottawa, Mr. President.

President: Ok, bye.