



“The President Is Dead”

Date: 1963-11-22

Conversation: Sound Recording Tape 0-969-1, Unidentified 1, and Unidentified 2

Participant: Pierre E. G. Salinger

Participant: Oliver S. Hallett

Participant: White House

Participant: Andrews Air Force Base

Start Time: 12:45 CST, 13:10 CST, 13:40 CST

Duration: 03:43

Place: White House Situation Room

SCENE SETTER: At the time of President John F. “Jack” Kennedy’s assassination around 12:29 p.m. CST, White House press secretary Pierre E. G. Salinger and several members of the Cabinet were airborne over the Pacific Ocean en route to Japan. Over the next hour, the White House Situation Room relayed to Salinger numerous reports on the developing situation in Dallas, including confirmation of the President’s death.

~12:45 p.m. CST

Pierre E. G. Salinger: Situation Room, this is WAYSIDE. Do you read me? Over.

Oliver S. Hallett: This is the Situation Room. I read you. Go ahead.

Salinger: Give me all available information on President [John F. “Jack” Kennedy]. Over.

Hallett: All available information on President follows: Connally—John—he and [*draws deep breath*] Governor [John B.] Connally of Texas have been hit in the car in which they were riding. We do not know how serious the situation is. We have no information. Mr. Bromley [K.] Smith is back here in the Situation Room now. We are getting our information over the tickers. Over.

Salinger: That is affirmative, affirmative. Please keep us advised out here. This plane, on which [the] Secretary of State [and] other Cabinet ministers [were] headed for Japan, [is] turning around, returning to Honolulu [Hawaii]. Will arrive there [in] approximately two hours. Over.

End of Sound Recording Tape 0-969-1 excerpt 1.

Hallett: Do you have anything else, WAYSIDE?

Salinger: No. Any other information, get ahold [of us] as rapidly as possible.

Hallett: All right. The Associated Press [AP] is coming out now with a bulletin to the effect that they believe the President was hit in the head. That just came in. Over.

Salinger: The President was hit in the head. Over. [*Leaves line.*]

Hallett: Roger. We will pass on any additional information we get from here to you.

End of Sound Recording Tape 0-969-1 excerpt 2.

Hallett: . . . Oh. Hold on the line there, WAYSIDE [*sic*]. We have some more information coming up.

86972: He'll be right back.

Pause.

Hallett: WAYSIDE, WAYSIDE, this is the Situation Room. I read from the AP bulletin: "Kennedy apparently shot in head. He fell face down in back seat of his car. Blood was on his head. Mrs. [Jacqueline B. "Jackie"] Kennedy cried, 'Oh no,' and tried to hold up his head. Connally remained half-seated, slumped to the left. There was blood on his face and forehead. The President and the Governor were rushed to Parkland Hospital near the Dallas Trade Mart where Kennedy was to have made a speech." Over.

Salinger: I read that. Over.

Hallett: This is [the] Situation Room. I have nothing further for you now. I will contact you if we get more.

Salinger: WAYSIDE is Roger and out.

End of Sound Recording Tape 0-969-1 excerpt 3.

~1:10 p.m. CST

Salinger: Situation Room, go ahead. This is WAYSIDE.

Hallett: All right. This is—WAYSIDE, this is [the] Situation Room. I read you latest bulletin: "President Kennedy has been given blood transfusions today at Parkland Hospital in an effort to save his life after he and Governor John Connally of Texas were shot in an assassination attempt." Over the TV we have the information that the Governor has been moved to the operating room. The President is still in the emergency room at Parkland Hospital. Do you read me so far? Over.

Salinger: I read that loud and clear. Go ahead.

End of Unidentified 1 excerpt.

~1:40 p.m. CST

86972: CROWN, [86]972. Go ahead.

Hallett: This is [the] Situation Room. Relay following to WAYSIDE: We have report quoting Mr. [Malcolm M. “Mac”] Kilduff in Dallas that the [*slowly and deliberately*] President is dead, that he died about 35 minutes ago. [*Pause.*] Do you have that? Over.

Salinger: The President is dead. Is that correct?

Hallett: [*deliberately*] That is correct. That is correct. New subject. Front office desires plane return Washington, with no stop Dallas. Over.

86972: [*Salinger has left.*] That is copied. WAYSIDE copied, all OK, and we return direct to Washington without stopping in Dallas. Roger, Roger.

Hallett: All right. This is [the] Situation Room, out.

End of Unidentified 2 excerpt.

CITATION: “86972 (Pierre Salinger), the White House, and WHSR (Oliver Hallett) on 22 November 1963,” Sound Recording Tape 0-969-1; “Andrews AFB, 86972 (Pierre Salinger), the White House, WHCA (H. R. Patterson), and WHSR (Oliver Hallett) on 22 November 1963,” Unidentified 1; and “Andrews AFB, WHSR (Oliver Hallett), and 86972 (Pierre Salinger) on 22 November 1963,” Unidentified 2, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [The Kennedy Assassination and the Transfer of Power, vol. 1, ed. Max Holland] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URLs: <https://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9010005>; <https://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9010010>; <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9010015>

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