



“I’m Just as Close as the Phone”

Date: 1964-06-20

Conversation: WH6406-12-3800

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Robert F. Kennedy

Participant: Jacqueline B. Kennedy

Start Time: 18:45

Duration: 01:52

Place: Beverly Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles, California

SCENE SETTER: On 19 June 1964, Sen. Edward M. “Teddy” Kennedy’s [D–Massachusetts] airplane crashed on its way to the Massachusetts Democratic state convention. Kennedy suffered severe injuries and was hospitalized for the next six months. President Johnson spoke to Teddy’s brother Robert F. “Bobby” Kennedy and then to Jacqueline B. “Jackie” Kennedy, the widow of his brother John F. “Jack” Kennedy.

President Johnson: Bobby? I’m sorry I—

Robert F. “Bobby” Kennedy: I just wanted to tell you that, you know, that Birch [E.] Bayh [Jr.] [D–Indiana] and his wife [Marvella Bayh] are fine and that [Edward M.] Teddy [Kennedy] [D–Massachusetts] [*unclear*] coming along well.

President Johnson: How’s Teddy, Bob?

Robert Kennedy: [*Clears throat.*] Well, he’s got a lot of . . . broken bones, and his back is in bad shape, but he’s not paralyzed. And it’s going to take, they suppose, anywhere from six months to a year, but he’s going to be fine at the end of it.

President Johnson: Oh, well, thank God, he’s safe.

Robert Kennedy: Well, I do thank you for calling.

President Johnson: Looks like you just have more than you can bear, but you’re a mighty brave fellow, and you have my sympathy and all your family, and . . .

Robert Kennedy: Thank you, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Any way in the world I can help, I’m just as close as the phone.

Robert Kennedy: Well, I think [*unclear*].

President Johnson: Well, I appreciate it so much. It's so distressing, and I know you're carrying a heavy load. And I wished I could do something to help you. Give your mother [Rose Kennedy] my love.

Robert Kennedy: [Jacqueline B.] Jackie [Kennedy] just wants to say hello to you, too.

President Johnson: Thank you, Bobby.

Robert Kennedy: Hold on.

President Johnson: Bye.

Jacqueline B. "Jackie" Kennedy: Hello? Mr. President?

President Johnson: My dear, it looks like you have more than we can bear, don't you?

Jacqueline Kennedy: Yeah, boy, that [*unclear*]. [*President Johnson acknowledges.*] But you're so nice to call.

President Johnson: Well, I'm thinking of you, and I wished I could do something.

Jacqueline Kennedy: Well, everyone here is very touched that you were. They thank you so much.

President Johnson: I talked to Mr. [Thomas F.] Corriden last night about three or four o'clock [a.m.], and he thought that it was going to take time, but everything's all right—is that it?

Jacqueline Kennedy: Yes, that's it. I just think [he'll] pretty much be in bed and everything, but at least, you know, everything will be all right.

President Johnson: Give Joan [Kennedy] a hug for me.

Jacqueline Kennedy: I will.

President Johnson: Thank you, Jackie.

Jacqueline Kennedy: Thank you, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Bye.

End of excerpt.

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Full information about this conversation: ["I'm Just as Close as the Phone"](#)