



“Don’t Let Them Get You Down”

Date: 1966-12-27

Conversation: WH6612-12-11221

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Clare Boothe Luce

Start Time: 20:37

Duration: 01:15

Place: LBJ Ranch

SCENE SETTER: At the end of 1966, after a recent hernia operation and a year of political setbacks and growing criticism from the left and the right, President Johnson received the Christmas gift of encouragement from a prominent Republican: Clare Boothe Luce, the playwright, ambassador, and former congresswoman from Connecticut.

Clare Boothe Luce: How’re you feeling?

President Johnson: Pretty good, pretty good. We’ve had a little difficulty the last two or three weeks, and after we got through with our operation, but we’re getting all right. And I think that we’ll be back in fine fettle in January when the boys come marching home from the—their constituency.

Luce: Well, you know, I was thinking of what old [Bernard M.] Bernie Baruch used to say to me when I got discouraged.

President Johnson: He’s a wonderful person. I [*unclear*]

Luce: [*speaking over President Johnson*] When people were picking on me, he always used to say one thing: “Keep your face to the sound of the gun.”

President Johnson: [*Laughs.*] He was a wonderful man. He was one of my very favorites in all the world, and I miss him a great deal. He used to come to see me and call me, and he never lost faith in me until he . . . till the last.

Luce: Well, they’ve been giving you a very rough time, and you don’t deserve it. And I called up to tell you just to keep your face to the sound of the gun. Because it’ll come out all right. You’re a great president, and history will recognize that fact, so *don’t* let them get you down.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: Conversation WH6612-12-11221, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Draft Transcript, Presidential Recordings Program, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.

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Full information about this conversation: ["Don't Let Them Get You Down"](#)