

K6311-02-22_scroller

Date: 1963-11-25

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Martin Luther King Jr.

Start Time: 21:20

Place: Executive Office Building

New conversation number in LBJL catalog is #56

SCROLLER TITLE: "In Memory of President Kennedy"

SCENE SETTER: Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the new President spent hours on the telephone with a variety of leaders. In this call, which took place just hours after Kennedy's funeral, President Johnson spoke with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. about his commitment to Kennedy's legislative agenda, including the civil rights bill that faced tough opposition on Capitol Hill.

President Johnson: —interest, and your cooperation, and your communication. And a good many people told me that they heard about your statement. I guess on TV, wasn't it?

Martin Luther King Jr.: Yes, that's right.

President Johnson: I—

King: Uh-huh.

President Johnson: I've been locked up in this office, and I haven't seen it. But I want to tell you how grateful I am, and how worthy I'm going to try to be of all your hopes.

King: Well, thank you very much. I'm so happy to hear that, and I knew that you had just that great spirit, and you know you have our support and backing—

President Johnson: Well—

King: —because we know what a difficult period this is. [*Unclear*]—

President Johnson: It's a—it's just an *impossible* period. We got a budget coming up that's—we got nothing to do with; it's practically already made. And we got a civil rights bill that hadn't even passed the House, and it's November, and Hubert [H.] Humphrey [Jr.] [DFL—Minnesota] told me yesterday everybody wanted to go home. We got a tax bill that they haven't touched. And we just got to let up—not let up on any of them and keep going. And I [*King acknowledges*] guess they'll say that I'm repudiated, but I'm going to ask the Congress Wednesday to just stay there till they pass them all. They won't do it, but we'll just keep them there next year till they do, and we just won't give up an inch.

King: Uh-huh. Well, this is mighty fine. I think it's so imperative. I think one of the great tributes that we can pay in memory of President Kennedy is to try to enact some of the great, progressive policies that he sought to initiate.

President Johnson: Well, I'm going to support them all, and you can count on that. And I'm going to do my best to get other men to do likewise, and I'll have to have y'all's help. [*King attempts to interject.*] And I never needed it more than I do now.

King: Well, you know you have it, and just feel free to call on us for anything.

President Johnson: Thank you so much, Martin.

King: All right. Give my—

President Johnson: Call me when you're—

King: —regards to the family.

President Johnson: I sure will. Call me when you're down here next time.

King: I certainly will, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Let's get together. And any suggestions you got, bring them in.

King: Fine, I certainly will do that.

President Johnson: Thank you so much.

King: Thank you for calling.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: "Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King, Jr. on 25 November 1963," Tape K6311.02, PNO 22, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition [The Kennedy Assassination and the Transfer of Power]*, vol. 1, ed. Max Holland] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9010106>