

Date: 1973-02-13

Time: 11:13-12:55

Participants: Richard M. Nixon, Julie Nixon Eisenhower

Location: White House Telephone

Tape: 043-064

SCROLLER TITLE: "A Valentine's Dinner"

SCENE SETTER: On the eve of Valentine's Day 1973, Julie Nixon Eisenhower convinced her father to take the family out for dinner at Trader Vic's, a California-based chain of Polynesian-themed tiki restaurants. The local Trader Vic's was three blocks north of the White House in the Statler Hilton hotel. That evening, the Nixons and their guests walked the three blocks to the restaurant. The group included President and Mrs. Nixon, Julie and David Eisenhower, and long-time friend Charles G. "Bebe" Rebozo. After the dinner, the President quipped to reporters gathered outside, "When you go in there, don't be on a diet."

President Nixon: Hello?

White House Operator: Julie—

Julie Nixon Eisenhower: Daddy?

President Nixon: Hi.

Eisenhower: Hi.

President Nixon: Well, how are you doing?

Eisenhower: Fine. How are you?

President Nixon: Did you—are you going out to the house or not?

Eisenhower: Yeah, we are. Uh-huh. We sure are. We're going to go out around three [o'clock] because the people will be there till three. We can't go before then.

President Nixon: Oh, I see. Right.

Eisenhower: So . . . unless you have other plans or something.

President Nixon: No, honey, no. That's great.

Eisenhower: Daddy, do you want to go out to dinner tonight? Trader Vic's or something, or . . . ? [*President Nixon acknowledges.*] Or eat here? Or you going to go to Camp David? Or what were you thinking?

President Nixon: No, I thought we'd—I can't get to Camp David because I've got something I have to do here early Thursday morning. So . . . well, I don't know, you mean go out? Or what do you think? Trader Vic's and . . . ? Would you—you think that . . . what would everybody like? I mean, what do you think?

Eisenhower: Um . . .

President Nixon: Do you think we should go out, or would—

Eisenhower: Or we can—

President Nixon: —Mommy [Thelma C. “Pat” Nixon] like to, or not?

Eisenhower: I think she might, or if it’d be fun for you. Or stay here and see a movie. Or whatever you sort of feel like doing.

President Nixon: [*Pause.*] Let’s see . . . Trader Vic’s. How is the Trader Vic’s here? Pretty good?

Eisenhower: It’s really good because they have a back table and all.

President Nixon: Mm-hmm.

Eisenhower: I mean, they have—it’s nicely lighted, and [*President Nixon acknowledges*] it’s—

President Nixon: Well, I’ll tell you, if Mommy would like to go, I think it’d be a nice idea.

Eisenhower: OK.

President Nixon: So you explore it with her. And is Tricia [Nixon Cox] around?

Eisenhower: Yeah, and I think she’d like to go.

President Nixon: Right.

Eisenhower: And if they don’t, then we’ll eat here.

President Nixon: We’ll go out and say that it’s kind of a Valentine’s [Day] dinner.

Eisenhower: OK!

President Nixon: See, it’s Valentine’s coming up, and we can say that—

Eisenhower: Tomorrow’s Valentine’s, yeah.

President Nixon: —and that “we wanted you to come out for a Valentine’s dinner.” [*Unclear.*]

Eisenhower: Good. OK.

President Nixon: Fair enough?

Eisenhower: Great.

President Nixon: All right, honey.

Eisenhower: OK, Daddy.

President Nixon: Swell. And everything’s fine? OK, fine.

Eisenhower: Everything’s great. OK, bye.

President Nixon: Yeah. Bye.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: "Richard M. Nixon and Julie Nixon Eisenhower on 13 February 1971," Conversation 043-064, Draft Transcript, Presidential Recordings Program, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.