



“That Wasn’t What Killed Kennedy”

Date: 1964-10-01

Conversation: WH6410-01-5802-5803

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.

Start Time: 21:46

Duration: 01:11

Place: Oval Office

SCENE SETTER: During a conversation about political strategy with running mate Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey Jr. [DFL–Minnesota], President Johnson outlined the security risks of the campaign trail and the measures the Secret Service should take to protect the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.: Well, I’ll tell you, he [Michael J. “Mike” Mansfield [D–Montana]] made another statement today about the President and the vice presidential candidates walking into the crowd and all that, and I’ve been—every press conference, they want to know what I think about that.

President Johnson: Well, just tell them that the Secret Service has never had the slightest concern—

Humphrey: Yes.

President Johnson: —or anybody else that you know of that knows anything about it. That’s the way to cut him.

Humphrey: Well, what I—

President Johnson: [*Unclear*] for shaking hands with high school kids or American citizens.

Humphrey: That’s right—

President Johnson: [*Humphrey acknowledges throughout.*] That what they need is to cover the route that a candidate follows, the buildings and the cowards that lurk in the dark. There’s not any problem with getting out, shaking hands. [John F. “Jack”] Kennedy shook hands with three or four groups. That wasn’t what killed Kennedy. No president’s ever been assassinated by shaking hands with somebody, at being [in] a crowd. They’re assassinated when they go to a theater or when they drive [*belches*] down a street and somebody can hide, and so forth.

Humphrey: That's right. [*President Johnson snorts.*] That's about what we've been saying about it. And I've just simply said that the President of the United States is a man of the people, and this is a government by the people, and that possibly the most dangerous part of his trip is after he leaves the crowd and goes to the airport, not while he's with the people of the United States.

End of excerpt.

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Full information about this conversation: ["That Wasn't What Killed Kennedy"](#)