
President Johnson: Hello?

Edward M. “Teddy” Kennedy: Oh, Mr. President?

President Johnson: My friend, I’m sure glad to hear your voice.

Kennedy: Well, thank you so much. Listen, I wanted to call and tell you how much we appreciate it. Joan [Kennedy] appreciates everything you’ve done, and your—

President Johnson: Haven’t done anything. I haven’t done anything, but I’m sure ready and willing.

Kennedy: Well, no. Well, you sent all those wonderful people up from the [U.S.] Army, and . . . Secretary [Cyrus R. “Cy”] Vance did. And they’ve made a great deal of difference, and everyone’s been so, so kind down there, and they’ve taken great care of me. [President Johnson acknowledges.] So I’ve been really, really coming along now, making progress.

President Johnson: Well, you got a bad break, but it’ll . . . My mother used to tell me that things like that develop character. It’ll make you stronger when you get older.

Kennedy: Well, I don’t know about that. [President Johnson chuckles.] You know, you’re ready to trade a little of that for a few weeks right now, I should say. But anyway, that’s what I keep reading in all that mail. They say, “Well, you’re going to . . . after all that, you get down on that back a little while, and think and do a little suffering, you’ll be a better man.” So, I guess I’ll take my chances with that, anyway.
President Johnson: Well, you’re a good guy, and you got lots of guts, and stay in there and pitch, and anything we can do, we’re ready.

Kennedy: Well, really appreciate it, Mr. President, and Joan wants to thank you for everything. Mrs. [Lady Bird] Johnson called, and you’ve been awfully kind during this, and we’re very much appreciative, and my parents are, too.

President Johnson: You just tell them we’re ready to do anything and everything that you want done. And we’ll elect you by a bigger vote than you got before.

Kennedy: I know it. God, now we’re really going to have to . . . you’re going to have to pull me through up here.

President Johnson: Well, just tell them that I’ll fill your speaking engagements.

Kennedy: [Laughs.] Well, I certainly shall. That was awful kind of you, but we’ll be looking forward to getting back down there.

President Johnson: Thank you. Give Joan a hug for me.

Kennedy: Certainly will, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Bye.

Kennedy: Thank you very much.

President Johnson: Bye. Thank you for calling.

End of excerpt.