

1963 11 25 WOR-AM

SPEAKER: JEAN SEPHERD

No theme. Hello, hello, hello, gee, you have my microphone open.

Well, we're not going to use the theme song tonight, and tonight we're going to talk about Mr. Kennedy and a lot of other associated problems and facts of American life, if we can.

And if you're expecting any great revelations or banjo playing tonight, I don't think you'll get it.

However, I remember, I wonder, it's difficult to say some of the things that you have to say in those times, but this has probably been one of the most significant, if not the most significant, weekends that any of us will ever live through, and not just because the president past, but because of a lot of other associated things that have said about American life, about American attitudes and American mores, today,

I remember, I remember the first time that I heard about Kennedy. And I suppose many of you remember a few of these things I can recall. You know, one of the most interesting aspects to history, in my experience, is how easily and how quickly people change their story or forget what they said or forget what they felt or forget even what they knew over a comparatively short time.

And I can remember the first time that that I heard of Kennedy. This was back in the days when Ike was president, and Kennedy began

to be heard just a little bit about. And I remember, I remember sitting one night in the in a guy's apartment, and we were talking about politics, and the whole phenomenon of American politics.

And he, he was, he was really a the hot under the collar type, the the the idealist, the burning idealist, 'The angry man who subscribes to all the magazines, the right ones, who subscribes to all the right causes, and this is even more important, who, who is always generally considered, in our time and in our world, a sensitive, truthful man when we're sitting there. And he was, he was very bugged, and he was saying, among other things, that he felt that one of the problems with with with American politics and in power and politics in general, was that it's usually run by old men.

It's it's usually in the in the hands of men who don't have energy. Idealism has long since disappeared from their lives. Dreams have disappeared, and there they are. They're old men, and they don't really know what's going on in the world of the now, this was his whole thesis, which is a reasonable one, although not necessarily a true one. This was his feeling. And then in the course of the conversation, he says, you know, he said, Have you ever heard of Jack Kennedy? And I, you know, I'd heard of Senator Kennedy. That's all just very vague name. You know, like many senators, you hear the senator from Illinois or the senator from Utah, something of name, and he says, Now this, this is an example of a guy who obviously, will never, never possibly be elected president of the United States. Why? He's young. He's too young. He's got ideas, he's got idealism, he's he's dedicated one thing and another.

Well, I don't have to tell you that. Shortly after Mr. Kennedy was elected, this was one of the first guys I heard yelling about the fact that Kennedy was too young, didn't have wisdom.

It's very interesting problem in America, this, this thing, and it's a common thing, but I wonder how many of you were at the Coliseum when Kennedy made his appearance, his first big campaign appearance, here just before the election.

He'd made several other appearances, I guess. But this was the last big swing through the country, and I believe it was after the television debates with Mr. Nixon, and he was appearing at the Coliseum. And of course, millions of people went down there. And there was a general air among the people in the auditorium, and among the people who who, at least certainly the ones that were around me, that he was a very interesting man, that he was unquestionably magnetic and had a lot of ideas and had proven that he has courage, but that he would not be elected. I wonder how many people recall that feeling that was in the air that they wouldn't be elected.

Well, I remember we're sitting in the in the audience there, and somebody gave me. A big, a big plastic hat. You know, these big imitation straw hats they were handing out during the campaign that looked like the straw skimmer things. You know, they were big white hats. And around the brim was a, was a paper band, the red, white and blue band. And it had Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and little pictures all the way around. And it said the Hooray for Kennedy or something on the side.

I still have the hat. By the way. I still have this and I remember getting this hat, and Kennedy came out. He must have been about a half

an hour late. And there were a few show biz types who had got out, gotten up and done a little bit, one kind of a bit or another. And when Kennedy, when Kennedy came out, of course, everyone, Everyone applauded, and they were kind of polite, and they were also sort of enthusiastic, but it was the kind of enthusiasm that people showed for something they didn't believe would happen.

Do you remember some of the campaign appearances that Hadley Stevenson made? It was very much the same thing where people were, they felt, well, gee, you know, he's a wonderful man and all, but it just won't happen to everyone, sort of applauded and went home.

Well, I remember this, the astonishment the day after the election, among many people when Kennedy was elected, and by such a wildly narrow margin. Well, from from that moment on, and I must say, this is a kind of a personal postscript. I've always been a Kennedy man, and for probably different reasons, then you can always state you don't know why you like a certain person.

It's very hard to know all the personal things that you got within you that make you lean towards a man, or make you believe in a man, and so on. But the one thing that I have always noticed about Kennedy that appealed to me specifically was that Kennedy was a realist, and being a realist in today's world is very dangerous, because realism is not a thing that is easily accepted by America in the 1960s and I always felt sorry for Kennedy, because I recognized the fact that Kennedy did not give people the soft pap that most of them somehow wanted on both sides of Any political fence?

Did you see? Did you see the discussion that can, course, this, this, this, we should, we should take one thing at a time. But I think one of

the great problems that lies in America today in connection with the presidency, and I can't, I can't tell you how deeply I feel. This is our current trend, and it's been going on for some years in this country to lay the blame for all economic and social conditions at the very feet of the President personally, in short, there are many people who really do believe somehow that Kennedy created, if not created, he is in large part responsible for the the Cuban situation.

We'll say that many people really believe that Kennedy could have solved the race problem, the civil rights problem. In fact, it gets to the point now today where, in American writing life, humor life, where the very the very things of which our life is made, the very problems that confront all of us as Americans, are taken as show biz gambits and no telling how much this fans, no telling how much hatred this engenders, and, incidentally, how much truth that it covers up.

For example, not more than two weeks ago, I remember being not only irritated, but I was blindly angry when I saw a cartoon that appeared in one of the local newspapers, which, by the way, has a reputation for truth and anger and an interest in liberal causes.

One thing another, a cartoon that showed it was a big cartoon. It showed President Kennedy, the late president, and he was holding up a large sign. And on this sign, it said, and you could see people all around him in the background, people who were looking up sort of hopefully. And Kennedy had this large sign, and he was a towering figure, and he looked sort of sinister in the cartoon. And he was holding a large demonstrator sign, and the sign said freedom.

Later, the implication, of course, by that cartoon was that Kennedy himself was blocking the Civil Rights Program that Kennedy himself

was not trying to do as much as he could with it. Well, that. Is this infuriated me because, because anyone who reads more than the headlines, you know, I have a feeling today that the only difference between the liberals and the right wingers is that the Liberals read the headlines from certain newspapers and the right wingers read the headlines from other newspapers.

Hardly any of them read the stories. But nevertheless, I couldn't imagine how a man who has read anything in the newspapers in the last six months could conceivably draw a cartoon like this. And yet, there it was, and it was so proudly shown in the paper that they reprinted it the next week. They thought it was such a telling shot. Well, it is this kind of playing fast and loose with the truth for the for the for the purpose of doing a good cartoon or doing a good nightclub gag that, in the end, could very well bring the bricks and the foundation of our democracy down around us. Because no telling how many people take this sort of thing literally as truth.

You know, they really believe this is a true thing that this man has said. But this, this phenomenon is, is comparatively new to America, the phenomenon of believing that the President personally can solve the issues of our day, he can have a great effect on there's a question about that, but whether or not he can, under our system, do the miracles and do the great, vast, sweeping changes overnight that people seem to want, is a question in fact, Mr. Kennedy himself, perhaps maybe some of you saw the rebroadcast of the of the superb television show that Kennedy did at the time of his second anniversary in office just a comparatively short time ago, around 1011, months ago, Mr. Kennedy was being interviewed by four or five newsmen, and he was talking

about the problems of being a president. And this is an extremely intelligent man, and not only that, he was a man with humor, and that, all right, there makes a lot of people mad at him. He was a man of obvious zest. He dug life, and that makes a lot of people mad. He enjoyed life, and he was, no question about it. He was he was a superb looking man. He looked good. He had everything that most men dream of someday, a dream of having if everything had worked out right, but they didn't quite have anyway. Mr. Kennedy was discussing the problems of the president presidency, and he said, he said, you know, there is no way for a man who is president to be able to tell the other people how it feels to be president. And they asked him, Well, what have you learned?

He says, Well, I've learned, for one one thing, I've learned that being President is very different from what I thought it was. And this is, this is obviously true. And then he went on to say that one of the problems in being President is that the people seem to expect miracles. And he said, you know, let's take the civil rights situation. He says, I presented a bill to Congress. I fought for it, I sent troops to Birmingham, and I've done everything I can do under our system. And he said, and yet people want me to do more, apparently. He says, I don't quite know what I can do.

He said, But I believe that what the people really want. Who advocate me doing more, they don't really want a democratic system. That's an important point. They don't really want a democratic system that you know, the presidency is the only office in America, the only elected office of total representation. By that, I mean, he's the only man in the country who represents everybody in the country. And you know,

there's a difference between a ruler and a leader, and I suspect that today, people have the two confused if they have a specific kind of legislation they want. And Mr. Kennedy seems to be for it. Why doesn't he get it in? Why doesn't he merely just sign a paper or do something, blow somebody up or somehow bullet through? Well, you know, under other systems of government, they don't have this problem. They the leader is a ruler, and he doesn't have these problems. Oh, by the way, this is W O, R, A M and F m, New York. And I have a, have a, I have a tonight. I have a feeling in my, inside of me, that is a great sense of apprehension, I suppose you might say a kind of feeling of, I hate to say fear, because it's not that clearly defined. It's kind of a free floating thing that the strange unreasonableness, the fanaticism that brought about this unbelievable weekend. It. Not only still around, but is slowly beginning to grow in this land. And you know, one of the things that always intrigues me is is our quick and easy way with answers. I noticed that immediately upon hearing the news, which was unbelievable, just you couldn't believe, and this is part of our problem, that that we are living in a in a world today of almost total show business. We are living in a world today where television shows are beamed at us day and night, where television and radio and newspapers and books and magazines are poured on us, and movies bike by almost like an avalanche, and it gets hard. It really gets very difficult to tell where the plot leaves off and the reality starts. It's very hard in a totally abstract civilization to actually believe that there are men that ordinary. You know, one of the things I think that that this, that this, that this thing taught us, is that this is a nation of just walking around men, just people trying to do the best they can. I wonder how many fanatics watching the events of the last two

days on television wondered whether they were right, wonder whether or not maybe something in their thinking was wrong that it's not that easy to solve problems. You don't just shoot somebody, you don't just demonstrate, and that'll take care of it. This, this is, this is a, this is a subtle thing that's happened to us. And, you know, I have a feeling that we will not know. In fact, I wonder whether Americans ever will, and that includes me. I'm certainly not letting myself out. Every will know the full ramifications of what happened to us over the past four or five days. You know, one of the things I think that sets Americans off, for many other peoples, and for many good reasons, because we're a very pragmatic race of people. We're a very pragmatic society. We have the ability to look at life as a series of isolated incidents, isolated incidents that the terrible thing that happened over the weekend and by Wednesday, now that it's all over that now we can go on from here. We it's hard for us to refuse to accept the premise that that events are not unconnected, that one event follows another, and they have reasons and causes, not the simple ones of a political belief, or the simple thing that this man stands for that so he wants to do this, that the that the strange You know, a few, a few months ago, if those of you who listen to the show regularly, it's people who are in public communications. Now, I'm not talking about writers who write in the quiet privacy of their study or who write down on a cellar in the village, but people who are in public communications, who somehow nightly or daily, find themselves in contact with an audience, a great anonymous audience, and get mail and feel things in the air. You get to the point where you feel something out there, something is going on, and it's hard to it's hard to tell the people out there why you feel it. Because they're not like the president. They're

not in the position of being like an antenna. They don't feel these things coming in. They don't get 500 anonymous letters a week. They don't hear 300 phone calls anonymous a month. So most people never get an anonymous letter in their whole life. You know, an anonymous letter is very different from one that's signed very it's liable to be more truthful about what that man really thinks, and that's why he doesn't put his name down there. And so you begin to feel things well, about a year or so ago, I began to be aware of a growing belief in violence in America, a growing impatience with the processes that are slow and painful, the processes of democracy, shall we say? I began to be aware of that, and that more and more people were beginning to see themselves as solitary, beautiful, Lone, sensitive individuals, arrayed against an unseen, unthinking, grinding, totally insensitive society. You might say it's the Holden Caulfield syndrome is beginning to grow. Well, this was fanned. This was fanned in a lot of ways. I think it was part and parcel of the of the feeling today that that what I want is the most important thing in the world. The President, of course, is in a very difficult situation. He does not have. It, he does not have the powers that we like to think he has. On the other hand, we refuse to accept the fact that he may also represent people we don't like. Literally, you know, one of the great differences between a dictatorship and a Democratic president is that very subtle difference that a dictatorship represents one group of people totally, and he represents them totally, to the point where if any other of the people pop up, any other people who may have different views, they are merely eliminated. This is one of the reasons why dictators have have gigantic jails. They have enormous jails. And so we have these problems going on, these problems which I don't know, I don't know

where it'll end. The presidency has been slowly undergoing a transformation, anyway, in the public mind in the past six or seven years. It's only within comparatively recent times that we would take the presidency and use of it and use it for the basis of, shall I say, show business purposes, records, gags on television shows. Now, everyone's always laughed about presidents or about politics, but to make of the President a sort of stand up comic, this is, this is something which is comparatively new in American life. It literally is. But, you know, getting back to Mr. Kennedy, I can't help but thinking that that that one of the one of the most valuable things that happened over the past weekend, if anything of value did happen, certainly it was a blindingly tragic affair, so tragic that I don't think most of us, even to this minute, really realize that it actually happened. Really do realize it, it's like some fantastic thing that we've lived through, and a week from now, it'll all be over, and somebody will call up and say, it's, it's now we go back to normal. You know, it's fantastic situation. But I think one of the things that happened I was sitting watching a television set late at night, and they were well it seemed late. I guess it wasn't as late as it seemed, but it was a telecast from inside the White House, or, I guess it was the State Department building where President Johnson was greeting the various delegates and the various leaders and ambassadors and so forth of the foreign countries. Was the peculiar feeling of, I guess, intimacy was it was the first time that I've ever had a feeling that, that we are just a bunch of people trying to get along. Did you feel that at all? Did you see Mr. Johnson talking to little guys from various countries, and big guys and guys coming in with robes, and they all sort of stood around just like everybody at a party, you know, just like ordinary people and and

you had, you had a feeling this is a remarkable thing. And not only was it a remarkable piece of journalism, television journalism, but it was a peculiar social document that kind of, on one hand, kind of frightened you, and on the other hand, because we like to think of our politician as God, like we like to somehow kind of think as the leaders are people sort of way off on some kind of an abstract plane. They exist on the front page of The New York Times, or they exist in in a newscast by Lester Smith, you know, but, but here was de Gaulle, President. De Gaulle, walking through the room and kind of looking a little a little uncomfortable, like his collar was sticking him in the back, and he was and all those men standing around trying to eavesdrop on what he was saying to the Chancellor of Germany, they're all standing around just like at any other party that I've ever been in. And I'm not trying to be make any be funny or anything about this, but it was, it was an eerie sensation to find out how personal politics and the world really is now. This, I think, was exemplified by our late president, President Kennedy, by all admission and by even by his his most his most dedicated opponents. President Kennedy was admittedly a man of almost unbelievable magnetism. He really was. He was a man who, in the terms of a performer, made contact. That is to say, when he listened to you, he really listened when he said things. He wasn't just giving a speech. It was obvious that he was saying things and that he was saying things that he thought, have you ever you remember those, those those memorable. Uh, those memorable, I hate to say, well, appearances before the public, on the news interview, shows that he had, what did they call them, the the press conferences. When Mr. Kennedy was was in a press conference, it was, it was quite evident that he he was there.

He was very definitely there. He had what they call in the in the theatrical world, he had presence. Now, the term presence is difficult to define and and it is conceivable that Mr. Kennedy, by the the merit, the very fact of what he this presence, this this quality that he had about him, had had a had a profound effect on the leaders of all the other countries of the world in personal contacts with them. You could see that in that line there, that line that was forming up in front of Mr. Johnson. Now, Mr. Johnson is obviously just from watching him on the screen. He is a pure American. You could pick Johnson out as an American in that crowd without even knowing he was an American the way he stood, the kind of look he had on his face. Did you notice this the attitude of, I don't know what it is. It's difficult to say. And you know, and sometimes this quality infuriates Europeans. That has to be pointed out, yes. Now, Mr. Kennedy, on the other hand, was a man of a very different stripe. He could, he would probably be accepted more by many countries, because Mr. Kennedy had a different way about him. He was, he was, he was more cosmopolitan and less of a pure American. By pure American, I mean his very, very stature, the way he stands, is his look on his face. I had had the feeling watching and and it was a great feeling to watch Mr. Johnson talk to these people, because you had a feeling that Johnson was just Johnson. He was nothing more or less than that, there was not You got no point, no feeling at any point that he was being polite. You know what I mean by being polite, being friendly. He was just there. He was saying hello, and he'd shake people's hands and talk to them. And I think a lot of people, after watching that telecast, had a renewed feeling of hope, and it's again, it's a very subtle thing, but one of the things that I noticed about this whole fantastic

weekend was the profound sense of, I suppose, reality. I just wondered how many people were shocked to see that our world hangs on such slender threads that it is conceivable and possible for one man to alter the entire course of American history. And believe me, when, when one administration ends and another one begins, the course of American history has been altered ever so slightly in many cases, but tremendously in others, I wonder, I wonder, whether or not this part of the the awful thing we've just gone through is one of the scariest feelings about it, maybe, maybe we don't want to admit this. And another thing, of course, that occurred to most of us right away was the was the awful realization that in spite of this being a civilized land, that the belief in brutality, the belief in in, I suppose you might say direct action, the belief in in, well, I suppose there are many words you can apply to it, but violence is still very much part of American life. You know, there was a little piece that appeared in the in the New York Times. About it, it's not much said about it. Was talking about assassins in general, that there are three countries in the world that lead in assassinations as a national phenomenon, and you never believe who they are, unless you read the piece. You probably know but they are Czarist Russia, Japan and the United States. This, this is a, this is a peculiarly American institution, and we are the only country in the world, by the way, among the major powers that has what they call the lone assassination, a man who, if he doesn't get a job in the post office, will kill. A president, and this happened in the case of McKinley, or was it Garfield? I believe was Garfield, wasn't it who was killed by a man who was very irritated that he did not get the job that he thought he should have gotten. So he just went down and shot the President. As simple as that. Perhaps this, this

is because Americans and in part and parcel, it might be, might be, might be one of the more evil byproducts of the democratic system. That that the democratic system often not only fosters individualism, it not only fosters things like idealism, but it also fosters selfishness. That many people confuse license with Liberty, that that some of the statements that were made over the past weekend shows this very definitely, that many people will will confuse the fact that that because I am not getting what I want out of life, it must be the fault of the system. It must be the fault of of some rotten person. And we have a tendency in America to narrow issues down to one man. We love to do this. We believe in personalities. We don't believe in ideas so much. We don't believe in abstractions. We believe in one man. One man caused it to come about. And so naturally it follows that there would be people on the far, fanatical edge of violence, who would believe that if we remove that man who is responsible for these bad things? Well, then it'll straighten out. It'll straighten out. Just, just believe it. You know, you know, I this. This must be a terrible thing for a president to have to face the fact that that we believe here in America, and it comes up in every any election, that if we elect the right man, somehow all of the problems that are that are dogging the nation will be taken care of, that it's looking for that right man, that right man. Well, what you're doing then, of course, is ignoring the fact that many of the problems that face America and face all peoples all over the world are not necessarily solvable. They really are not and if they are solvable, they can only be solved by that long, slow, grinding passage of time and evolution. This is a very unpopular idea, a very unpopular idea, and one that could easily get you shot if you mentioned it never. Nevertheless, this is faced

by every president, and it, as Mr. Kennedy said in that, in that broadcast that, that broadcast that he did on the on the second anniversary of his administration, he said, you know, the the facing of the facts is not always easy. He said most people can get away without facing facts. He said most people don't have to deal with them. He said most people only have to deal with making a speech or writing a book. And he said, But the President has to deal with the facts. He has to deal with the facts that that large numbers of congressmen may not believe in his his safe his civil rights bill, and what's he going to do about that? Well, he has to face that. He has to deal with it. Whereas the guy who draws the cartoon, the man who does the funny bit in the nightclub, the guy who writes the editorial rarely has to deal with facts, because you see, by Monday after he's drawn his cartoon, Wednesday, he will be dealing with another issue in his cartoon. He just leaves the last one and goes on, goes on and on and on, whereas the President is left with it on his desk, he's left with that problem on his desk. And it must be a terrible situation to realize that that many people do not understand the office of the presidency that much now i i feel that that that the that the belief that we have in the president sometimes transcends our understanding of a human being. I also believe that that our belief in a president often precludes totally the judicial system that is the life blood of the democratic process. You know, Hitler used to say, and I have to hate to bring in such a such a terrible name, but one of the things that Hitler said about democracy, and this has been said by almost every totalitarian leader, is that democracies cannot do things fast enough. He said that democracies get bogged down in arguments, and in the meantime, they're liable to go down the drain. He said that is the is, one of the big

problems is they're not organized. Well, that's true, and one of the beauties of democracy is we don't go off half cocked. We don't rush out and immediately enact 17,000 laws, which six years later we may regret. But there they are. People do argue back and forth, but slowly but. Surely those wheels grind. And if they grind, they grind in such a way that that eventually good, bad or indifferent, they arrive pretty much at a workable situation. Now I think, I think Mr. Kennedy, the late Mr. Kennedy, represents a rare thing in this world, and I think that the thing that he represented will become increasingly rare as our world gets more and more abstract. He represented a realist. He represented the man who looked at both sides of the facts and looked at all the facts and then said, Well, let's see what we can do. Considering all those situations, we'll do the best we can now this is very unpopular type of person in our time, very because today, more and more, we are beginning to believe in passion as a substitute for reason. Passion will take over, and we'll often find ourselves writing books, even we'll write ourselves find ourselves doing cartoons. We'll find ourselves doing doing nightclub bits based on a passionate feeling about an issue and and totally circumventing reason and then using reason to justify our passions, which is a very dangerous situation. Now I'm not to say, I'm not saying here that passion is a bad thing. I'm merely saying, however, that the minute that passion begins to believe, be believed in as always a good thing, you wind up with assassinations, which are, by the way, crimes of passion. I think another one of the dangerous snap judgments we make is whenever a thing like, like, when this terrible event occurred, just a just unbelievably serious and true event suddenly happened. I was, I was appalled at the number of people who automatically formed a

snap judgment as to what side or what part of the political spectrum was responsible for it. It's interesting to note how quickly they did that the statements were made about this thing. Never again, real never never realizing the facts of this kind of fanaticism that they very often don't even have any genuine political base. Political basis. That I think there's something growing in this country that is neither left nor right. It is the growing meism, and it's a new kind of a political force. It's the new militant, apolitical man. He is militant in his righteousness. Who feels that he is right, who feels that he is more moral than all other people, who feels that that his inherent his inherent beauty, has caused him to transcend these poor people who believe in one system or the other. Now, now this is perhaps a new kind of anarchism that's growing, but eventually, I have a feeling that in a few short years, it will become a genuine political force. We see labor leaders, for example, who do not have the slightest concern for the American system and for the American economy, they're concerned with one thing, me and my union. We find big industrialists who are doing the same thing. We find, certainly many persons and many, many pressure groups, both on the left and on the right, who feel this. Well, eventually this, this slow drifting away from a concern over for the for the entire structure or fabric of a society will eventually result into in a very, very difficult spearhead of evangelistic meism, but Mr. Kennedy, I think will go down in history as a martyr. I think he will go down in history as eventually, when all the when all the facts are in he will go down as a man who was during his two years and and few months in office, was largely, was largely misunderstood, that the very things he stood for were the very things that that that the that the hippies, the people on all

sides accused him of not wanting to come apart, not or fighting or not doing enough, or not not caring forward enough. But this will take history. I would love to read now tonight, what history will say about Mr. Kennedy in 1980 not so much from the accomplishments of his, his his short, very brief administration, but from the things, the repercussions and the the ripples and the slow circles that his his. Is largely frustrating. Two years and 10 months meant to the nation, and what it really meant symbolically, as far as the entire Democratic process was concerned, I don't know. I don't know whether anybody really has learned by history. Somebody during one of the one of the broadcasts said, Well, if there's ever a time, I think it might have been Earl Warren who said, If there's ever been a time when we should learn by history, this is a time. But there was a slight sound in his voice that said he didn't think we would. There's a great, the great possibility that that's true. But I looking at looking at that broadcast, and watching the broadcast, I hate to use that term, but looking at the events, feeling, the events that we've all felt in the past, in the past 72 hours, feeling these events, watching them occur before our very eyes, was probably something which most of us even to this at this very minute, do not really, in our deep inner inner admit to ever having actually happened, ever having actually occurred. Pretty hard, you know what I'm trying to say here. And maybe this is one of the reasons why, very quickly, within the next three weeks, we will almost totally forget Mr. Kennedy. I suspect this might happen. We might totally forget practically the event and what it meant. But nobody can quite remember anything more completely moving. I'll never forget, and I hope few Americans will ever forget the sight of that open grave. It all seems so simple and so

little did you have the feeling of great sadness there was just this little grave, little, I mean, like everybody else's little grave, you know, somehow when they were saying they were going to Arlington, you have some feeling of of great monuments or something, but they took you there, and here it was just this little simple grave. And it was, it was just a hole in the ground, really. And there was this little simple bronze coffin. And there was a quick shot, which they cut away from. I don't know whether you saw this or not, but it was one of the most poignant shots of all. There was a little moment after the after the funeral party. Party had left, the had left Arlington, and the the cars were winding back up the up the drive over the bridge, back over the river to Washington, and the four soldiers were still standing guard over the grave. You saw coming down from the lower left hand corner, two workmen. Did you see them dressed in overalls? Just two workmen with baseball caps, and they were coming to do the inevitable. And there was a brief shot of them. They they walked up, and one of them sort of kneeled down, and he started to pick things up around the grave, and he's, he's beginning to do what happens to all of us in the end. And they cut away from that very quickly. Maybe this was too much, but I saw that for that instant, and I thought, my God, how, how small we are, and even the president is no no more, nor different from us. And maybe this was one of the things that was so profoundly moving and frightening and at the same time vaguely reassuring, and it gave us all a sense of unbelievable loneliness. Maybe this is why people rushed off to football games, although that's probably being kind to them, because I believe that the that you know, I wonder whether the British would have considered having a professional soccer game in London the day

after the king died. I doubt it. We're a different kind of people. And this is not to say good, bad or indifferent. We're just very different. And sometimes you wonder just what kind we are. It was a terrible weekend, and I'm not so sure that we're not in for a few more in the next 100 years. This is Gene Shepard. This is wor radio, your station for news. We'd like to remind you that we need your support of the wor children's Christmas fund. Send your check or money order to the w o r children's Christmas fund box 710 Times Square Station New York and thank you very much. Now stay tuned for Long John Neville conversation through the night, over w o r, A M and W o r, F m in New York. You. You.