



2201 Old Ivy Road
PO Box 400406
Charlottesville VA 22904-4406

434.982.2974 *voice*
434.982.4528 *fax*
millercenter.virginia.edu

Press Release — October 1, 2001

Contact: Lisa Todorovich
Tel: (434) 243-4096
Fax: (434) 924-2739
ltodorovich@virginia.edu

Presidential Recordings: *John F. Kennedy "The Great Crises"*

Charlottesville, VA — October 1, 2001 In October, 2001, W.W. Norton will publish the first three volumes of the Miller Center's John F. Kennedy Recordings reference series, covering the first three months of secret taping after the system was installed in the Kennedy White House in July 1962.

In the world of scholarship and publishing, this effort is unprecedented in its character and scale:

- For the first time, all the presidential recordings secretly taped in the White House are being offered in full, transcribed and annotated in chronological order and on every subject.
- For the first time, the transcribed recordings are being published with a multimedia companion on CD-ROM. Itself a design breakthrough in multimedia publishing, the CD synchronizes the transcripts to the audio of the recordings, with searching capability. Viewers can also give themselves a virtual tour of the rooms where meetings were taped in the Kennedy White House. Each day's tapes are introduced with a brief, vivid multimedia narrative. Exploring hyperlinks, viewers can discover biographical profiles, background essays, and read for themselves facsimiles of some of the documents that were on the desks that day in the White House.

The result is that, for the first time, anyone can experience the Kennedy White House -- the real "West Wing" -- in a way that has never been possible before for this any other government.

This is the work of the team of scholars of the Presidential Recordings Program at the Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.

Philip Zelikow is director of the Miller Center and Timothy Naftali directs the Presidential Recordings Program. Along with Harvard historian Ernest May, Zelikow and Naftali were the chief editors for the first three volumes of the Kennedy series.

Nearly forty years after his assassination, John F. Kennedy remains for many the personification of the modern American president. Even as the finer points of the Cold War struggle blur into the past, Kennedy's actions regarding Cuba, Vietnam and civil rights retain their vividness in the public imagination. Cool and ironic, yet capable of recklessness, John Kennedy was enigmatic even to those who thought they knew him well. The tapes reveal like nothing else the man behind the decisions and the ideas, fears and prejudices that motivated him.

Highlights:

For the first time we can see a President actually planning CIA covert operations, in meetings to discuss activities in China, Cuba, Haiti, and Brazil.

- The tapes reveal the dramatic all-night vigil during which President Kennedy and his brother, the Attorney General, attempted to follow the progress of U.S. troops sent into Oxford, Mississippi to protect James Meredith, an American-American who was attempting to register at the University of Mississippi. (Meeting on Civil Rights, 30 September - 1 October 1962).
- We can witness the start of one of the most extraordinary press leak investigations in American history up to that time, as the tapes now reveal Clark Clifford's proposal that Kennedy set up a special CIA unit to investigate American journalists. (Meeting with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 1 August 1962).
- The volumes more fully document than ever before the development and course of the Cuban missile crisis, including the September 4 meetings where Kennedy decides to draw the public line to warn the Soviets against sending missiles to that island and his private analysis of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in a small meeting with his Kremlinologists (29 September 1962).

These three Kennedy volumes inaugurate the Presidential Recordings Program's extensive publishing program. The John F. Kennedy collection will ultimately comprise 12 volumes, including the last recordings made by President Kennedy in November 1963. Besides the entire Kennedy recordings collection, the Presidential Recordings Program is dedicated to transcribing and annotating all 800 hours of Lyndon Johnson's tapes, all of Dwight Eisenhower, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman's comparatively few recordings and the most historically significant segments of Richard Nixon's vast collection – 3800 hours – of tapes. It will take about 70 volumes to achieve these goals.