

Telephone Conversation Between President John X. Jamrich and
the Legal Advisers in the Governor's Office, Mr. Joseph Thibodeau
and Mr. Kenneth Frankland, January 8, 1970, 4:40 P. M.

T: Dr. Jamrich.

J: Yes, sir.

T: Joseph Thibodeau speaking.

J: Yes, sir, how are you?

T: I'm fine. It's been some time since we have spoken.

J: Well, we have had very little reason to do it apparently.

T: Yes, except for the one time, and we have a similar situation at this point, perhaps. I have on the other line Mr. Kenneth Frankland who is the new assistant legal adviser, and he received a call today from a gentleman up there in your area. And I thought I would take the opportunity to talk to you as well, but primarily it was for the purpose of having him relay you this information and to perhaps find out from you what the situation is there that we're calling.

J: Yes, sir.

T: Go ahead, Ken.

F: Thank you. Dr., a gentleman by the name of Gerald White called. He is an attorney, and he has his office in Detroit, and he is a Negro.

J: Yes, I talked with him a moment ago.

F: You just talked to him.

J: Yes, sir.

F: All right, fine. Well, I don't know what he has related to you, but his only thoughts in calling our office were, number 1 to sort of find out what was going on with the students and what disciplinary actions the university was taking; and if the university felt they were going to go through with any criminal proceedings, he felt that there was a hostility in the area

towards the students on behalf of maybe some of the members of the bar, and he was sort of interested as far as having the students come in voluntarily, if the university went ahead with any plans that they might have to prosecute the students. He relayed this information to us, and we've just planned to give you a call to find out what the situation was.

J: Well, let's see. I ought to start back a ways.

F: . . . as well, is that right?

J: I beg your pardon.

T: They were sitting in, or whatever they were doing at this point.

J: Oh, yes, actually they were not sitting in today.

T: I see.

J: They were gathered across the hall awaiting the decision, but as soon as I gave the letter to the students they read the decision and they left.

T: Well, Ken, what was the thrust of the . . .

F: I gathered from Mr. White's comments that he had some influence with this group, and he felt that he would be able to talk to the students. He thought that a result of today's meetings, that the students were getting agitated, and he was afraid that adverse rulings today or any prosecution say by the prosecuting attorney, more so than the university, would have an adverse effect upon the kids, and his contention was that if there were any legal proceedings, say outside the university, that there were no attorneys available in the area that could adequately represent the Negro students. Now, I gather from what you have said that any proceedings you're taking are strictly within the university's rules and regulations.

J: That's correct. They are, and what Mr. Quinnell, the County Prosecutor, intends to do, I don't know. They completed their investigation today, so I doubt very much that he is in a position to issue any warrants for quite some time.

F: Well it sounds like the same situation to me. Mr. White was saying that he felt that they were just trying to get these students through their exams, which I understand you are in your exams right now.

J: Shortly coming up. Not yet. It will be another week.

F: And once the exams are over, then you would have plenty of time to sit down and talk these things over and take whatever steps the university has to take.

J: Well, it may be that we might want to confer on this with our staff here to postpone the hearings until after exams. I don't know, what would you think about that?

T: Are you asking of us?

J: Yes.

T: Oh, I would not, I certainly don't think that we, you know, ought to inject ourselves one way or the other. I think that's probably the kind of decision you've got to come to there, based on how you read the situation.

J: Yes.

T: You're in the best position to do that.

J: Fine. Very good.

T: I want to make that certainly very clear that we are not intending in any way to interfere or interject at all.

J: No, I have none of that feeling at all. I appreciate your call and your interest in this. I have written to the Governor's Office, I'm not sure whether you fellows have seen that letter.

T: I have not. How long ago was it sent?

J: Oh, this past week or ten days.

T: It probably went through or was assigned through another office.

- J: Well, I tried to summarize the situation. I thought perhaps you were calling as a result of that.
- T: I certainly appreciate your having done so now very succinctly and clearly. And it gives us a feel in case we get similar calls or inquiries from the press. At least we are not caught completely unawares.
- J: Yes.
- T: And I think our response would be merely to indicate that to our knowledge it certainly is well under control at the university and that any statements of any kind would be forthcoming from the administration there.
- J: And I'll certainly keep your office informed because should the matter escalate artificially or for whatever reasons, I have at this point in time concluded that we're just not going to tolerate a disruption or interruption of the university's ongoing operations.
- T: And procedures. Right.
- J: And the procedures. We have worked tremendously hard to provide this judicial process for the students within the university, and I don't propose to abandon it just out of hand. Abandoning it now would flush the whole thing down the drain, and we would have nothing as a set of guidelines.
- T: But it sounds as though things at this point are very far, or as far as they ever have been, from escalating artificially or otherwise.
- J: Well, I would say at this point, it sounds that way to me too. Now especially when I got this little item that the black students met and decided to let the 24 be tried by the Faculty-Student Judiciary.
- T: Right.
- J: This is quite different than they are saying that they are going to do this, that, and the other thing. Which they might still do. You have to remember that in this group there is a problem of lack of leadership. There isn't any sound and this is why Mr. White -- I encouraged him to come up here because he could contribute some of that lack in leadership. He could help out.

- T: Has he been doing that?
- J: Well, I think he has been helpful. As a matter of fact, over the phone I think he has injected considerable calm into some of the upset young folks because they called him and said -- Well, they are going to be arrested today, and they can only make one telephone call, what should they do? Well, that's just hysterics. None of that was happening.
- F: What got White upset, and that was the fact that he thought something imminent was happening. The kids were upset. He was afraid the kids were going to maybe start some other demonstration.
- J: Sure.
- F: I think you are right in your assessment of Mr. White; from what I gather on the telephone, he has a student.
- J: He has a daughter up here.
- F: Right. And he is a concerned parent, and he is also an attorney, and he seems to me that he does have or could have some influence as far as leadership goes. And that, I think, is all that he was interested in.
- J: That's what I gathered. I certainly encouraged him to, if possible, to come up here because as he told you he was worried about what frankly surprised me, that there were no attorneys up here who would help the kids -- take up their case. I can hardly believe that, knowing some of the people up here.
- T: Well, Dr., I think unless we would hear otherwise from you that we will just assume that there is no further need for our involvement of any kind really, even to this extent unless we hear from you specifically on this.
- J: All right, sir, and I'll keep your name, and I would call you directly if we needed some assistance in the case of some very grave situation.
- T: Right, and I certainly appreciate your taking the time now.
- J: Glad to do it, sir.
- T: Thank you, Dr.
- F: Thank you, Dr.
- J: Goodbye.