JFK's Opinion of Nixon

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President Kennedy said he thought Richard Nixon was unsound mentally and once described him as a "cheap bastard," according to excerpts from a book on the late president released yesterday.

The book affirms that Kennedy swore and had, on at least one occasion, an eye for the ladies.

Excerpts from the soon-to-be-published book by Washington Post executive editor Benjamin Bradlee will appear in next month's edition of Playboy magazine.

Bradlee knew President Kennedy as a friend and as a journalist when he worked for Newsweek magazine in the early 1960s. He kept notes of their meetings, with the understanding that they would not be published until at least five years after Kennedy left the White House.

Bradlee recalled that at the end of 1962, after Mr. Nixon had been defeated in an attempt to become governor of California, Kennedy said he thought Mr. Nixon was unsound mentally, or, as he once said of him, "sick, sick, sick."

Referring to Mr. Nixon's remark to reporters after his defeat that "You won't have Nixon to kick around any more," Kennedy said, "nobody could talk like that and be normal."

Asked by Bradlee if he had read "Six Crises," Mr. Nixon's autobiography dealing with significant events in his life, Kennedy replied:

"Just the 1960 campaign stuff (when Kennedy defeated Mr. Nixon for the presidency) and that's all I'm going to read.

"I can't stand the way he puts everything in Tricia's (one of his daughters) mouth. It makes me sick. He's a cheap bastard; that's all there is to it."

KENNEDY AND MR. NIXON BEFORE THE 1960 DEBATE
Later, Kennedy said he thought Mr. Nixon was unsound mentally

Referring to a dance attended by Kennedy, Bradlee said the women there from New York were spectacular and at one point Kennedy pulled him to one side to comment: "If you and I could only run wild, Benjy."

Before a birthday party for the late President, his wife Jacqueline asked a doctor for an injection that would keep Kennedy's troubled back free of pain for the occasion.

She told her husband there was such an injection, but it would remove all feeling below the waist. "We can't have that, can we, Jacqueline," the book says Kennedy ruled.

Shortly after the U.S. steel industry raised prices in April, 1962, Kennedy told a family gathering how a steel company president, Thomas Patton, complained that the President's brother, then Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was wiretapping steel executives and harrassing them through the Internal Revenue Service.

"And, of course, Mr. Patton was right," the book quotes the President as saying.

At that point, Bradlee recorded, Robert Kennedy, who later was also assassinated, rose and yelled in mock anger: "They were mean to my brother. They can't do that to my brother."

In June, 1962, when his youngest brother Edward was campaigning for the Senate, President Kennedy criticized a story which had Edward smiling sardonically.

"Bobby and I smile sardonically," he said. "Teddy will learn how to smile sardonically in two or three years, but he doesn't know how, yet."

Bradlee said that Kennedy found it intolerable not to have the facility for foreign languages others had, and that a French friend had said Kennedy spoke French "with a bad Cuban accent."

Just before his trip to Berlin in June, 1963, Kennedy spent the better part of an hour mastering the phrase — later to become famous — "Ich bin ein Berliner (I am a Berliner)."

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