

From the Office of:
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

FOR RELEASE: MONDAY A. M.
DECEMBER 2, 1963

THE FOLLOWING IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF A STATEMENT
BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY (D., MINN.) FOR HIS REGULAR TELEVISION
REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA AREA. THE PROGRAM WAS FILMED ON WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 27:

Since my last report to you, America has suffered a great
tragedy. America has lost a truly great man and a great President,
the world has lost a courageous leader, and I have lost a very dear
and personal friend. Yes, our beloved late President, John Fitzgerald
Kennedy, has departed from this earthly existence.

Today, in the few moments that we have together, I want to
reflect with you for a moment or two on some of my experiences
with this fine, good man, particularly those experiences of just
the week before he was taken from us. It was on Friday, November
22, that our President was struck down by the assassin's bullet
in Texas. But it was Wednesday of that same week that we were
together at the White House for our legislative leaders weekly

breakfast with President Kennedy. And what an active session it was! The President had been traveling the week before, and over the period of Veteran's Day. We didn't have our regular legislative meeting, so there was much to talk about on that Wednesday of this tragic week. We discussed the legislative program. We discussed the President's visits---the temper and the mood of the people. The President always came back from those visits to other parts of the country filled with the love of life, and with a sense of optimism about the future of our country. I remember him saying something to the effect that whenever he became discouraged, all he needed to do was to go to the people, and to renew his faith and his strength by being with the people, and then he could come back to the Nation's capitol to undertake the burdens of office and the responsibilities that are ever present. After that Wednesday morning breakfast, the last breakfast that I was privileged to have with the President, we walked from the Executive Mansion, the White House, out to the gardens in the White House grounds, and walked back in that narrow corridor alongside the Rose Garden to the Executive Offices. And on this morning, I am happy to recall, President Kennedy said: "Hubert, come walk with me, I want to talk to you."

We visited about matters in the mid-West, the economic problems. We talked, for example, of the development in the upper Great Lakes, and I spoke to him about the necessity of additional emphasis to that area of America. We spoke about the development of atomic energy programs in the mid-West, and we spoke also about

his visits to the mid-West. It was a friendly meeting, it was a happy one, and I can recall it so vividly.

So when I say I have lost a friend, this is to put it very gently and mildly. I suppose never before in the history of our country have we gone through such a period of consummate grief and sorrow as we have experienced these past few days. I have tried to jot down here on paper, a few notes on my reactions and reflections, because it is very difficult to properly express oneself at a moment like this. I am not ashamed to say that I was grief-stricken, that I simply couldn't believe what had happened. It all seemed like an ugly dream. And during those days of the memorial services, when we were paying our last respects to this fine and good man, it was almost more than one could bear. There were so many, so many things that happened that touched one's heart.

I remember being in my office on Friday night, late, after the President's body had been returned to Washington, after we had visited with the incoming President, President Johnson. The legislative leaders were with him for some 45 minutes to an hour discussing the future of our country and reassuring President Johnson of our faith and our loyalty and our cooperation. Following that, I went back to my office, and I sat there alone. I wanted to be alone. I just wanted to meditate. And to be silent. And as I sat there the phone would ring, and it was a long distance call. There were

several of these long distance calls well after 10 o'clock in Washington, D. C., and most of them were from home---out in Minnesota. And I had people on the phone who were workers, business people, a schoolteacher, a taxi cab driver, a mother, just calling me to ask me to convey to Mrs. Kennedy, to Jacqueline Kennedy, their sorrow, their sympathy, their understanding, and their love. And I am sure as they witnessed this fine good lady, Mrs. Kennedy, during these difficult days for her and for the Nation, everyone of our constituents, everyone of our neighbors have been very proud of her.

Last Monday, while the body of the late President rested in those final hours of the morning in the Rotunda of the Capitol, a policeman was standing near the entrance of the Capitol building, and a young man came walking up the stairs and the policeman visited with him awhile as he was standing in line. The policeman said: "Where are you from?" "Where are you going?" The young man answered, "I've come to pay my respects to President Kennedy, and when I'm through here I'm going to go to my church, and then I want to go home to be with my family, and tomorrow I will go back to work." Now this young man sums up the feelings and the emotions of most of us. We sought to express, in some way, our respect for President Kennedy and our sorrow because of his death, our desire to seek an understanding with our God, and to seek comfort. And our desire, of course, in these moments of crisis and tragedy to be with our

loved ones. And then---as the President would have wanted it, as this young man of vigor and vitality and boldness would have wanted it---to go to work, to continue the daily activities of our lives and to carry on with the new business.

Well, that little story---and it's a true one---I think tells us a great deal about what's been going on here the last few days. We are back at work now, both as individuals and as a Nation. But we are not the same. Something has departed from us, something has left us, there is a spirit that is gone, there is a sense that life itself has been diminished. And it all happened because of that incredible and ghastly act of the assassin on Friday, November 22.

It's very difficult, as I have said, for me to properly describe my own thoughts even now. Words come like cold pebbles thrown into a sea of my emotion. But I seek to comprehend and communicate my understanding and the meaning of John Fitzgerald's life and his death. Quickly: he gave his life, he gave of himself to this Nation, completely and totally. He gave in wartime and he gave in peacetime. And he also gave in death. As President, he gave of his courage, his intelligence, his energy and his strength to this Nation. His life was a constant portrayal of a Profile of Courage. The result of that life not only as President but all through his life, is an America more firmly on the path to peace, an America more dedicated to the cause of freedom and

human equality, and an America that is more beautiful and more just. This is the legacy. This is John Fitzgerald's contribution, his gift to the history of this great republic. And in death, he continued to give. Because out of the shock of his assassination, and the deep sorrow of his death, the people of this Nation have emerged with new courage, new strength, new unity. There has been some soul-searching, some asking of forgiveness, some seeking of better understanding. I don't recall that ever before in our history have the people of the U. S. been so moved. You witnessed it on your television, you heard it on your radio, you saw it in your press, and you also experienced it as you stood with your neighbors, or even as you stood alone. Never before has there been such a total involvement by all the people in any one event. Never before have so many Americans joined together so immediately and intimately to express respect for a man and his work. So there is a kind of new unity that is forged out of sorrow and grief, and possibly, as I have said out of soul-searching of our own iniquities and injustices. This unity that came out of the President's death is a gift to American youth. I don't believe it's going to fade, but rather that the U. S. will be stronger, will move ahead to a greater unity than it has ever known. Yes, we are truly: "... One Nation, under God, indivisible ..."

And then to Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, affectionately known as "Jackie" Kennedy, and to all the members of the late President's family we offer our prayers and our hearts.

Mrs. Kennedy, in particular, gave us an unforgettable demonstration of courage and of grace and of dignity. And that was exactly what this Nation needed in such time of travail and such sorrow.

Can I just say in conclusion a word about our new President, whom I've known well, President Lyndon B. Johnson? I've known him during all of my days in the Senate. I knew him as Senator, as Majority Leader, as personal friend, and knew his lovely wife, Mrs. Johnson. Their family has been close to us. And I have watched President Johnson as the Vice President to President Kennedy grow in stature and understanding and knowledge of the world in which we live and work. I saw him not as a political ally but as an intimate friend of President Kennedy. I want to make it quite clear that President Johnson will carry on the Administration of President Kennedy. He will carry forward the commitments and the programs of President Kennedy. He will work closely with the Congress that he knows so well. Very few men have come into public office as well equipped for the heavy responsibilities as President Johnson. He is an experienced man in the work of political life. He is educated. He has a natural talent for political organization and for political achievement. He knows the legislative process and as Vice President he was brought into intimate contact with this troubled world of ours. I predict he will be a great President. He will be active, he will be forceful and he will be resourceful. But he needs our help, and he needs the confidence and the understanding and the support of the American people during these perilous days. In any way that we can show it, we should indicate to President Johnson that we want to help him to carry on the unfinished work

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of the man that is our fallen leader, President Kennedy. We have work to do. The Nation's business must go on. The Republic is in good hands, and the institutions of our democracy survive.

Thank you.

END

TRANSCRIPT

TV ~~SCRIPT~~ - NOVEMBER 26, 1963

Transcript of Report by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey through Minnesota Area TV Stations

BOB COAR: This is Washington, and this is the Assistant Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Humphrey reporting to the people of Minnesota.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Since my last report to you, America has suffered a great tragedy. America has lost a truly great man and a great President, ~~and~~ the world has lost a courageous leader, and I have lost a very dear and personal friend. Yes, our beloved late President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, has departed from this earthly existence. [Today, in the few moments that we have together, I want to reflect with you for a moment or two on some of my experiences with this fine good man, particularly those experiences of just ~~the~~ ^{the} week before he was taken from us. It was on Friday, November 22, that our President was struck down by the assassin's bullet in Texas. But it was Wednesday of that same week that we were together at the White House for our legislative leaders weekly breakfast with President Kennedy. And what an active session it was [!] ~~because~~ ^{the} President had been traveling the week before, and over the period of ~~the Armistice Day or~~ Veteran's Day. We didn't have our regular legislative meeting, so there was much to talk about on that Wednesday of this tragic week. We discussed the legislative program. ~~We~~ discussed the President's visits---the temper and the moods of the people. ~~And~~ ^{the} the President always came back from those visits to

(of the country) -2-

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their understanding, and their love. And I am sure as they witnessed this fine good lady, Mrs. Kennedy, during these difficult days for her and for the nation, everyone of our constituents, everyone of our neighbors have been very proud of her.

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Thank you.

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