

TRANSCRIPT

Speech of the Vice President

Gridiron Club

Washington, D. C.

March 20, 1965

Master of Ceremonies: And now, gentlemen, speaking for the Democratic Party, the co-pilot of the Great Society's dizzy flight into the future, the Vice President of the United States. (applause).

The Vice President:

President Collins, Mr. Chief Justice: A very funny thing happened to me on the way to a funeral... (laughter). My fellow Texans and recent converts, generous contributors, members of the Establishment and the President's Club, and my old friend, Barry Horatio Goldwater (laughter). Barry, that was a very modest introduction you gave yourself, and I want to tell you if you'd had that speechwriter four months sooner, this party'd been different tonight. (laughter)

Well, I guess you all know I like these parties. In fact, I really looked forward to this evening. I finally got a chance to wear my Inaugural suit. (laughter). I want to tell you this is some barbecue. This is the fanciest sit-in we've had in Washington for months! Good fellowship, good food, greetings at least somewhere in the night from the President, and we shall not be moved till at least the benediction.

Well, I'm delighted -- I really am. I'm delighted to be here. In fact, I'm delighted to be anywhere tonight. (laughter and applause). Mr. Chairman, I'm just delighted to be invited. And I'm delighted that I was permitted to accept. (laughter and applause). And, Mr. Secretary, I'm delighted that my remarks have been cleared at the highest levels of government -- Lynda Bird, Luci Baines, Cousin Oriole, and that philosopher of the Pedernales, William S. White. (laughter)

Well, now, just a word about a subject that's often discussed -- the Vice Presidency. And I'm the man that can make something out of it right now (laughter). I think you'll recall in your objectivity that I really never, never caught the job. Now all of those meetings last summer with businessmen and bankers and oil tycoons and editors and Governors and Mayors -- they had but one noble objective -- to help President Johnson, and I was the most surprised man in Atlantic City when I got that call from the White House. And when I arrived at the airport and found my friend, Senator Tom Dodd, I was really surprised! (laughter)

Now this meeting, according to the Gridiron code, is off-the-record. And I'm going to for the first time let you in on really what happened that afternoon. Here's what I did and here's what I said to Tom Dodd. "Tom, this plane isn't safe." (laughter) "Tom, my friend Tom, is this trip really necessary? Tom, you're a great Senator. Connecticut needs you."

"Tom, if he should ask you, be brave. Say no!" (laughter)

Well, then we arrived. First it was Tom. And then, thank goodness, it was me. The President called for me. And here's a verbatim transcript of what he said: "Hubert, do you think you can keep your mouth shut for the next four years?" (laughter) And I said, "Yes, Mr. President." And then he said, "There you go interrupting me again." (laughter) And then, my good friends, came the campaign. Extremely interesting. Extremely long. Extremely expensive. And ending up extremely well. And Barry, you were extremely helpful, I want you to know. (laughter).

Barry, we met only once during that campaign, and appropriately, at a corn-picking contest. (laughter) You may recall Barry, that I said you'd better lay off that social security issue. And you replied, "Listen Horatio, you run your campaign and I'll ruin mine." (laughter) But Barry's a very fine man. He's a smart man too. And I'll tell you, he's the kind of man that says if you can't beat those sensation-seeking columnists, join them. And he did.

Well, after being elected, I immediately sought the advice of an old friend, the former Vice President of the United States, Mr. Richard Nixon. And I said, "Dick, what need I do to be a good Vice President?" And he gave me a list. He said, "Well, Hubert." He said, "First, get yourself a good dog." (laughter) And I said, "Anything else?" "Oh yes,"

he said, "you'll need a crisis. In fact, you'll really need 6 crises." "What else?" I asked him. He said, "Just stay the heck out of South America." (laughter)

Now the President, I want to say a word about the President. Sort of my night out, you know, tonight. (laughter) Sorry, Dean, I didn't clear this part with you (laughter). The President's a very practical man. He believes in experience and he believes in on-the-job training. I remember the President saying to me after that 1960 West Virginia primary, just to bring up a bad memory, "Hubert, that was the poorest campaign I've ever seen. And if this country ever has a poverty program, you're the man that ought to be in charge of it." And then what did he do. He gave it to that rich fellow, Sargent Shriver. He not only gave him one job -- he gave him two and the other day he was going to give him three until I stopped him. I said, "Mr. President. This is no way to cure unemployment." (laughter)

There's been a good deal of talk, all of you know, about an official residence for the Vice President. Every time it comes up in our home Muriel and the family just sit down on the floor and say -- We shall not be moved. (laughter) Now, recently the President asked me about that. About that official residence, and I said, "Mr. President -- Mr. President, I kind of go for those big old houses, you know, with columns on them (laughter)." The President said, "Yeeees." "Mr. President,

I like a house that's close in. I like a lot of yard, a lot of trees, squirrels, and a lot of driveway. And I like alot of bedrooms, Mr. President, in a lot of colors." "Yeeees, Hubert." "Mr. President, I think I have my eye on just the right place." And the President said, "Hubert, you've had too much time for reflection' and that's when he assigned me civil rights, poverty, mayors, space, travel, See America, Peace Corps, ambassadors, agriculture, legislation and diligent attention to my duties as the trustee on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. (laughter, applause)

Now, a great deal's been written about this role of the Vice President. I guess I'm one of the few that enjoys it. And I want to say right here now that I like it. Of course, there are a few things that bother me. For instance, my friend, Mike Mansfield, Russell Long and Carl Hayden -- they all have those big, sumptuous offices in the Capitol. But not Hubert Humphrey. (laughter) And Chief Justice Warren and Dean Rusk and Dwight Eisenhower were sent to London for the Churchill funeral -- but not Hubert Humphrey. (laughter) And Everett Dirksen and Gerry Ford and Bob McNamara and Sargent Shriver, why they can just talk all they want to the press -- but not Hubert HumpHrey (laughter). And Wayne Morse and Bobby Kennedy and George Murphy -- they can talk in the Senate as long as they please -- but not Hubert Humphrey. Now I'm not complaining. I want you to know that. And I

know there may be a few of you here that'll report on me. I really like my job, Mr. President. Why I will go any place that I'm asked to go. I'll even go sometimes when I'm not. I will do anything I'm asked to do, at any time. You see, I try harder -- I have too -- I'm only number two. (laughter)

Ah, but one of the real pleasures has been working with that White House staff. Now, the other day I called my old friend, George Reedy. And I asked him about that dinner for Princess Grace of Monaco. George said, "I'm sorry -- I don't know about any dinner." "George," I said, "You announced it to the press at Monday's briefing." "I don't remember even having that briefing on Monday." (laughter) "But George, there is a dinner tonight for Princess Grace." "I don't have any information on that. I'll just have to check it out." "George," I said, "do you know who you're talking to?" "I'm not sure," said George. (laughter) "Well, George, this is the Vice President of the United States." And George said, "Could you give me just a few more details on that?" (laughter) Ah, the Great Society.

Truly, my fellow Americans, this has been a delightful evening. Good humor, Thomas Jefferson once said, is one of the preservatives of the peace of our people and our tranquillity. And we have good humor here. And the gentleman from Arizona has made a distinct contribution to it, and I salute him for it. (applause) Never as before, we Americans

search for peace, and we strive for that tranquillity of which Jefferson spoke. There comes a time in the life of every man when he must search the very depths of his soul for answers to the vital questions of his life. Who am I? What do I believe? What really counts in my life? Now to confront such questions forthrightly is never easy. To answer them honestly is often very painful. Yet, a determination to do this is the true test of one's courage and of one's convictions, and indeed, of one's humanity. And so, as it is in the life of an individual, it is in the life of the nation.

Do we, my fellow Americans, as a free people, possess the courage, the conviction and the humanity to ask ourselves who are we, what do we really believe, and what does this America of ours stand for. I believe that today, tonight, America is searching for its soul; for these very answers. And she's doing it in many and strange places. She's doing it on the highway between Selma and Montgomery, in the marble halls of Congress, in the barren valleys of Appalachia, in the poverty-stricken slums of Harlem and South Chicago, and on those distant paddy fields of Southeast Asia. And as in the life of an individual, this process in the life of a nation is never easy. And it is not without great pain and sacrifice. Yet, to avoid these very questions that we ask, and to evade the answers, would be to forfeit the legacy of freedom that has been given to us by generations of compassionate

and courageous Americans.

President Woodrow Wilson was one of these Americans. Speaking in Philadelphia in the year 1914, he gave us his vision of where America should be going. "My dream is," said President Wilson, "that America will come into the full light of the day when all shall know that she puts human rights above all other rights, and that her flag is the flag not only of America but of humanity." My fellow Americans, this is the dream of our President. It is my dream. And it is surely yours. And I say to you that this is the promise of America, a promise that will be fulfilled. Thank you.

(applause)

~~President Collins~~ <sup>in Chief Justice</sup>

A funny thing happened to me on the way to a funeral.!!

My fellow Texans, <sup>recent generous</sup> converts, contributors, <sup>members of the Establisment</sup> members of the President's Club, and my old friend, Barry "Horatio" Goldwater.!

Ⓧ Barry - that speech written earlier! <sup>That was a ~~great~~ introduction you gave yourself</sup>

I have looked forward to this evening. I finally got a chance to wear my Inaugural suit.!

Ⓧ Fancy Site - <sup>and to a Party Beach Barbeque that!</sup> Good fellowship, Good food, fun, + <sup>quit up from the President!</sup> <sup>We shall not be moved!</sup>

Delighted to be invited, <sup>Delighted</sup> to be permitted to accept, and delighted my remarks have been cleared at the highest levels of Government -- Lynda Bird, Luci Baines, Cousin Oriel and William S. White.

*and that Philosopher of the Perdenales*

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Now just a word on the Vice Presidency.---

You recall I never sought the job. All those meetings last summer with businessmen, bankers, and oil tycoons, editors, Governors, Mayors had but one objective, to help President Johnson.!

and, <sup>See my friend Tim Dodd</sup> When I arrived at the airport and found Senator Dodd waiting in the plane I was really surprised.!

This meeting is entirely off-the-record and I want to let you in on what really happened that afternoon.

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And here is what I said to Tom Dodd. "Tom, this plane isn't safe!  
Tom, is this trip necessary? Tom, Connecticut needs you. Tom, if he  
asks you, be brave, say no!" *We arrived - just Tom - ~~the~~*

*Here is a debate transcript of our conversation*

And then the President called for me. "Hubert, do you think you  
can keep your mouth shut for the next four years?" I said, "Yes, Mr.  
President." And then he said, "There you go interrupting me again."

And then came the campaign, -- extremely interesting, extremely  
long, extremely expensive, but ending up extremely well! And Barry, you  
were extremely helpful!

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Barry, we met only once during the campaign, and appropriately  
at the cornpicking contest. And you may recall, I said, "Barry, you'd  
better lay off that Social Security issue." And you replied, "Listen,  
Horatio, you run your campaign, and I'll ruin mine!"

~~But Barry's doing all right. He has a new T. V. Network show. It  
runs from 6 P. M. to 5:30 every night. He is writing a syndicated column  
that reads from right to right. - back to back!~~

But Barry's a smart man. If you can't beat those "sensation-seeking  
columnists," join them! *He did!*

5

There is another friend of the President ~~here tonight~~, former Vice President Richard Nixon. After being elected, I immediately sought ~~his~~ the

advice. I said, "Dick, what do I need to do to be a good Vice President?"  
~~the former VP, Richard Nixon~~

"Well," he said, "get yourself a good dog." "Anything else," I said?

"Oh, yes, you need a crisis. In fact, you really need 6 crises." "And what else," I asked him?" He said, "Stay out of South America."

But being Vice President is not all one happy rose garden. For one thing I had to declare all my assets. Up until that, I had Muriel thinking we were broke. She even made her own dresses.

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President Johnson is an amazing man. <sup>is a practical man - he</sup> The President believes in on-the-job training. I remember the President saying to me after that 1960 West Virginia Primary, "Hubert, that was the poorest campaign I have ever seen. If ever this country has a poverty program, you ought to be in charge of it." (and then he gave it to that Rich Large Shiner)

There's been a good deal of talk about an official residence for the Vice President.

Recently The President ~~was~~ asked me about that. I said, "Mr. President, I kind of go for those big old houses with the columns on them."

He said, "yes-s-s-s-s."

V.P. House

⑦.

~~I said~~ "Mr. President, "I like a house that is close in. I like a lot of yard, a lot of trees and squirrels and a lot of driveway. I like a lot of bedrooms in different colors."

↳ The President said, "Yes-s-s-s."

~~And finally I said~~ "Mr. President, I think I have my eye on just ~~the~~ the right place."

The President said, "Hubert, you have had too much time for reflection." !

↳ And that's when he assigned me Civil Rights, Poverty, Mayors, Space

⑧.

Travel-See-America, Peace Corps, Ambassadors, Agriculture, legislation and dilligent attention to my duties as a trustee of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. !

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Insert (A)

17.

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Optional

Insert B

8A

A great deal has been said and written about the role of the Vice President. I want to say here and now that I like it! Of course, there a few things that bother me.

For instance, Mike Mansfield, Russell Long and Carl Hayden all have sumptuous offices at the Capitol.

BUT NOT HUBERT HUMPHREY.

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Chief Justice Warren, Dean Rusk, and Dwight Eisenhower were sent to London for the Churchill Funeral.

BUT NOT HUBERT HUMPHREY.

Everett Dirksen, Jerry Ford, Bob McNamara, and Sargent Shriver can't # # Pump.

BUT NOT HUBERT HUMPHREY.

8 B

Wayne Morse, Bobby Kennedy and George Murphy can talk in the Senate as long as they please.

BUT NOT HUBERT HUMPHREY.

Now, I'm not complaining. I really like my job. I mean jobs!  
Why, I will go any place I am asked to go. I will do anything I am asked to do at any time. You see, I try harder. I have to. I'm only No. 2.

But One of the real pleasures has been working with the White House Staff. The other day I called George Reedy and asked him about that dinner for Princess Grace of Monaco.

19.

Back to 8

- He said, "I'm sorry, I don't know about any dinner."
- "But, George, you announced it to the press at Monday's briefing."
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- "But, George, "I said, "there's a dinner tonight for Princess Grace."
- "I don't have any information on that. I have to check it out."
- "George, " I said, "do you know who you are talking to."
- "I am not sure."
- "This is the Vice President of the United States."

(17)

(Back to 8)

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L "I am not sure."

L "This is the Vice President of the United States."

(18)

And he said, "Could you give me a few more details." *sir* /

13

This has been a delightful evening -- "Good humor," as Thomas Jefferson once said, "is one of the preservatives of our peace and tranquility." Now, as never before, we search for peace and strive for tranquility.

There comes a time in every man's life when he must search the very depths of his soul for answers to the vital questions of life: Who am I? What do I believe? What really counts in my life?

- ↳ To confront such questions forthrightly is never easy.
- ↳ To answer them honestly is often painful.
- ↳ Yet a determination to do this is the true test of one's

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courage and conviction -- and of one's humanity.

↳ And so it is in the life of a nation.

↳ Do we, as a free people, possess the courage, the conviction and the humanity to ask: Who are we? What do we believe? What does America stand for?

↳ I believe that today America is searching her soul for these answers. ↳ She is doing it on the highway between Selma and Montgomery . . .

↳ in the marbled halls of Congress . . . in the barren valleys of Appalachia . . .

↳ in the poverty-stricken slums of Harlem and South Chicago. . . and on the

distant battlefields of Southeast Asia.

*Paddy-Felds*

15  
 And, as in the life of an individual, this process in the life of a nation is never easy.

< It is not without great pain and sacrifice. Yet to avoid these questions, and to evade these answers, would be to forfeit the legacy of freedom given to us by generations of compassionate and courageous Americans.

> President Woodrow Wilson was one of these Americans. Speaking in Philadelphia in 1914, he gave his vision of where America should be going: —

16  
 "My dream is. . . that America will come into the full light of the day when all shall know that she puts human rights above all other rights and that her flag is the flag not only of America but of humanity."

This is Lyndon Johnson's dream. It is my dream. And it is surely yours. This is the Promise of <sup>our</sup> America.



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