

"AT ISSUE"

WSAZ-TV

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GUEST: Hubert H. Humphrey  
Vice President of the United States

MODERATOR: Jack W. Lee  
V. P. & General Manager WSAZ-TV

NEWS PANEL: Tom D. Miller  
News Editor, Huntington Advertiser

Ed Tunstall  
Bureau Chief, Associated Press

Bos Johnson  
News Director, WSAZ

Jim Mitchell  
News Editor, WSAZ

Mr. Lee

This Sunday we conclude a three week series on "At Issue", presenting the top names in democratic presidential speculation. Two weeks ago our guest was Senator Robert Kennedy...last week Senator Eugene McCarthy. And today we are pleased to welcome the Vice President of the United States....The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey. Wednesday of this week, Mr. Humphrey visited the Marshall University campus for a speech during "Impact" week. During the six hour stay in Huntington he videotaped this half hour interview with area newsmen. At the time this program was recorded, there was considerable speculation Mr. Humphrey would be an announced candidate for President by the time this is aired. He is not an announced candidate as this is being recorded which creates some interesting journalistic problems for our guest and for the panel of reporters....WSAZ News Director Bos Johnson, Huntington Advertiser Reporter Tom Miller, WSAZ's Jim Mitchell, and Associated Press W. Va. Bureau Chief Ed Tunstall. We begin our questioning with Mr. Tunstall.

Mr. Tunstall

Mr. Vice President, many thanks for visiting with us today. Yesterday, Secretary of Agriculture Freeman indicated that you were his man in the presidential race. Could we ask you Sir, as a candidate would you expect the backing of the Johnson Administration?

Mr. Humphrey

Well I'm sure there will be members of the Johnson Administration who are my personal friends, with whom I've worked who may want to express their support for Vice President Humphrey. There is no effort on the part of the administration, may I say, to have any concerted drive by representatives of the administration. Secretary Freeman is a very old friend of mine of about 30 years or more and he's from my home state and of course I was very gratified and highly honored that he saw fit to announce his support publically. I consider this a very valuable asset in any effort that I may make. Secretary Wirtz of the Dept. of Labor has done the same thing, but I don't expect there will be any rash let me say of cabinet support. I think it'll be individuals, some maybe and some not.

Mr. Lee

I believe Bos Johnson has the next question.

Mr. Johnson

Mr. Humphrey if its assumed that presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey would have to campaign on the record of the Johnson Administration since he's a part of it. What would happen if suddenly at the convention they developed a draft Johnson movement. Would candidate Humphrey then have to stand aside?

Mr. Humphrey

Well, if the democratic convention would want to draft the President for renomination, I would be a very happy man. I think the President deserves all possible support from the democratic leadership, democratic delegates, from the American people. I do not believe, however, that the President is going to be a candidate. I don't believe he's going to submit to a draft. He has made it quite clear, and he's a very honorable man, that he is not a candidate that he will not accept the nomination. But, if events should develop that would in a sense compel him to do so, Hubert Humphrey would recognize that those events were compelling and controlling, after all, the delegates are going to make the selection and they're going to determine who the nominee of our party will be.

Mr. Johnson

In the State of Ohio, for example, a preponderance of those polled by the Associated Press indicated preferred Johnson, with some for you as well. Will you try to go after support from those who are presently saying President Johnsons their first choice?

Mr. Humphrey

Well, when and if I become a candidate - that is an active candidate - there's no doubt but what there's a great deal of talk about my entering these convention contests, no primaries, but delegate contests. I would hope that I might be able to have the support of the delegates that have looked to President Johnson for leadership. I'm a happy member of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration. I'm very proud of that administration, I'm very proud of my friendship with the President. I've tried to be a loyal, helpful Vice President. I have had some opportunity to share in the framing of the program of the administration, I will not run away from the administration record. I want you to know that I'm proud of that record. However, every man is his own man and if I should carry my candidacy, or if I should be available as a candidate and carry my case to the American people, I will do it on the basis of Hubert Humphrey, his thoughts, his views, his ideas, but with a firm base on the Kennedy-Johnson and the Johnson-Humphrey administration. Our efforts in this modern period started with John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and then the program was the Johnson-Humphrey administration. We're going to build on that record, we're going to try to use it as a base, America does not stand still, nor do I. And I'm sure that the American people want every man who offers himself to the public to be his own man and the first man that would want you to be that way would be the President of the U. S. because he is a very much independent man and he is his own man.

Mr. Lee

Tom Miller.

Mr. Miller

Mr. Vice President, the poverty war in W. Va. and Eastern Kentucky, which is near by, has received much national attention during the past 8 years. Since you and the late President Kennedy both campaigned here in W. Va., I wonder if we might have your assessment as to the progress that has been made and what we might look for in the future?

Mr. Humphrey

Well, I'm returning to W. Va. for the first time in some time - of course, I've visited some of your communities in other parts of the state for presentation of honors on an All American City, to come to the Univ. of W. Va. and of course now at Marshall Univ. I think this state is the living embodiment of the effectiveness of the war on poverty. W. Va. had two great assets on which to build. First, its people - I grew to love the people of this state and I say that in all sincerity. During that primary contest of 1960, I never found people any place that I had greater respect for, greater affection for, you have a wonderful people. And then you have vast natural resources, with the help of government and its effective help, federal government and state government and the ingenuity of your own people and the vast investment of private enterprise you've made this state all over again. Well its a thriving state, there's still areas of course that you want to improve, you need more jobs, there are still people that are under employed and there are still the hard core unemployed. There is yet a need for even more and better education. But, when you look back 10 years, I remember being here in 1958, when I came into this state to campaign in 1958, I recall my visits all up and down through every hill and hollow and every valley and mountain of this state. In 1960, I travelled thousands of miles, Mrs. Humphrey and myself. To come back here as I have these last three-four years and I visited several times and to see what's happened is like the rebirth of a community, a rebirth of an economy. And I believe that's about the best testimony I can give for the war on poverty. Now it isn't done, this isn't a finished struggle. We've made the beginning and we're going to continue on until we have even greater success.

Mr. Lee

Jim Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell

Mr. Vice President. I'd like to get back to national politics for just a moment. You have said that any campaign you might launch for the Presidency would be based on the administration record, that was a record, I think, that didn't meet with a great deal of popularity with the public until Mr. Johnson announced that he would be

withdrawing and would not seek another term. Do you think that if you stand on that record, that you would in a sense become the new whipping boy for Senators Kennedy and McCarthy for the remainder of the campaign?

Mr. Humphrey

I believe that the President could have received the nomination of his party without question or doubt had he wanted it. I believe that President Johnson would have been re-elected in the country had he wanted it. I believe that President Johnson had a higher priority in his mind and soul than re-election and that was to do every thing that he could possibly do, with all of the energy at his command, to seek an honorable peace in Vietnam and to seek unity of the American people here at home. He had reason to believe that because of the attacks upon him and his policies which I think was a reckless attack and many times irresponsible, that this nation was being divided and that his efforts to bring about an honorable peace were being misjudged and misunderstood. So, in a very real sense President Johnson made the supreme political sacrifice. He sacrificed the continuation of a noble and very worth political career. But I think he has made for himself an immortal page in history and if he can bring about, through his tireless efforts and I think very effective efforts, the beginnings of a negotiated peace and a negotiation that will undoubtedly take a great deal of time and have many frustrations. If he can do that and if he can help bring about a little better sense of unity in our country his administration will go down in history as one of the great administrations.

Now, coming back to the Vice President, I am my own man, I have my own personality with all of its limitations and hopefully with one or two assets. I will go to the American people with the programs of urban renewal, model cities, health of our people, better education for our people, fiscal responsibility, offering no instant solutions, no pie in the sky, no gimics, calling upon the American people for a sense of sacrifice as well as commitment to the high purposes that we need in this country. I think the record of the Johnson-Humphrey administration which is a continuation of the record of the Kennedy-Johnson administration is a good record. Not infallible, not without its limitations or its inadequacies, we're humans and we'll try to build on that. I think the Presidents main problem has been the great division over the war in Vietnam. I think much of that today, or some of that, has been reduced, yes, much of it by the Presidents sacrificial and noble act of his recent policy address where he announced a new program of peace seeking, of the pursuit of peace in Vietnam and dedicated his whole effort to that objective. I'm not at all worried about being the new whipping boy. If you have to have someone to beat on, well I'm ready. I don't intend to try to carry on a whipping effort on my part. I have very little or nothing ill to say of those who seek this nomination. I know both the Senators in the democratic party, they're both very good men, they're intelligent, they're able, they're gifted. I think that they have some wrong views on a few matters of public policy, but that's matter for the public to decide. Senators are senators and they have an independence in judgment.

Mr. Lee

Ed Tunstall.

Mr. Tunstall

Mr. Vice President. On the matter of views, on this same program, just two weeks ago, Senator Kennedy indicated the steps the President had made in his address of March 31st were what he called a step in the right direction with the references to the peace movements in Vietnam - toward peace movements. He said, however, with some reservation, that he had his own ideas in extending these proposals. Would we gather from what you say Sir, as a Presidential candidate you would continue a pretty strong line, the present line Mr. Johnson has adopted, toward those peace feelers, toward the peace movement in Vietnam?

Mr. Humphrey

I would consider it a patriotic and indeed a very personal obligation to do everything that I could and can to help the President achieve his goal of an honorable peace in Vietnam. And I recognize in saying that that this is a tedious process, it may be filled with all kinds of difficulties. I shall say nothing and do nothing that will in any way impair that effort. I happen to believe that the attainment of peace in the world is the highest calling that a man can possibly serve and even if that meant that I would be unsuccessful in whatever endeavor I were to undertake I would be perfectly willing to let that be the case, to let that be the result. I can think of nothing more important for the American people right now and for the whole world than to bring this sad and painful and costly war to a conclusion. And to do it without retreat, to do it without humiliation and to do it without defeat. I think this can be accomplished, its the fine art of statesmanship and the second grade priority is to try to heal America, to bind up its wounds, to bring a sense of harmony of unity in America. I realize there's diversity, there are differences, but this ought to be with respect. We have peaceful ways of being able to settle our difficulties here. So if you want to know what the creative Hubert Humphreys going to be and is. It is to serve this country. I am the Vice President of the U. S. and I will be the Vice President, the Lord willing, until January 20th, 1969. I intend to act like a Vice President. I do not act like an aggressive, acquisitive, self seeking, bridge burning, so to speak, candidate. I'm going to try to be the man that you elected the Vice President of the U. S. Now if that should interfere with any other program or purposes I have in mind then so be it. I think my first duty is to fulfill the obligations of my office. If there's time for anything else then we'll use that time for something else. But I can assure you and I want to assure the people of this state and any place else that I am unwilling to act, speak or do anything in such a way as to embarass the President in his efforts or to embarass our country. I happen to think that a little general cooperation from all political leaders for the coming months would be a very, very noble act of citizenship. That's what we need right now, because we have a chance Sir, we have a real

chance to gain what we wanted all the time - namely, Peace. To bring about at least a de-escalation of this struggle and hopefully, step by step, carefully, systematically, methodically find the ultimate peace that we're seeking, a genuine lasting peace. I think that's the biggest job that we have. I'm going to do my part.

Mr. Lee

Bos Johnson.

Mr. Johnson

Mr. Humphrey. Former Kentucky Governor Breathitt, in a speech in Charleston last week, spoke of the report the Presidents committee on rural poor, indicating that it had been swept aside with very little notice by the news media because of the riots and indicating that the basic problems in the cities in his view and in the commissions view was the poor of the rural areas who decended upon the city. With the switch in emphasis to the big cities are we in danger of losing sight of the rural poor?

Mr. Humphrey

Governor Breathitt has reminded us of one of the truths of our time. I am pleased that he did. I think its fair to say without being critical that our media is concentrated in the great metropolitan cities. Most of us just don't have time to get out into what we call the rural areas. Now I come from a rural area, I'm sort of a rural boy, at least in my childhood and my adolesence and young adulthood. I lived in Minnesota in a very small community when I return home. There isn't any doubt but what much of theproblem of the modern city today with its ghettos and its slums and its poverty is due to the seedbed of poverty in the areas of rural poverty in America. I've been chairman of a cabinet committee for better than a year on what we call the urban-rural balance. This is to try to find ways and means of bringing modern technology, benefits of modern industry, jobs, recreation, education, transportation, communi-cation to rural America so that you make rural America attractive. So that those who live there do not feel compelled by economic necessity or cultural drought to leave the rural areas and migrate to the cities. Now we have a tremendous problem at hand in the cities. To rebuild our cities we simply must rehabilitate the slums of America. Not only physically, but the victims of slumism, the poor, the depraved, the needy, the deprived, the bitter. This is a really soul searching, life building job. It's going to take time, going to take tremendous effort, but we ought to try to do something to prevent this mass migration into the city. Not by telling people they can't move, you can't do that in America. We don't want to have laws that say you can't move, but by giving people a real choice so that not on'y the choice of fresh air and flowers and birds that you can get in the countryside, but of a job and as good a school or better in rural America as you have in the city and modern industry and on the streets of the modern rural community the signs that indicate the big industries are

there. That modern capitalism is there, good hospitals, good doctors, it's going to take some doing, but that's the only way that you're going to get down to solving this problem in urban America.

Bos Johnson

May I follow that with one other question. A specific case in point in Huntington where Marshall University seeks expansion through Urban Renewal adjacent to its campus. The Urban Renewal application has been accepted for filing, indicated that it was qualified, but received a low priority because Urban Renewal money, by administrative decision, was moving into areas of the large city riots. Do you consider that an appropriate action for Urban Renewal?

Mr. Humphrey

Well, if that's the case I don't.

I want to look into it. I have an interest in these matters. As a matter of fact, most of our Urban Renewal money is now going into communities of moderate size and would be more than happy to look into it. Quite frankly, I believe that your Marshall University and Huntington should have a very high priority, simply because we need the decentralization of our great university systems as well. We need community colleges, we need these smaller universities and colleges spread out widely throughout all the states of the nation some of our universities are getting like some of our great cities. Too big to be manageable and you lose your identity. I think this matter will, by the way I'm happy you brought it up Mr. Johnson, I'll make a note of it and I'll check into it and might be able to do something about it.

Mr. Lee

Tom Miller.

Mr. Miller

Mr. Vice President. I would like to know, even though you at the time we are doing this are not a candidate for President, if you have talked with the Governor of W. Va., if you expect possibly the State of W. Va. to be in the Humphrey camp if you are a candidate for President by the time the convention rolls around.

Mr. Humphrey

Well, somebody said the other night that HHH stood for Happy, Heart and Hope and I want to emphasize the last word. I have great hope that that may be the case. I don't think it's any secret that it would mean a great deal to me to have the support of W. Va. delegates, I have a particular affection for the state and I haven't tried to pressure the Governor. He's an honorable man and I find that most people don't go for that pressure business. There are no strong arm tactics, I don't run any blitzkrieg. I'm Vice President of the U. S., I'm going to conduct myself that way.

I believe the people of W. Va. know what I stand for, I think they know me. I'm sure your Governor does. I think very highly of Hulett Smith, he's a personal friend of mine and Mary Alice, a lovely lady, is a personal friend of mine and Mrs. Humphreys. I think that he'll treat me well if its in the interest of his state, if I'm the sort of a man that he thinks we ought to have, he ought to have and that if his people feel that way, if they don't they ought not to have anything to do with me. So, I'm not going to put any squeeze on. Frankly, I've always heard alot about this business of putting the squeeze on. I haven't found the technique. I think the best squeeze that a man can give is good public service and if you can put out good pub service and if prove yourself to be worthy of respect and some degree of confidence you might be surprised, you may get those votes. I'm going to rely on that. Of course, if I find it necessary I'll move around a bit.

Mr. Lee

Jim Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell

Mr. Humphrey. One of the chief complaints in Appalachia has been the loss of its brightest students in that they go out of state to colleges and universities and never seem to find their way back to not only W. Va., but other states in the Appalachian region. What would you have in mind if you were President to perhaps reverse this brain drain?

Mr. Humphrey

There is a brain drain from many areas of America into other centers and there is as we've heard so many times, our European friends feel there's a brain drain from the european market into the American economy. Particularly in the highly sophisticated, engineering and industrial areas. The only way that you reverse that is to make it possible for those who are the educated and who get this specialized training to find a reward for their expertise, for their ability, for their knowledge, right in the area where they have received their education. That means modern industry, it means investment, it also means government policy. Let me give you an example: Huntsville, Alabama. I've been there. Huntsville, Alabama 20 years ago was a sleepy little town of under 20,000 people. Today it is a thriving modern metropolis of over 200,000 people. There are over 200 PHD'S there now. Why. Well, by the way the University of Alabama has one of its finest branches there, some of the best modern industry is there. It has its own symphony orchestra, it has an outstanding hospital and a teaching hospital which means the most in modern medicine, it has a community college for the student that may not want to go on for the full four year college. Why? Because the government of the U. S. made a calculated judgment to put there, one of the great space centers, the George Marshall Space Center and that brought in great government resources, attacted industry. Now the government by its own decisions, can help in this. It can't do it all, but it can help, where you put government laboratories for example, where government contracts, for example, where government technical assistance goes and any man that is'

President of the United States must keep that in mind. We do not want an America that has just the thriving economy on the two coast lines alone, we want thriving economies on our coast lines, but between what we call the great mountain ranges from the coast line of the East to the coast line of the West is the great inner-land of America and we want to see the benefits of this nation spread somewhat equitably through America. But more important, we want to see the resources and talents of this nation developed all across the country. The best way to stop the brain drain is to have a magnet and that's the magnet of jobs, of universities, the magnet of a modern community there to hold that trained mind.

Mr. Lee

Gentlemen, we have just about two more minutes. Does anyone have that last prime question. Ed Tunstall.

Mr. Tunstall

Just one, if you will Mr. Vice President. There's been some discussion about the democratic party being in trouble. In our own region we've had a former democratic governor indicted by a federal grand jury, the party in Ohio seems to be torn between former Senator Lausche and Congressman Gilligan. The democrats have lost the state house in Kentucky. Would you agree that the democrat party is in trouble?

Mr. Humphrey

Democrats always find themselves in a bit of trouble. There isn't any doubt about that. But, I've noticed of late that there's been argument even between republicans in W. Va. and you'll be surprised, there seems to be some growing on the national scene and it's a very interesting experiment, by the way, that they're going through and I want to encourage it. I like this dialogue that the republicans are having, particularly when it gets a little difficult for them. In all frankness, every state has its own difficulties. The democrat party is a party of change. it has volatile and voluble people within it. Once in awhile some of our people do something they shouldn't do, we're human beings. Neither party has a monopoly on virtue or wisdom. I want to go on record for that much bi-partisanship. But I will say this, that I think that when the election day comes the American people are going to make their basic decision on the issue of which party and which one of these men that stands for high office can best direct the destiny of this nation, or the course of this nation through the difficult years ahead. I think they're going to look to experience, I think they're going to look to record, I think the American people want a political leader and a political party that both has a useful spirit and a sense of maturity, integrity and experience. I think that's what they'll want and we plan on offering it to them.



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