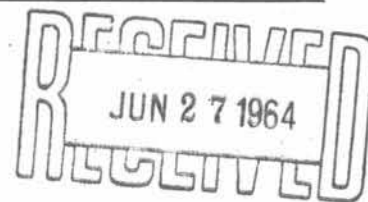


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HUMPHREY INTERVIEW

HUGH DOWNS: "The most comprehensive civil rights bill in history is soon to come. The Senate is in the final stage now and one of the questions, now, is how to prepare the country for it -- how to get a national climate of acceptance. Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, the Democratic 'whip' who has shepherded the bill through the Senate, has some ideas on this.

"The Senator comes to us fresh -- or perhaps I should say weary -- from many successive days and nights of debate. With him are NBC Washington correspondents Ray Scherer and Nancy Dickerson. Ray --?"

SCHERER: "Right, Hugh. Senator, how is it? Are you fresh or are you weary and where do you go from here?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, it's a strange combination of both, but frankly I feel a little better this morning, emotionally and temperamentally, than I have for a long long time; because, as I said some days ago, I had a feeling that we were looking down a long tunnel and I'd begin to see what I thought was a speck of light. Now the sun seems to be shining; the clouds are breaking and I have a feeling that very shortly, within the next few hours -- that is, between now, let us say, and Friday -- that we ought to complete action in the Senate on the Civil Rights Bill."

SCHERER: "That's pretty lyrical. What was it like last night, when you finally reached the brink of passage?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, you could sense right in the Chamber of the Senate the tension and the emotion that was there. There's always a sort of restlessness when you come to a moment of decision in the Senate; the galleries were packed; even though the rules of the Senate are you must not lean over those galleries, I looked up and saw people leaning over and pointing at different senators and there was a sort of a buzz, a noisy atmosphere.

"And then when we came to the point where Senator Thurmond said that this was his last or final amendment, there was, I believe, just a little shout of glee from one area of the Senate -- I wasn't sure whether it was the gallery or the Senate. . . . But you could see senators leaning back and all at once just sorta going 'Whhhew' -- boy, that's good, you know? And then the roll call was taken and after that there was a bit of debate on the substitute package that Senator Dirksen, Mansfield, Kuchel and myself had prepared -- a little exchange of debate between myself and Senator Russell; some questions asked about the jury trial amendment by Senator Monroney; some clarification made; and then the roll call. And when the roll call came, why, the senators were, you could see, very relieved and they wanted to know whether this was the final moment and any more business; and they'd go by and say, 'Well, see you tomorrow, see you tomorrow' -- there was a happy note."

DICKERSON: "When is that final moment coming, Senator Humphrey? When will you vote; do you think?"

HUMPHREY: "I think it'll be Friday; it's possible that it could be tonight, but I doubt it -- I believe that many senators will want to speak on this bill. This is a truly historical moment for the nation. I have said to many of the visitors who come to the gallery of the Senate -- they come to my office first and I visit with them briefly -- that they are present at a time when a great chapter of history is being written, for the United States and for the whole world; and I think the Senate senses this now."

"So that senators will make speeches, but they will be -- those speeches will be better than speeches that are generally made here in the Senate, even though many times you hear a very good speech. They will be concise, they'll be to the point, and I think each senator will have in mind that what he says will, in a sense, lend itself to the interpretation of this legislation -- to the effectiveness of the legislation -- and it will be recorded in the annals of history as his contribution. So I would recommend that the 'Congressional Record' might be the bestseller for a little while. It will have some literary gems in it."

DICKERSON: "Senator, after the Senate finishes, then the Bill will have to go back to the House. What will happen then, and when do you see President Johnson signing this bill into law?"

HUMPHREY: "Yes, it will have to go back to the House; and of course, this is the -- this is the trek or the trip that has some uncertainties in it. I would imagine what would happen would be that when it goes back to the House, the Bill would be referred to the Rules Committee, asking the Rules Committee for a rule on the bill. I doubt that it would be accepted by unanimous consent, I think that's looking forward to too much."

"It'll be in the Rules Committee and there could be some delay there, but not over ten days; with both the Republicans and some Democratic members wanting to get the bill out of Committee. Then it will come back to the House and I am hopeful that the House will accept the Senate amendments."

DICKERSON: "Do you have any assurance on that?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, one is never sure in this government of ours, and particularly in Congress, what will happen; but we have been in very close contact with the leaders of the House, on the amendments that we have added in the Senate and the changes that we have offered. And I must say that the House deserves the lion's share of the credit for civil rights. Because they laid down the basic framework and hammered out the first structure of civil rights legislation; and I am deeply indebted, as one citizen, to Manny Seller -- Emanuel Seller, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and to the ranking Republican, William McCulloch. These two men are giants, really, in terms of what they have been able to accomplish. Speaker McCormick and Carl Albert and Charles Halleck -- the leaders in the House, the Republican and Democrat; and may I stress this -- that the whole pattern of bi-partisanship, or should I say 'non-partisanship', was established in the House of Representatives. And this is something that we carried through into the Senate -- it's the way I felt about it all the time, and I am convinced that this is the reason that we have a bill; because we were non-partisan; we made this a truly national issue, not a Party issue."

SCHERER: "That removes it, then, as you see it, as a campaign issue this November -- it couldn't be, hmd?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, it surely removes it as a Party issue, unless one of the candidates should vote against this bill; then, regretably, it might become a subject of political consideration. But my hope and my prayer is -- and I say this with all the sincerity at my command -- that we will not make civil rights a partisan political issue; if we're going to speak about it, we ought to speak about it in terms of what we can do to implement it, what we can do to make this bill effective, how we can prove its effectiveness, and how we can do it without being -- without 'the club', so to speak. I've always felt that a bill such as this needed law observance, even more than it needed law enforcement; and if we get it out here on the political hustings and discuss it as an issue, it'd be a tragedy."

DICKERSON: "Senator, before we get to that implementation, I wonder if I could just bring back that point you raised, which was about -- if certain candidates became the candidates for their parties, namely Senator Goldwater, would this become more of an issue than it would otherwise? Even if he votes for the bill today or tomorrow, when the final vote comes, his reticence would lead people to believe one way or another about his stand on civil rights."

HUMPHREY: "If Senator Goldwater should become the Republican Party standard-bearer for President, I would hope that he would have voted for the Civil Rights Bill; he did pair, as you know, on the substitute package."

SCHERER: "He was listed in favor of it."

HUMPHREY: "Yes. Senator Tower voted against it and in announcing his vote, he said that he was paired with the Senator from Arizona, Mr. Goldwater, who would vote 'aye'. I was pleased with that. As much as I like to win elections, I don't want to win an election at the expense of the national unity; and at the expense of tranquility, and peace, and justice in our society."

"So I am hopeful -- and I really, I said this some time ago in discussing civil rights with a number of people -- I really hope that Senator Goldwater will vote on final passage for the bill. I think he may; and if he does, this ought not to become a Party issue, and I would then surely recommend to our party that despite the previous stand of the senator, on cloture and other things, that we not even talk about it, except to talk about that we're building a better America; as the President says, 'the great society', and try to get everybody thinking constructively and positively about this bill."

SCHERER: "But Senator, is a white backlash issue -- do you think a Republican candidate could develop this against Mr. Johnson?"

HUMPHREY: "I suppose it could be developed, but if it were, I think it would be shameful, I think it would be tragic. Candidates for President must re- -- and they do, I'm sure, but -- above all, they must remember that their duty, even as a candidate, is to unite our country, on the fundamentals of our society; we can have disagreements as to how we proceed on the realization of these goals and fundamentals; but to try to put, or pit, race against race, or church against church, or religion against religion and group against group -- this has no place in American politics. And I have a feeling that if this is done, that the person responsible for it will suffer a humiliating defeat. Because the American people truly want community; they want community -- I think that's the best word that I can think of for it. It isn't that they want unanimity, but they want community; they want to be able to live together and to work together. And they prefer to have their leaders -- those that they want to respect and look up to -- to lead them in the paths of unity and community and neighborliness; rather than to divide on the basis of religion or of race or ethnic group; and, I just can't believe that a person running for the Presidency of the United States, the highest office . . . would ever indulge in this kind of cheap politics, of disuniting and dividing the nation."

DICKERSON: "Senator, you believe that it's a national consensus that wants this Civil Rights Bill. But even with that, how do you explain the popularity of Governor Wallace in the northern primaries? He got quite a few votes in Wisconsin and Maryland -- people who were agreeing with him. How do you explain that?"

HUMPHREY: "I know that every measurement of public opinion that we can get -- those measurements are less than accurate, but they're relatively accurate -- indicates that there is a great deal of support for civil rights legislation and for a civil rights program. Now, many of the people questioned do not know the details of the particular bill, but they want to see the -- the wounds bound up, so to speak, and healed; and they'd like to see the people working together.

"A man like Governor Wallace appealed to many negative elements in our society; he ran in certain state primaries where there were problems of taxation; where a governor was in some political trouble; where people, in a sense, could take out all of their frustrations upon the majority party, or upon one of the leading political candidates by voting for Governor Wallace.

"This may be a poor comparison and I hesitate to even use it; but many times in European countries, people voted for the Communist Party, not because they were Communist, but because they were just angry with the non-communist parties; and in the United States I think that in some of these primaries, Governor Wallace received votes from people that were unhappy with the sales tax or unhappy with the particular road proposal or something else.

"Then, to be quite frank about it, everybody in the United States does not agree on the issue of civil rights -- I've said that; everybody doesn't like negroes and everyone doesn't like Catholics or Protestants or Jews; and they don't like Democrats; and they don't like Republicans; there are people that just don't like each other. I would say, however, that we will build a national consensus."

SCHERER: "How do you do that, Senator? How do you get the country ready to accept this bill?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, by the words of men like myself; commentators, like you two distinguished commentators; radio and the press and television; by being considerate and understanding with this legislation -- not trying to make it appear as if it's a panacea for all of our ills."

SCHERER: "Should there be a national conference, maybe?"

HUMPHREY: "I would say that in the beginning what we should have are governors that take the lead -- this is a chance, now, for governors to exercise great leadership in their states. Because governors

are close to the people -- it's a wonderful position; or a mayor of a large city. And to call in all the many people and organizations and ethnic groups and religious groups to try to understand this law -- what it means, how it can be implemented; to work with the legislators if there's a need of re-fashioning some state law. Mayors, yes -- conferences and mayors; the United States Conference of Mayors; the governors themselves in their respective states; and it has been indicated in the press that possibly something at the national level might take place. I know that -- "

DICKERSON: "Do you think President Johnson's going to do that?"

HUMPHREY: "Well, I know the President is a man that believes, above all other things, in unity and in consensus and I would imagine that he's been giving considerable thought to it. He's never talked to me about it, I must say quite candidly; but I know that the President, long before the bill was at this point where it looks as if it will pass and be law -- that the President had thought in terms of getting the whole nation to work together, and I hope he might do so."

DICKERSON: "Senator Humphrey, you're known as one of the greatest talkers in the Senate -- I wish we had more time to talk this morning."

HUMPHREY: "I wish we did, too -- lots to talk about."

DICKERSON: "Thank you, -- Ray Scherer; this is Nancy Dickerson, NBC News in Washington; now back to Hugh Downs."



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