

FOR UNITED DEMOCRATS FOR HUMPHREY

PROGRAM Dick Cavett Show

STATION WMAL TV  
ABC Network

DATE July 23, 1968 10:30 AM

CITY Washington, DC

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY INTERVIEWED

CAVETT: This is the closest we've come so far on the show to having the phrase, need no introduction, be absolutely true.

I'm very pleased to introduce my next guest, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President of the United States.

(Applause)

CAVETT: Nice to see you. I think it's only fair to tell the audience at home that the audience rose with only one or two exceptions.

HUMPHREY: Thank you very much. Thank you.

CAVETT: It seemed to me.

HUMPHREY: Can I thank the orchestra for playing my theme song? They did it beautifully, I liked every bit of it.

CAVETT: They do those things nicely.

Your son, Robert, was here the other day. And I don't know if you had time to catch that or not, but he mentioned on the show an interesting thing. He said that, there was a time when you were in high school -- I believe it was -- and your coach asked all the fellows on the bench what they wanted to be when they grew up and you were the only one who said President of the United States. And they all laughed. I wonder if you wonder how many of them are still laughing.

HUMPHREY: Well, Dick, as a matter of fact, I suppose the reason I said that is, I was only a substitute on the team at the time. And your question, of course, prompts me to say that there are some that are still laughing. I think there are a few that are groaning. But I hope they'll all be voting for me comes November....

(Applause)

CAVETT: I think you covered everyone then.

HUMPHREY: Say, Dick what about this billing that you gave me here tonight? I heard....

CAVETT: Oh, did you hear about that?

HUMPHREY: I did....

CAVETT: I felt terrible about that. You followed a garbage machine on our -- on our billing.

HUMPHREY: Well, I think that's a good way to keep this program bipartisan.

(Applause)

CAVETT: Speaking of your son, Robert, and your family, when you decided to make the momentous decision to run for President, had you talked it over with them?

HUMPHREY: Well, I talked it over with Mrs. Humphrey, and I had -- yes, as a matter of fact, this -- on this occasion -- you know I made another whirl at this back in 1960. I gave John Kennedy his spring training, and I knew he was going to win after that.

But, in this instance, after President Johnson had announced that he would not seek remonination nor would he accept it, interestingly enough, the first one to call me from my family was my daughter, our daughter, Nancy. And she said, "Daddy, you've got to run". And so help me, she is the most non-political member of the family, and I thought that was a good omen.

Then, my -- two of my sons called me. In the meantime, I talked it over with Mrs. Humphrey. And after knowing what this meant, knowing something a little bit more than we had in the past about the responsibilities of this office, also the ordeal of a campaign on a national basis, we took our time. And finally, in the later part of April, I believe it was the 27th of April, I announced that I would be a candidate and would seek the office of the Presidency.

It's quite -- well, let me tell you, it's quite a decision to make for anybody that makes it, and particularly it's a serious decision to make when you've served as Vice President and kind of have some idea of what it means if it happens.

So that's it.

CAVETT: There were no dissenting members in the family?

HUMPHREY: No, at this time, I can tell you that the -- the decision was unanimous. It wasn't always so, but this time it was.

CAVETT: I thought you'd might like to meet, if you have not already, Mrs. Humphrey who is in the first row.

(Applause)

CAVETT: Mister Vice President, I know that your wife worked while you were studying and getting your degree and all -- you were a student I guess. How did you get her to do that, did you promise her you would be President someday?

HUMPHREY: Well, this was before there were any federal loans of federal scholarships, so I just married one, you see. And as a matter of fact, I can recommend that to some of the young graduate students right now, it works out very nicely. The loans aren't big enough, you know, so you have to have a little extra help.

CAVETT: You can marry one.

HUMPHREY: The truth is, when we were first married, Muriel talked to me a great deal about going back to the university. My university education had been interrupted by the Depression years, and after some years out in South Dakota, we decided to get back to the University of Minnesota.

She helped me there. She had a job working in an investment company. I worked at night in a drug store and attended the university during the day. Later on we went on into graduate school. Then she worked and help feed some of the students, made sandwiches that I used to cart off to the graduate school and sell to my fellow students.

We had -- we did a lot of work together, we worked together as a team. As I always say, it's a great fellowship and a great scholarship to have a good working wife to help put you through school.

When I travelled to Washington, D.C., during our first -- well just before we were married, as a matter of fact, I told Muriel then that possibly some day we might get into politics. So possibly she had that in mind, she thought maybe if I was going to get into politics I'd better get a little education to be prepared to make a living in it.

CAVETT: When we come back from -- from the message we're about to do, we have a letter here that you wrote to her, and I thought I'd ask you to read that. We will be back, however, for that after this message.

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CAVETT: Mister Vice President, if I err and call you Mr. Humphrey that's because....

HUMPHREY: That's forgivable.

CAVETT: I can't think when it was we've had a Vice President on the show.

"A man for All People" is the book I was looking at, about you. It says a pictorial biography of Hubert H. Humphrey. I wonder if you can get a look at that on the cameras. And it's full of interesting things about you and photographs, which I noticed they're in black and white. I wondered if that was an attempt to appeal to all ages, adults can read it and children can color it.

HUMPHREY: That's correct.

CAVETT: It's an interesting book. But this letter from the book was a letter you wrote to your wife way back then, and I wondered if you would read it to the audience.

HUMPHREY: Yes, it's in that book and I'm glad you put a plug in for the book, too, Dick. If you want to hold it up again....

CAVETT: Oh, I'll be glad....

HUMPHREY: All right.

CAVETT: I'm sure we can find time.

HUMPHREY: This is a letter that somebody discovered. I think it must -- they've must have gotten it from Muriel -- dated August 25th, 1935.

Now, that's a year and nine days before we were married. And I had travelled to Washington, D.C. to see my sister who was graduating from George Washington University.

And I said this:

"This trip has impressed one thing on my mind, Muriel. That impression is the need of an education, an alert mind, clean living, and a bit of culture, which undoubtedly will come with age and learning.

"I don't necessarily mean more college is necessary, but I need to do more reading, more writing, more thinking, if I ever want to fulfill my dream of being someone in this world.

"Maybe I seem foolish to have such vain hopes and plans, but I can see how someday, if you and I just apply ourselves and make up our minds to work for bigger things, how we can someday live here in Washington and probably be in government, politics or service.

"I intend to set my aim -- let's see here, where's the -- oh, yes -- "my aim at Congress. Don't laugh at me, Muriel. Maybe it does sound -- maybe it does sound rather egotistical and beyond reason, but I do know others have succeeded, why haven't I a chance? You would help me, I know, and together we can do things I'm sure.

"Never let me get lazy or discouraged. You be my inspirational force and always encourage me in what you feel will be right for me to do.

"Does this all sound ridiculous to you? Etcetera. It gets a little more personal as we go down there.

CAVETT: Well, read it....

(Applause)

HUMPHREY: I -- I want to skip one line. It says, "Washington, D. C. thrills me to my very fingertips. I simply revel and beam with delight in this realm of politics and government. I hope my dream comes true. I'm going to try anyhow, but first I shall prepare myself for the task by reading and thinking always as a liberal. Roosevelt is a superman, his speech last night surely baffled the Republicans". I just had to get that in.

(Applause)

HUMPHREY: All of the rest is in that book.

CAVETT: Yes.

HUMPHREY: The spicy part that I left out.

CAVETT: And the fact that it was postage due.

Would you want your sons in politics? Is it, at once, interesting enough to be in politics and challenging enough, but something you might not want your children to do?

HUMPHREY: No, indeed, I want to be in public life and forms of government service, or at least as an interested thoughtful citizen.

You know, I -- I've been a teacher, Dick, and I used to have a large class of freshmen and sophomores, in American Government. And generally speaking, they come in rather cynical, they say politics is dirty and politicians are worst, and they have a sort of a negative attitude about government.

And I used to say this to them, if you think politics is dirty, get yourself a bar of soap and get in and clean it up. Don't stand on the sidelines being as sort of a second-guesser. If you want good government you have to pay the price, get in on it.

And I think that's true today. And one of the best things that's happening America today is the ever-increasing number of young people who are really deeply concerned about their country and who are participating in political life.

I happen to think that this generation of young Americans is the best we've ever had and I believe that they're very alive and very alert.

(Applause)

HUMPHREY: And my -- my family puts me through the paces. You know, we don't have a yes family. They did agree that it was all right for me to run for President, but I get more advice per week from my daughter and my son-in-law and my two daughters-in-law and my two -- my three sons than you'd ever get from a university, and they are all people with their own points of view.

So, when I have people say to me, Well, do you ever hear from the young? I say, "Do I hear from them? They beat me over the head with their ideas and sometimes it even sinks in". So, I'm all for them getting into politics and being in public service.

CAVETT: All right. We have --- there are many other things I'd like to ask you but we must pause occasionally. We'll be back.

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CAVETT: Mister Vice President, let me ask you, bluntly why you've suddenly accepted debate with Senator McCarthy?

HUMPHREY: Well, I thought it was perfectly proper that sometimes between now and the convention that we should be together. We've known each other for better than 20 years, it isn't as if we're strangers. And there are some differences that we seem to have and I think it's good to always air those differences.

I do believe, however, that the -- that the range of questions in public life today, deserve a little more treatment than it's getting, this isn't a one issue country.

And we've got serious problems in our cities, grave problems with race relation, very serious problems in education; just to mention a few.

And we have a number of Americans today who are not fully sharing in the benefits of this country, not even being given a chance to participate in the processes of this country.

I want to -- I think we ought to discuss this whole range of -- of concerns of the American people. And that way I believe that we perform our responsibility as political leaders.

A political leader ought to be more than an orator, he ought to be an educator, he ought to do more than argue, he ought to be able to persuade; at least he ought to be able to generate some thinking and some ideas.

It's really a job of teaching all the way down the line. It has a little more dramatics than you have in the classroom, but the purpose of politics in a democracy is to inform the people so that the people can ultimately make the right decisions. And I know no better way of informing the people than through the competition of ideas.

CAVETT: And/or debates....

HUMPHREY: That's my view.

CAVETT: Let me....

(Applause)

CAVETT: What about this possibility now, that the -- the putting together of the Democratic platform and all of the complicated thinking that will have to go into that -- could necessarily result in what might be crudely termed a split between you and President Johnson, the fact that your ideas might necessarily have to diverge from his considerably?



HUMPHREY: Well, you have to keep in mind, Dick, that a platform is, in a very real sense, a -- it's a composite of many ideas.

If you're going into politics demanding that everybody agree with your idea, you'll end up with a community of one listening to yourself. You'll hold your convention in a telephone booth and there'll be plenty of room for -- for a lot of other folks.

A platform represents a consensus of the people. It necessarily is a kind of compromise on many of the more difficult issues. It doesn't mean to be a compromise of principles, but of means and of ways of achieving the objectives that you have.

I don't think there will be any difficulty. As a matter of fact, I've had a very good relationship with the President, and with the President that preceeded him. I was John Kennedy's majority whip in the United States Senate and faithfully served him -- very proud of it.

I've been the Vice President of the United States for almost four years, I consider that a very high honor. And it's a position that has a great deal of responsibility and very little authority. I do believe, however, that my better than 20 years in government has taught me to be tolerant of other people's point of view.

You know you may be wrong. It is entirely possible that once in a while a person may have a point of view that he finds out later on is wrong. And if you find that it's in error you should have the courage to change. Some people say you must be consistent, you know, all the time. Well, if you're consistently wrong you've just a fool, and you ought not to pride yourself in that.

Politics should also permit you to learn, to adjust, to mature, to be a more reasonable and a more prudent and wise man. If that doesn't happen then you've wasted your life.

Now, I think we'll be able to come out of the Democratic convention with a forward looking platform, not a eulogy to the past, but a program of action for the future.

I happen to be one of those persons that believe that those who use the present to justify the past lose the future. And I'm interested in tomorrow, there's isn't a thing I can do about yesterday, it's all gone.

(Applause)

CAVETT: What are the chances that Edward Kennedy might be your Vice Presidential choice?



HUMPHREY: I think that's greatly dependent on Mr. Kennedy own attitudes and views and his own wishes. He's a very popular man. I've said many times, and I repeat it on this program, I have been privileged to share in his friendship.

He's affectionally known -- known to his friends as Ted Kennedy -- Senator Edward Kennedy. Senator Kennedy, Ted and Joan are friends of Muriel's and mine. I think very highly of him. But I don't believe that he would appreciate having his friend or the Vice President going around making selections before his himself has even determined what he wants to do in public life.

He's gone through some terrible days. That family has suffered incredible tragedy. I sort of felt the best thing I could do was to leave him alone until they had a chance to sort of get themselves back into a feeling of equilibrium to ease their pain from their hearts, and then maybe we can talk politics. And one of these days I'm sure it will happen.

(Applause)

CAVETT: There's something I don't understand about balancing of the ticket. And that is, that, by definition, balancing of the ticket would mean that one -- one of the people represents one faction, let's say, of the party, and the other person represents another.

Now, suppose they're both elected. How does the Vice President who represents the other faction or wing, you might say, continue to serve those people if that's in conflict with the President's faction, so to speak?

HUMPHREY: Well, Dick, that used to be about the way they selected a Vice President. It was an effort to sort of balance off geographical interest or ideological differences, but it really isn't the way you should do it.

As a matter of fact, our country is much more united that it was before. This media called television has brought us all closer together; radio and the press we have today, communications are better.

What is most important is not the ideology so much of a man or of his geographical location. What's most important is his qualifications. Is he capable of assuming the duties of the Presidency? At least, does he have some experience and background that might equip him for those awesome responsibilities? Because remember, while the Vice President does not have a great deal of responsibility -- a great deal of authority, I should say, he must be ready at any moment in case of tragedy to take over the leadership of this nation.

And I don't believe that we ought to play games with the Vice Presidency, trying to balance off the ticket. I think that what we ought to do, is to have somebody as Vice

President, who if -- could step in a fill that void if there was a tragic set of circumstances that affected the President of the United States.

Now, might I add that whoever is Vice President, as far as I'm concerned, if I could have my way about it, I would want him to be, so to speak, on the same political wavelength with me. I think we ought to have some basic agreement. And if those agreements are not all the way through and true, I think it's the duty of the Vice President with whom he's elected. Remember, you are elected with the President, people do not vote for the Vice President separately, they vote for the President and the Vice President as a ticket.

Now, we had one Vice President in the history of this country who wasn't very loyal and his name was Aaron Burr. And he caused this country of ours grave difficulties. He conspired with our enemies. He did everything that he could to cause Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both, a great difficulty. I don't think we ever need another Vice President like that.

I think the first duty of a Vice President is to be loyal to his President, to be loyal to the platform that he said that he would serve, and to be loyal to the party that nominated him as President -- Vice President. And above all, to be loyal to the people that elected the President and the Vice President.

I tried to fulfill that qualification.

CAVETT: I wonder when you say that....

(Applause)

CAVETT: I wondered something that will have to wait because we have a message and we'll be right back.

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CAVETT: Before we take a question from the audience, Mr. Vice President, I was thinking the other day, we've never had anyone as august as yourself on the show. And they asked for our birthdate about a week ago, and then I realized that that had to do with security measures and finding out if we are who we say we are, and that sort of thing. I'm so naive I thought you wanted to get us all birthday presents.

HUMPHREY: You did? As a matter of fact, how would you like one of the Vice Presidential tie pins?

CAVETT: Can you spare that?

HUMPHREY: Well, I can't but I'm willing to be generous.

(Applause)

HUMPHREY: You'll notice that the eagle's wings on the Vice Presidential seal are down, I think it's time to get them up.

CAVETT: I understand. I really begged for that, didn't I?

Here's a question from a lady named Richie Green in our audience.

It now becomes apparent that if both the Democratic and Republican conventions -- that's at both the Democratic and Republican conventions, the delegates' nominee may not reflect the wishes of the American people. How do you feel about the possibility of a national primary?

HUMPHREY: I think it would be well if we could have a national primary, but I would say to the person that sent the question in, that it would be also well if we could figure out how we would pay for it.

The general elections are very, very costly. As a matter of fact, I wish to say to the American people, that the problem of financing general elections for the office of the Presidency, for Governor, for Senator, is getting to be such a big problem that it's a matter now of great public concern. We have to find some better way than we do now, from all the large donors and all the efforts that we make scrambling around for money. I think it doesn't do American politics right.

Now, if you have a national primary you have a extra dimension of this financing problem. But I think it has merit. I voted for this when the late Senator Kefauver offered such a resolution in the Senate of the United States.

But I wouldn't want you to think that the process which we now have is so vile and bad as some portray it. After all, the convention system has been working pretty well since the time of Andrew Jackson. It gave us Andrew Jackson, it gave us Abraham Lincoln, it gave us Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson. It's worked pretty well for this country. And literally hundreds of thousands of people participate in the party structure.

And I don't believe that it does anyone good to tear down the political structure, trying to make it appear as if it's ugly, unclean and unworthy. The people who engage in trying to keep these political parties alive at home do a job for this country. We can't operate our government without political parties, and we ought not to downgrade those who try to keep them alive.

I'll say to the critics of the political parties, the best way to improvement is what I said to the young people, get in and participate. Quit standing on the sideline grumbling and groaning and condemning and get on in there and see if you can do something about it. Get yourself messed up a little bit in the fight of politics. It's easy to stand on the sideline, you know, but get on in and get on the field of battle and come out with a few scars and then you'll know what politics is all about. It's easy to talk about, it is tough to work in, but it is fun, we welcome people in.

CAVETT: We don't even have time for one more question. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Well, what do you do for fun?

HUMPHREY: Oh, my gracious. I love to dance. I like good music, like I heard tonight. I like to go swimming, I like to go fishing. I like to bowl. My wife beats me, but I enjoy it. I say I enjoy it....

CAVETT: Bowling?

HUMPHREY: Yes. Yes, thank you very much. Thanks for the clarification.

CAVETT: We almost had a news break here. We have a message and we'll be right back.

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CAVETT: Mister Vice President, we have only 30 seconds left, and if I -- well, let me thank you now. And what would you say in the remaining 20?

HUMPHREY: I simply say that I hope Americans will have great faith in their country and don't listen to all those that downgrade it. I think it's time to speak up for this country. I think it's time to have faith in our democracy. And I think it's, above all, time for citizens to get registered so that can vote and then on election day to cast their vote for the man of their choice.

That's good citizenship and that's the way we'll make freedom work.

CAVETT: You had a 20 second speech, very good.

(APPLAUSE)

CAVETT: Thank you for being here.



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