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TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY VICE
PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,
TAKEN AT BURKE LAKEFRONT AIRPORT,
CLEVELAND, OHIO, ON SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 22, 1968.

SPEECH

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, Mr. Porter.

Mayor Carl Stokes and our distinguished congressmen Charlie Vanik and Mike Feighan and our new United States Senator about to be from the State of Ohio, Jack Gilligan. Jack, step up here. We have some wonderful friends here today here for you and I know that my friend Jack Gilligan is as delighted as I am with this remarkable turnout in this great city of Cleveland.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are in the beginning stages of a great national contest to be decided on that memorable day known as election day on November the 5th. These are the days when the American people will be making up their minds as to the kind of a nation that they want, as to the future course of this country both at home and abroad, and these are the days we must ask all of our friends and neighbors to do their own thinking.

I ask you as my fellow citizens to think of an America that can work together, a nation where people will treat each others as neighbors and not as enemies, a nation where we will have a

1 pride of our citizenship, a pride that will
2 compel us to try to work out our problems in
3 peace and in reason and in understanding, a pride
4 in citizenship that will deny this country the
5 tragedy of violence and conflict and bitterness,
6 a pride in citizenship that will open up the
7 gates of opportunity to every American, no matter
8 what his station in life, his race, his color,
9 his creed, or how he spells his last name.

10 We are mighty proud that we have been able
11 to build a great country by hard work, by com-
12 passion, by understanding through education and
13 through this pride of citizenship.

14 I do not come to you with an easy program,
15 a program that says that all you must do is
16 follow me and it will be easy for you. On the
17 contrary. I come to you and say that what America
18 needs now is what John Kennedy once said to all
19 of you, "Ask not what your country can do for you.
20 Ask what you can do for your country." That's
21 what is needed today.

22 And may I ask particularly the young people
23 who are here in such large numbers today to set
24 a good example for us as they are in these days
25 of politicking, an example of concern and compassion

1 and conscience, an example of participation, of
2 a willingness to be heard and a willingness to
3 listen. These young people can be the difference
4 in this campaign. I cannot imagine that the youth
5 of America would want to stop the clock of progress.
6 I cannot imagine that they would want to turn back
7 to patterns and practices of the yesterdays that
8 caused us nothing but trouble. I think our young
9 people will want to look to the future and the
10 Democratic party is just another name for the promise
11 of the future, and that is why so many of our young
12 people are Democrats today.

13 And I want these young Americans, whatever may
14 have been their views in the days prior to our
15 convention, to know that we are now united as a
16 party, working together, that we are united to see
17 that peace and justice prevail in this land of ours,
18 that order and justice are the standard of the day
19 for this nation. I want them to know that I believe
20 that the only way this nation can do the things
21 that is required of it for ourselves and for others
22 is if we are a united people, united in respect,
23 united in the sense of personal human dignity, united
24 in self respect, and united in both humility and
25 pride of the fact that we are Americans.

1 And finally may I make this commitment to
2 you: I know of the troubles that beset our land.
3 I know that there are difficulties in our cities,
4 I know there is concern in our countryside. I know
5 that people are deeply concerned over what is
6 transpiring in this troubled world, with tension
7 rising, with vicious attacks, with aggression in
8 Europe, we're a brave people seeking to breath
9 the fresh air and air of liberty had that breath
10 denied them by Soviet aggression. I can know and
11 you know that that is a sad and tragic day for all
12 mankind, and I know that we cannot condone it and
13 we must condemn it and we must try to build a world
14 in which this can never happen again, because
15 surely the spector of invasion, of aggression, of
16 the denial of human liberty is something that no
17 self respecting American can ever tolerate or ever
18 condone, and on this occasion we once again condemn
19 it and say shame upon those who perpetrate that
20 crime on humanity.

21 I also know that we are concerned about the
22 tragedy of war in Southeast Asia and I want this
23 audience to know that when I become your president,
24 and I do intend with your help to become your
25 president next January, that when I become your

1 president I will place at the top of my agenda,
2 the highest priority of my service to this
3 country, to seek every way within the power and
4 the authority of the office of the president to
5 seek every honorable way to find a way to bring
6 that tragic war in Viet Nam to an end and to restore
7 peace to that part of the world and to our country.

8 Now, I want to thank you in conclusion for
9 these wonderful signs. My goodness, Carl, and
10 Bert, I see all kinds of signs when I travel
11 around America, and I have never seen signs that
12 look nicer than these. Oh, they look so good.

13 I wouldn't want to leave you, however, with-
14 out reminding you that there are some other
15 candidates. I shall not mention their names
16 because I don't want to upset you on this beautiful
17 Sunday. You ought to be of joyful spirit and you
18 ought to be of happy mood today, so we shall not
19 speak of the others who would deny us that privilege.
20 I can only say this: That if you want a better
21 America, if you want what our forefathers said for
22 this country was it's aim and it's purpose, namely
23 life, liberty and a meaningful life that is to be
24 found in the pursuit of happiness, then might I
25 suggest that you back the party that has brought

prosperity to this nation, that has brought care
to the elderly, education to the children, jobs
to the worker, profit to industry, and a chance --
yes, a chance, a fair chance to millions and
millions of Americans from one end of this country
to the other, and that party is the Democratic
party and I am proud to be it's standard bearer
and I ask your help. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

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TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY VICE
PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,
TAKEN AT THE GOLD ROOM OF THE
CLEVELAND SHERATON HOTEL ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1968.

North East Ohio Democratic Leadership

SPEECH

1
2
3 VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you. Thank
4 you. Bert, I want them to save all that energy.
5 Thank you very much, Bert Porter. It's always
6 a special pleasure for me to come to Cleveland
7 to be introduced by you, to be welcomed by the
8 good Mayor. And by the way, he made a fighting
9 speech here today. It's a good one for any day
10 including Sunday. We want to thank you very
11 much, Carl.

12 There is so many here that I would like to
13 acknowledge that I hesitate to get started but
14 I'm going to start acknowledging folks that I know
15 can just pull this ticket through and make things
16 really click.

17 The first thing, I want to tell Mike Feighan,
18 you just gather in all the votes you can, Mike, and
19 give me my fair share. That's all I want. (Applause.)
20 Then I want Charlie Vanik to not to be too greedy
21 about his votes, too. Just get in all you can get,
22 Charlie, and give me my fair share. And when you
23 pile them in from both of these Congressmen I hope
24 that you will give every single vote that you can
25 possibly measure to the next United States Senator
from the state of Ohio, Jack Gilligan. That's the

1 man we need. (Applause.) I have been looking
2 over this program today that we are going to have
3 out at the annual steer roast. I see this fine
4 array of candidates, every one of them undoubtedly
5 the right man and the right woman to be elected
6 to whatever office they aspire, but there are four
7 members of the four contestants here for Congress,
8 two incumbents that I already mentioned, and two
9 that we hope and pray will receive the majority
10 vote of the people of their respective districts,
11 and I know they are here with us and I want very
12 much to emphasize the importance of the election
13 of Louis Stokes and of James Stanton to back up
14 Mike Feighan and Charlie Vanik. They both need to
15 be elected. (Applause.) I have the privilege of
16 having Tony Calabrese and Frank King join us as
17 we came down today or came here from Columbus, and
18 I guess everybody knows that I have been a long
19 time friend of these gentlemen and I want to say
20 particularly to Frank, who has been the minority
21 leader up there in the Ohio State Senate, how much
22 we have all appreciated his remarkable steadfastness,
23 his great loyalty to the Democratic party and to
24 best interests of the state of Ohio. This man is
25 truly a great public servant. (Applause.) John

1 McDonald, who has done exactly the same thing
2 over on the other side as the minority leader
3 over in the Ohio State House of Representatives,
4 the only thing is that these fellows ought to
5 quit being minority leaders and become majority
6 leaders (Applause.) And to Pat O'Malley, that
7 fine Swedish gentleman -- (Applause.) we thank
8 you and your labor movement for what you do for
9 all of us.

10 Now, I was asked to say, to make a few remarks
11 here today. I don't know what that is going to
12 end up in. It's hard to tell. But I do know one
13 thing, that if I can do as well in Cleveland and
14 Cuyahoga County as Dr. Samuel Gerber, if I can get
15 as many votes as Doc Gerber, I am in.

16 Doc, would you mind just kind of keep
17 stroking me all the time up here? (Laughter.)
18 He really has the touch, that man has. He has
19 the touch. Every place you go, Doc, I want you
20 to just interrupt the remarks that you may have
21 to say I have a very special friend and he is the
22 candidate on the Democratic ticket for the office
23 of president and if you will just keep saying that --
24 and the name is Humphrey -- (Laughter) I think it's
25 going to do a lot of good around these precincts.

1 The same thing is true for Bert Porter over
2 here running for County Engineer. I guess these
3 two just have it made, I don't know. They do it
4 the way we all want to do it and if they do it
5 the way they want to do it, maybe we will all get
6 a chance to do it. (Applause.)

7 Thank you very much. To Peter Grady, may I
8 just take a moment to express my thanks to Pete
9 for that wonderful dinner last night up at
10 Columbus. It was really a remarkable occasion.
11 We had the Democrats there and they were jumping
12 and they were screaming and they were applauding
13 and they were shouting. It was the kind of dinner
14 that would have warmed your heart and I hope it
15 made a little money for you, too, Pete. Anyway,
16 it was a real fine affair and gave me the sense of
17 feeling that we are on the road here in Ohio, we
18 are on the road to the success that this great
19 county and this great community can testify to.
20 One out of every five votes I understand in the
21 state of Ohio are in this county. Now, that's a
22 good, good average to go in with and if we can
23 start to get our share of that one out of every
24 five right here in Cleveland and this county, we
25 are going to start to be on the victory road.

1 I know that Ohio is often spoken of as a
2 state that is very difficult for the Democrats
3 to carry, but it's been carried and because it's
4 been carried in the past, I think it can be
5 carried in the present. I think we have the
6 makings here of what is needed for a victory in
7 1968 and I will tell you why I think so. First of
8 all, your Republican opposition thinks they have
9 it made. They are feeling pretty good, they are
10 active, they are confident, their candidate is
11 cool and relaxed, they tell me. Well, let me tell
12 you, he will be taking tranquilizers before this
13 thing is over. (Laughter and applause.) I intend
14 to sell them to him right out of Humphrey's drug
15 store. (Laughter and applause.) I know that this
16 state is recognized as one that can be the -- well,
17 it can be the crucial state.

18 Surely here in Cleveland in 1960, John
19 Kennedy felt that it was here in this city, and I
20 believe it was at the steer roast if I'm not
21 mistaken, in this great city, that he said that he
22 felt that was the turning point of his campaign
23 and while he did not carry the state, he went out
24 of Cleveland with a great majority and he knew that
25 the message of enthusiasm for his candidacy had

1 permeated the entire nation, and if you don't
2 mind my bragging a little bit, it got as far as
3 Minnesota and we carried for John Kennedy in
4 Minnesota in 1960.

5 And I talked to a gentleman yesterday that
6 told me a little bit about Ohio, too. I was out
7 in the state of Missouri, stopped by out at the
8 airport at Kansas City, got in a car and drove
9 over to Independence, Missouri, and I talked to
10 the man that did carry this state, and I talked
11 to a man that gave me more sound political advice
12 in a brief visit that I had with him than I have
13 had in all the years of public life. And you know
14 what he told me? And you know, of course, to whom
15 I refer, the one and only, the incomparable, the
16 greatest of them all, Harry S. Truman. (Applause.)
17 I said, "Mr. President, just what advice have you
18 for me?" He said, "Hubert, you just go out to the
19 people and tell them the truth and particularly
20 about those Republicans, and you give the Republicans
21 what" Carl Stokes said that you're supposed to do.
22 And how well we remember it, an uphill fight, one
23 that all the pundits, all the columnists and all
24 the predictors said was impossible for you know,
25 I have been looking at the poles, too, but the poles

1 that I like best are the ones that must be leads.
2 (Laughter and applause.) I told a group in Columbus
3 last night that I read these poles in Ohio and I
4 know they are wrong, I got more relatives in this
5 state than that, (Laughter) but quite frankly, all
6 my relatives don't vote straight. That's the
7 trouble, a little politically unreliable but it's
8 not bad to be an underdog, not at all. As a matter
9 of fact, that's been somewhat the -- well, it's
10 been somewhat the pattern of my political life.
11 I want to share with you some observations about
12 that.

13
14 When I ran for Mayor of Minneapolis, Carl, in
15 1945 against the incumbent Mayor, I was the underdog.
16 They said they didn't think I could win. In fact,
17 most of my good friends advised me not even to
18 run, but I won and I won by the largest majority
19 that was ever given a Mayor of the city of Minneapolis
20 up to that date, so it wasn't bad to be the underdog,
21 particularly when you are the top dog on election
22 day. And I remember in 1948 I ran for the United
23 States Senate. I opponent in the primary on the
24 Republican ticket received three times as many votes
25 in the primary as I did in that election and they
had me written off, they already had a stone carved

1 me, here lies the political remains of a young man,
2 they were ready to bury us, and we went on -- that
3 was the year when Truman was fighting for his
4 political life. It was a time when a man who
5 professed to, openly proclaimed that he was a
6 Democrat, was running on the ticket in Minnesota
7 for the United States Senate for there had never
8 been a Democrat ever elected to the United States
9 Senate for a hundred years in the state of Minnesota
10 and I looked at the poles and I listened to all the
11 wise boys and they said, well, you'll do good back
12 there teaching school or staying on as Mayor of
13 Minneapolis, because I had one re-election in 1947,
14 and I was the underdog, but I didn't get to the
15 Senate by appointment. I was elected and I was
16 elected by the largest majority ever given a
17 United States Senator in the state of Minnesota
18 up until that particular time. (Applause.)

19 I have led a lot of fights in the Congress of
20 the United States where they said I didn't have
21 a chance. I was the first man to introduce Medicare.
22 It took us sixteen years to get it, but we stuck
23 with it and I remember when we first introduced
24 federal aid to education, it took us a long time
25 to get that. In every one of these fights we were

1 the underdog. Everything that ever amounted to
2 anything had to come the hard way, every one of them,
3 and how well I remember that even in 1960 when the
4 poles were being taken, it appeared that John Kennedy
5 was the underdog, too. So, my fellow Democrats,
6 don't ever get discouraged if you want to be on
7 my team. Don't ever be that way, because I have
8 got enough optimism and I have enough confidence
9 that if you will just stand alongside of me I will
10 give you a little transfusion, get you all pumped
11 up, because there's one thing that to me is
12 absolutely inconceivable, that is that you, the
13 Democrats, and that when the people of this country,
14 the majority of the people of this country are
15 going to permit a political party which has made
16 an alliance with the remnants of the old Dixiecrats,
17 that we are going to permit that party of Nixon,
18 Agnew and Strom Thurman to take over the leadership
19 of this country. I don't think you are ever going
20 to let that happen. (Applause.) Somebody said,
21 well, when you come to an occasion like this, Mr.
22 Vice-President, you ought to talk about all the
23 issues. Listen, the issues are bound up in those
24 names and you know it. There isn't a working man
25 here in this audience today, Pat, that doesn't know

1 that Mr. Nixon has never cast a labor vote, never
2 cast a vote that was beneficial to labor yet and
3 there isn't a businessman in this audience that
4 doesn't know during those Nixon Republican years
5 from '53 to '61, this country suffered three
6 recessions and the profits of American business
7 were static and workers were laid off by the
8 thousands here in the state of Ohio and there isn't
9 a mother or father that doesn't know that during
10 those eight years of Nixon Republicanism that our
11 educational system was in dire trouble, that poverty
12 was the lot of far too many of our Americans, that
13 little or nothing was done to protect the consumer.
14 I think people know that and I think people also
15 know that while we had our troubles at our
16 convention, and we had bitter battles on the floor
17 of that convention, we fought it out like men and
18 women, we argued out our platform, we called the
19 rule, we took our case to the public, and sometimes
20 it wasn't too pleasant, but we didn't have ourselves
21 a national wake like that Republican crowd did
22 down there in Miami. (Applause.) Jack Gilligan
23 was talking to me this morning and he is a very
24 bright man and a wonderful Senator-to-be and a
25 good man in Congress during the time that he served

1 there. I just want, I really want to clear you
2 up on this fellow. It's absolutely imperative,
3 regardless of what happens to my candidacy in this
4 state, that you send to the United States Senate
5 to stand alongside of Steve Young, Jack Gilligan.
6 Now, let's not have any monkey business. Let's
7 get that job done. (Applause.) Jack was saying
8 to me this morning, he said, you know, one of the
9 things we think of of a president are the men that
10 he selects to help him make great decisions, and
11 the great decisions are -- well, they are almost
12 beyond man's comprehension. Whoever is president
13 of this country needs not only divine guidance
14 which he surely should seek and search for, but
15 he needs the combined judgment and wisdom of many
16 good people. And I am going to just level with
17 you from this platform. I want you to take a look
18 at our ticket and then I want you to take a look
19 at the Republican ticket and I want you to take a
20 look at the man that I ask you to make Vice-President
21 and I want you to take a look at what the Republican
22 ticket offers in terms of President and Vice-President.
23 I am not talking now about the fact that these are
24 decent men, that these are good family men, that
25 these are good people. I am talking about experience,

1 I am talking about judgment, I am talking about
2 training, I am talking about political maturity and
3 political responsibility. I didn't have to go to
4 anybody to make a deal, not anyone. Ohio never came
5 to me and said we are going to give you a large
6 block of our votes. And I am ever grateful to you
7 for those wonderful votes that you gave me in that
8 nomination and you surprised me. I got a lot more
9 than I thought I would get and a few more I imagine
10 than I deserve. I want to thank you very much. The
11 nice part is, the ones I didn't get went to good
12 fellows, so you couldn't be wrong. But anyway, I
13 wasn't asked by your chairman, Pete, or by Bert or
14 by Carl or by anybody else, I wasn't asked by anyone
15 here or had somebody come up and say to me, well,
16 now, you are going to get our votes, Mr. Vice-President,
17 on that nomination, if you take so and so. I never
18 had a southern governor come to me and say, listen,
19 we will give you our votes, but we want to make
20 certain that so and so is on the ticket. Not one.
21 I made no deals. I had for a long time in my mind
22 who I wanted. It's no secret now. I tell you why
23 I wanted the man who is my running mate. Because
24 now, more than ever, the Vice-President of the United
25 States is an important man in the affairs of government.

1 He is not only a heart beat away from the President
2 or from the Presidency, but he is also one of those
3 that is needed more and more for the duties and
4 responsibilities of government. This office has
5 grown in it's responsibilities, it has very little
6 authority, but it has an ever increasing amount of
7 responsibility, and I know that these are difficult
8 times, I know that these are times when life is
9 uncertain, I know that every day of your public
10 life you run the risk of that being your last day.
11 Those are the facts that you must face. And I know
12 that this country cannot afford to have mediocrity,
13 I know that you cannot afford to have less than
14 what we think is the best, and I wanted to be sure
15 that on the Democratic ticket that not only would
16 you have what I believe are my credentials, which
17 I have spoken to you about in the past, service as
18 a Mayor of a great city with all the responsibilities
19 that go with that, sixteen years in the United States
20 Senate and four years as the majority whip and four
21 years as Vice-President close to the center of this
22 country, but I wanted to be sure that you would have
23 something even better. I wanted you to be sure in
24 your mind that you could go to the public and say
25 that we are presenting a team here, we are presenting

1 a team of experienced men in public life, family
2 men, men of youthful spirit, men of determination,
3 men who have earned their way, and we both have,
4 and I went and looked for a man and found one. Two
5 terms governor of his state, and a Democrat, by the
6 way in Maine, which is no small achievement, might
7 I add; two times United States Senator, re-elected
8 by his people; the author of the Model Cities
9 Program for the cities of the United States; a
10 member of the intergovernmental commission that
11 deals with the whole problems of our federal system;
12 the foremost expert on the problems of public
13 works, air pollution and water pollution, but best
14 of all, a man of judicial temper, a kind man, a
15 strong man, not an angry man, but a man of reason,
16 and I really believe that we are giving you, if I
17 can be immodest for a moment, at least let me put
18 it on the side of my colleague here, that we are
19 giving you a ticket that you can work for in
20 confidence, that you can go to the people and say
21 here is a ticket that will govern this country and
22 will govern it with a sense of firmness on the
23 one hand and passion and humanity on the other and
24 that is what a good leader ought to have. (Applause.)

25 Now, we are going to have my colleague, my

1 associate, my Vice-Presidential running mate
2 Ed Muskie, he's coming in to talk to you. You
3 are going to love him. I want you to know when I
4 am President of this country, with your support, that
5 we are going to work as a team. The office of
6 the Vice-Presidency has been developing and
7 Senator Muskie will tell you when he comes to you
8 that this is no one-man show. I will make the
9 decisions, I will have to be responsible as your
10 President, but I'm going to have to have the advice
11 and counsel of many and you can help here so much,
12 you can help so much.

13 Now, listen, don't believe what people tell
14 you about things are not good. You know the facts,
15 you know that our convention was late, you know
16 the strife that we have had in our party, you know
17 that we have had less than two weeks to really get
18 a campaign underway, you know that our opposition
19 has had over two months, but we can do more work
20 in two weeks than they can do in two months if we
21 will buckle down to it. (Applause.) And this is
22 a four quarter gain. We are not quitting at half
23 time and we are not throwing in any towels and we
24 are not hitting anybody with the bucket, but we may
25 have to do a little open field running. I saw my

1 own University of Minnesota yesterday looking good
2 four minutes before the end of the game and then
3 USC, University of Southern California, turned
4 loose that O. J. Simpson on us. Well, I just
5 want you to know that I am the O.J. Simpson of
6 the Democratic party. (Applause.) I would have
7 picked out a star from Ohio but you've got so
8 many universities and colleges I didn't want to
9 choose up sides at this particular moment in my
10 political life.

11 Well, friends, just one final thought. I have
12 really my message for you out at the steer roast.
13 I don't want you to have two full meals, but I
14 saw this lovely program and is really a tribute to
15 my family and is a wonderful tribute to you for
16 the way you have put it together. I saw that
17 picture there of myself and my wife, our five little
18 granddaughters. I tell you, that's a package,
19 that's a package, and I'm going to make a prediction
20 to you. We can't do it in 1968 because I doubt
21 that they will let me have the Christmas party there
22 in 1968, but we will have the merriest Christmas
23 you ever saw in your life, I'll tell you, in 1969,
24 because we are going to have all of those grand-
25 daughters there and I hope a grandson or two by that

1 time, too, if I can encourage my young sons.

2 We do thank you. Now, I want you to go
3 forth from this meeting today convinced of one
4 thing, that we can do what we need to do. The party
5 needs to be like a country, because it's difficult,
6 it becomes more challenging, because it's to some
7 people impossible it becomes possible to us. I am
8 convinced as I am of my own name that if we do what
9 we need to do, if you continue that registration
10 drive, if you will get out that vote, if we will
11 forget the pettiness we have, if we are united as
12 a Democratic family, take our message to every club,
13 every fraternal order, every group, every union,
14 every business meeting, every P.T.A., whatever it
15 is, if we will just get on out and bestir ourselves,
16 we can have another great victory on November 5th
17 and you will have a Democratic administration in
18 Washington continuing on January 20, 1969. Thank
19 you very much.

20 (Prolonged standing applause.)
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