

Rivalry Is Real but Friendly

# Potshots Are Out in HHH-RFK 'Feud'

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Hubert Humphrey and Robert Kennedy—the principals in what is billed as the biggest feud in town—are painfully aware that their political destiny is not likely to be determined by oratorical potshots and elaborate planning.

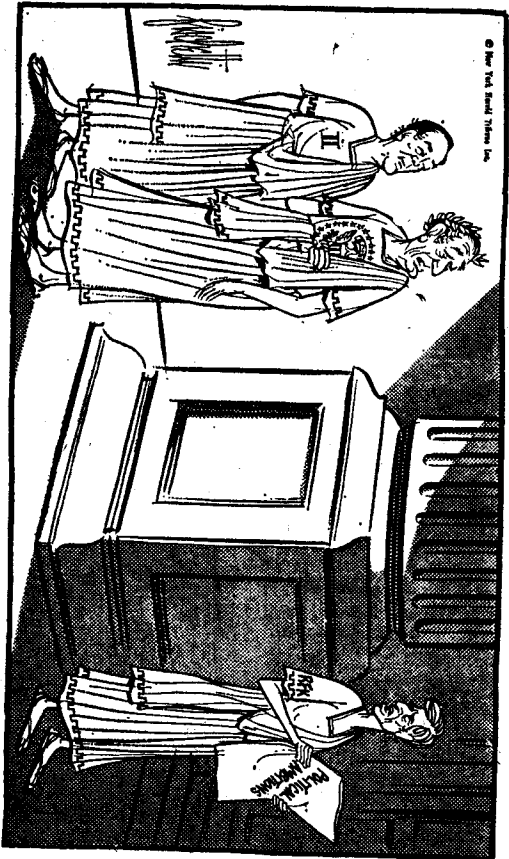
Humphrey is Vice President and Kennedy is a Senator with a nationwide constituency all because of a horrible event in Dallas over which neither had any control.

Their rivalry is real and is rooted in their ambitions to be President, but both understand the uncertainties of politics and of life itself.

So Kennedy was able to write a jesting note to Humphrey not long ago saying he felt as if he were "a chicken in a fox coop" after the Vice President had likened a suggestion by the Senator on Vietnamese negotiations to "letting the fox in the chicken coop."

And Humphrey did not hesitate to invite Kennedy to ride to New York with him in a vice presidential plane last January to keep a speaking date with the Vice President's liberal friends in Americans for Democratic Action while Humphrey himself was talking at a Brooklyn charity dinner.

Neither is a Free Agent  
Humphrey and Kennedy may at times still be free spirits, but neither is a free



"I'd feed you lean and hungry look to the lions if I could only be sure the lions weren't overmatched."

agent and both are aware of this, too.

The Vice President is a prisoner of President Johnson's policies and whims. As Humphrey himself noted in a speech to the National Press Club on Friday, even the wings of the eagle on the vice presidential seal droop as if he were "always ready for a soft landing."

But Kennedy is a prisoner of his own name, his own fame and martyrdom of his lake brother. Kennedy has adjusted to some degree to the abrupt

and terrible change in his life that plummeted him from a position at the summit of power as the second most important man in the United States to the relatively powerless status of a freshman Senator.

Why'd He Say That?  
He appreciates the freedom that the Senate gives a man to pick his issues and to speak out on a wide range of subjects.

He also knows the impact that his speeches and statements can have not only in the United States but throughout the world simply

because his name is Kennedy.

Also bedeviling him and his pronouncement is the public psychoanalysis that follows on his every word: Why did he say that? Why is he picking a fight with Humphrey—or the President—over this issue?

Kennedy has said something plaintively to friends that often no one seems to give him credit for making a statement or taking a position merely because he believes in what he is saying or doing. He has also noted in conversations with friends that

1972—the earliest possible year he could seek the Democratic presidential nomination—is six years away and that events are hard enough to control from year to year without looking ahead to the next decade.

If Mr. Johnson runs for another term and is re-elected in 1968 he rather than Humphrey or Kennedy can determine who will succeed him as the Democratic nominee in 1972.

Mr. Johnson is a man who savors power and no one who knows him can believe that he would fail to pick his successor or that his successor or that his choice would be Kennedy.

Probably would be Humphrey, but relations have often cooled between a President and his Vice President.

If Mr. Johnson should die in office—and three of the last eight Presidents have died in office—Humphrey would succeed him and would be all but assured of nomination for a term in his own right.

And if Humphrey were President whom would he want to run with him to balance the ticket in 1972 and make certain that he got the liberal vote? Robert Kennedy, perhaps?