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A BIG TEN INTERVIEW

ROBERT VAUGHN

Robert Vaughn, a man from *UNCLE*, has been writing his own script on college campuses during the last two years. He has been touring the campuses, and various Democratic party affairs, criticizing the Vietnam war.

Vaughn's education is much fuller than his critics might believe. He started his college training at the University of Minnesota, got his M.A. and B.A. at Los Angeles City College, and is working for his Ph.D. at the University of Southern California. His Ph.D. study centers on the philosophy of mass communications and political science. His dissertation will focus on the McCarthy era and its effects on the American theater.

Among the stops on Vaughn's speaking tours was the University of Minnesota. There, *BIG TEN*'s Jim Miller talked with him.

BIG TEN: Why are you making these speaking trips? Are you motivated by an ideological commitment . . . are you planning a political career?

The last two years I have spoken against this war on college campuses, at Democratic fund raising dinners, and at a variety of other situations, explaining my position.

BT: Are you helped, in your appearances, by being an actor?

V: Definitely. People will generally come to see what the actor looks like. How fat he is. How tall. Whether he has his own hair.

BT: As a critic of the war then, what do you think we should do in Vietnam?

V: My suggestions are no different than those of at least one-third of the US Senate, many college professors, and many, many people in the world. It is quite simple . . . we should return to the Geneva Accords.

1. We stop the bombing of North Vietnam.

2. We deescalate the war in the South.

3. We recognize the Viet Cong as having belligerent status and hence negotiation status equal to that of the Saigon regime.

4. We reconvene the Geneva Accords, preferably in an Asian country. We should indicate that, by a certain date, all alien forces will be out of Vietnam. We should also indicate there will be internationally-supervised elections, and that, eventually, Vietnam again will be one country.

Now, there is nothing new in these suggestions. They have been made many times before. But they have not been carried out.

BT: There has been criticism about the news coverage of the war in Vietnam. Do you think there's been slanting or out-and-out lying in the press?

V: No. I have had the opportunity to speak with many newsmen. I have weekly seminars in my home with Vietnam veterans. The news is not mishandled or mismanaged in the radical sense of the word. But, some of it doesn't get through.

This is the result of fear. The men who are in command are afraid to admit we're not doing as well as we say we are. Everybody tells everybody something else. So when it gets to Washington, it's a series of unfortunate lies. In that sense, then, the news does get misdirected. So the President gets a more-glossy and glowing picture than what is actu-

BT: Do you think President Kennedy would have handled the war any differently?

V: I think he would never have allowed this war to become an American war. I don't base this on the strong emotional feeling I had for Kennedy. I base it on two other things.

First, in the last televised news conference Kennedy had, he said, "in the final analysis, it is their war. We can give them troops. We can give them support. We can give them help. But they have to win it, the people of South Vietnam."

The second reason I feel this way is a conversation I had with Senator Wayne Morse. He told me that, on the Monday before the assassination, Kennedy called him into his office. Kennedy said he had been reading Morse's speeches criticizing the war. Kennedy revealed he was planning an entire review of, and change in, policies. The changes, Kennedy told Morse, were sympathetic to Morse's views. Kennedy said he wanted Morse to come to the White House in a week, November 24th, to discuss the matter at that time. But on November 24th, John Kennedy was buried.

BT: To change the subject, how do California politics relate to the nation?

V: They don't.

BT: Well, California has elected several movie stars already. What would happen if other entertainment-type people were to try running. Will the voters over-react?

V: If the actors already elected somehow destroy the confidence of the people, that will of course abrogate the chances of any more actors being involved in politics.

I think there are a few actors equipped for political office. Possibly Governor Reagan is one of them. Even though his views are antithetical to me. I think he has a good chance of being the GOP-presidential nominee in 1968. But he has spent the better portion of his mature life involved in the social issues and problems of the day. He's been on the wrong side, I think, but at least he's been involved. He has been president of several actors' organizations. In fact, both he and Senator Murphy have been enthusi-

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