

For the Record

From a commentary by Edward P. Morgan on "In The Public Interest" radio program:

Hubert Humphrey endured a lot of things. Aside from the cancer that killed him, one of his heaviest burdens was Lyndon Baines Johnson. . . .

A little known incident . . . may add substance to the speculation that if Hubert Humphrey could only have been his own man he might well have beaten Nixon, with Vietnam as a cutting issue.

After [Humphrey] became the presidential nominee at Chicago, pressures mounted on him to declare his own Vietnam policy—which would be to end the war. First [he] didn't move, at least outwardly. Then in the early fall he scheduled a nationwide radio-TV address . . . to reveal his policy on the war. . . . It was too equivocal. I was deeply disappointed, even resentful. What I didn't know until years later was this:

For some quirky reason, LBJ refused to speak directly to Humphrey but kept tabs on the campaign, in part, through Dwayne Andreas, a rich industrialist and close friend of Humphrey who was with him much of the time. The President had seen the proposed draft of the Vice President's speech. He called Andreas. "Dwayne," he said, "you tell that so-and-so if he delivers this speech I'll be on all the networks 40 minutes later and read a telegram from Gen. Abrams [U.S. commander in Vietnam] declaring it would prolong the war and increase our casualties enormously."

Humphrey could have stood his ground but against such incredibly vicious shenanigans he might not have won and the country might have been even more divided.

I confirmed the incident with Humphrey himself last year. Typically, the Happy Warrior had never aired this grievance in public.