

HHH Denies He's Soft

By Spencer Rich

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Looking fit and strong at 63 and speaking with the famous buoyancy and good spirits that have made him one of the best-liked senators, Hubert H. Humphrey the other day called Watergate "a shameful, disgusting thing." He snorted his utter contempt for the theory that he's pulling his punches against President Nixon for fear campaign skeletons of his own may pop out.

"Your thesis is erroneous. I have spoken out a great deal on Watergate," said the Minnesota Democrat, who lost the presidency to Richard Nixon in a close 1968 race. "I have spoken out on the violation of law, the whole shameful, disgusting thing."

"I've spoken lots of times at student meetings, I spoke yesterday at Fairleigh Dickinson. I've never called for resignation, I've felt the constitutional process (of impeachment) is the better way for three reasons.

"One, I felt he wouldn't resign. Two, I was his opponent in 1968 and some people might think it's sour grapes. And three, it wouldn't resolve the issue. Some people might say he wasn't found guilty. The impeachment process is slow but it brings specific charges backed by judgment and evidence. I do not want a prior judging."

In recent months Humphrey has been involved in a number of charges which, if true, would severely damage his reputation and destroy his career. The most serious, made by Robert Maheu in a court statement, alleges that the one-time aide to Howard Hughes gave Humphrey \$50,000 in cash in 1968 in a limousine parked outside the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles.

All the charges, posed not against Humphrey personally but against donors to his campaigns from 1968 to 1972 or against his campaign fund organizations, involve allegations that donors illegally used corporation funds to make contributions to

Humphrey campaigns. Under existing campaign laws on the books for over 45 years, individuals and political organizations may contribute, but business corporations as such may not.

If it could be established that Humphrey personally knew of or connived in the use of corporate funds, he would be criminally liable, and his career would be shattered. There are theories sometimes heard around the Senate that Humphrey has been withholding his fire against President Nixon for fear the White House would then seek out information to link Humphrey to these activities.

Humphrey, in a tone alternating between indignation and amusement, said in an interview that the theory is nonsense and that none of the charges will ever be proved against him because he isn't guilty.

With regard to Maheu's allegation, Humphrey said, "He's a liar. No one has ever seen the money. When asked where he got it he says he borrowed it. What kind of nonsense is that?"

As for the campaign contribution allegations, Humphrey said these involved charges that individual donors to his campaigns were reimbursed by business corporations for their contributions to Humphrey.

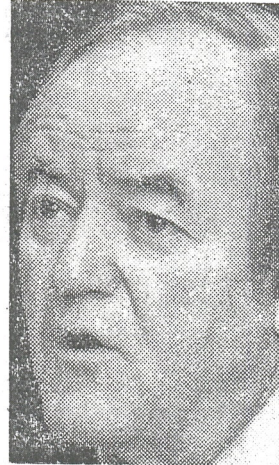
"We have no way of knowing when a man gives me a contribution if a corporation later reimburses him," said Humphrey. "How the hell would I know... when I am campaigning day and night and someone is somewhere else getting me some money, I have no way of knowing whether they're getting corporate money. This is a matter between the campaign committee and donor."

Humphrey was asked whether in saying that his campaign chairmen were responsible for receiving money, not himself personally, he was adopting the same line of argument used by President Nixon to explain many aspects of the Watergate scandal.

"There's a lot of difference," he exploded angrily. "I do not break and enter, obstruct justice, wiretap. There's a difference between that and receiving a corporate contribution without knowing it... I do not want to be compared with Mr. Nixon."

Although Humphrey says he has hit the President on Watergate on frequent occasions, his portfolio of formal statements on the matter is relatively thin.

In a June 3, 1973, commencement address at Georgetown University, he



HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
... Watergate "disgusting"

scored the Watergate scandal and the corrupting of American traditions.

In May, 1973, an article he wrote for The Washington Post called Watergate "a flagrant violation of the law... Wiretapping, burglary, breaking and entering have absolutely no place in even the most vigorous partisan contest," the article said.

When the first Watergate Special Prosecutor, Archibald Cox, was fired by President Nixon last Oct. 20, he cosponsored legislation for an independent special prosecutor, and called the absence of two Watergate tapes "incredible."

In October he told the AFL-CIO convention that Watergate has "seriously undermined respect and support for the presidency..." A strong presidency, he said, "does not mean a President who violates the Constitution instead of breathing life into it. It does not mean a President who ignores the will of the elected representatives. It does not mean a President who will tolerate those who corrupt the election process." He repeated similar statements at the Democratic Governors' Conference a month ago.

With a touch of disappointment and ruefulness, he conceded that since he's no longer a presidential candidate, he doesn't get the kind of publicity he had become accustomed to in 30 years of public life.

"I speak to hundreds of groups, especially students, and I chastise the President unmercifully, but I never see a reporter there from The Washington Post, and that's why you haven't got any of my statements in your clips," he said.

"What they mean when they say I'm not speaking up is that I've never called for his resignation or said he's guilty. If there are calls for his resignation, all you need is 25 Democrats saying it and the Republicans would say, 'See, it's parti-

on Nixon

san.' I've avoided that and resisted the temptation to let him have it."

The charges clustering around Humphrey—in addition to the Maheu allegation of a \$50,000 payment—are very similar to those involved in some of the Watergate cases now pending.

- Dwayne Andreas, a long-time Humphrey associate and financial backer, was charged Oct. 19, 1973, by Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski with giving Humphrey's 1968 presidential campaign four \$25,000 payments—\$100,000 in all—out of the corporate funds of Andreas' First Inter-oceanic Corp. The payments allegedly took place between Oct. 14 and 21, 1968. Andreas has pleaded innocent and Humphrey has denied all knowledge that the payments were from corporate funds, and he said again yesterday, "I wouldn't know. It was the last week of October, 1968, and I was busy on the road campaigning. The campaign committee handled it."

- John Loeb, a Wall Street investment banker, was accused of contributing \$48,000 to Humphrey's 1972 campaign for the Democratic nomination but concealing it by ascribing the contributions to the names of nine of his employees. Several of the charges were dropped and he eventually pleaded no-contest to counts involving donations of \$18,000. Here again, Humphrey said he knew nothing of the transaction and at any rate wouldn't have any way of knowing on receiving money that Loeb might have used the names of others to pass contributions through.

- Associated Milk Producers, Inc., is alleged to have given Humphrey's 1968 presidential campaign \$91,691 out of corporate funds, his 1970 Senate campaign \$22,500 out of corporate funds, and his 1972 presidential campaign \$34,500 out of corporate funds. Here again, Humphrey says his campaign organization handled the matter, not he, and anyhow it would be very hard for a recipient to know whether the funds came from a corporate or non-corporate account.

- The milk producers also

allegedly paid \$25,000 in corporate funds for mailing lists used by Humphrey in the 1972 Florida and Maryland presidential primaries, handled by a computer-mail firm (Valentine, Sherman & Associates) in which former Humphrey press aide Norman Sherman was a partner.

- The General Accounting Office, Oct. 12, 1973, cited the Committee for the Nomination of Hubert Humphrey for failing to disclose until almost a year after it was due some \$456,732 in 1972 primary expenditures. Other violations, including receipt of \$1,900 in corporate funds, were also alleged. The matter was referred to the Justice Department. The GAO did state, however, that the committee had gone to considerable trouble eventually to update its report and that all required information had eventually been filed. It also said the corporate contributions had been reimbursed or returned.

"It has been a worry to me and I scolded the living daylights out of them and made them go into the field and get the information and file it," said Humphrey.

- Still another GAO charge, made public Aug. 9, 1973, involved two complicated contributions of \$100,000 and \$200,000 to Humphrey's 1972 campaign by Walter T. Duncan of Texas. Because Duncan was short of cash, he made the contributions through loans guaranteed by several of Humphrey's campaign solicitors and other backers. Here again, Humphrey isn't personally charged with anything and he disclaims knowledge of the transaction.

"I recognize that as a candidate, this is a reflection, even though I don't have the legal responsibility unless I ordered or knew of it or conspired, which I didn't," he said of the various transactions. "But there's a lot of difference between inadvertent" receipt of questionable contributions and "dirty tricks, breaking and entering, wire-tapping and other despicable and wrong things," he concluded, galloping down the hall to a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee.