



“We’ve Been in Tears”

Date: 1968-11-06

Conversation: WH6811-03-13718

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.

Participant: Lady Bird Johnson

Participant: Muriel F. Humphrey

Start Time: 11:32

Duration: 03:51

Place: LBJ Ranch

SCENE SETTER: As Richard M. “Dick” Nixon began giving his presidential victory remarks, President Johnson and Lady Bird offered their praise and condolences to the Democratic nominee, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey Jr., and his wife, Muriel.

President Johnson: —fight like you did, Hubert. It was a wonderful one, and it wasn’t your fault that they didn’t make it. It’s—you did . . . you did the greatest job anybody’s ever done in this—

Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.: Yeah, I’m sorry I let you down a little.

President Johnson: No, you didn’t. No, you didn’t. It’s a lot of other folks, but not you.

Hubert Humphrey: Well, I just want you to know—

President Johnson: It’s our—

Hubert Humphrey: —I appreciate your help.

President Johnson: [*Humphrey acknowledges throughout.*] It was our own people in the [Democratic] Party that created all the problems, and all the conditions, and stirred up all the divisiveness, and now they’re blaming everybody else.

Hubert Humphrey: Yeah.

President Johnson: But you came out of it in mighty good shape, and I just wished it could’ve been a few hundred more.

Hubert Humphrey: That’s right. Well, if we could’ve done it just a little better, but we’re not going to cry. Nothing you can do about it. We’ll be back there—I’m going to take two days off and maybe go down to Caneel Bay [U.S. Virgin Islands]. You tell Lady Bird [Johnson] I’m going down to her favorite haunt down there.

President Johnson: Well, she'll—I'm trying to locate her, just let her tell you how much we all love you.

Hubert Humphrey: Well—

President Johnson: We've been in tears. We sent you a wire at Waverly [Minnesota], and—

Hubert Humphrey: Well, thank you so much.

President Johnson: I think I'll just read it to you; you may not get it. "You have fought well and hard. You've carried your convictions and the standard of our party with eloquence and magnificent courage. In 20 years of national service, you've had no finer hours than those of the past few weeks, in which you awakened the support and the interest of millions of our people. As a fellow public servant and as a Democrat, your friend of two decades, I'm proud of the brave, enlightened, and vigorous campaign you waged." [*aside*] Come here, Bird! [*to Hubert Humphrey*] "I know that you'll continue to serve America in the cause of freedom for as long as you live. My deep admiration and affection for you and Muriel [F. Humphrey]."

Hubert Humphrey: Thank you.

Lady Bird Johnson speaks indistinctly in the background.

President Johnson: Here's Bird. Here's Bird.

Lady Bird Johnson: [*speaking in the background*] Who's that?

President Johnson: [*aside to Lady Bird Johnson*] Hubert.

Lady Bird Johnson: [*speaking to Humphrey*] Hubert [*unclear*]?

Hubert Humphrey: Yes, dear.

Lady Bird Johnson: You were just great. I was so proud of you.

Hubert Humphrey: Thank you.

Lady Bird Johnson: There wasn't a soul in this house but what was standing around un—looking first happy, and then droopy and, well—

Hubert Humphrey: [*chuckling*] Yeah, I know.

Lady Bird Johnson: You were just magnificent—

Hubert Humphrey: [*Unclear.*]

Lady Bird Johnson: —and so was Muriel, and—

Hubert Humphrey: Well, Muriel's right here. I know she'd like to say a word to you, Lady Bird. And I just thank you so much. Will you?

Lady Bird Johnson: And if there's anything that we can—we've got, we want to share with you. And we're just so proud of you.

Hubert Humphrey: Thank you.

Lady Bird Johnson: And [Richard M. "Dick"] Nixon's coming on [television]. I better let you go.

Hubert Humphrey: Let me just—I have Muriel—say "hello" to you.

Lady Bird Johnson: All right.

Muriel F. Humphrey: Bird?

Lady Bird Johnson: Yes, dear.

Muriel Humphrey: Hi, dear.

Lady Bird Johnson: You emerged as the star of this.

Muriel Humphrey: Well, bless your heart. We—

Lady Bird Johnson: Even if it is on very slightly, slightly the little end.

Richard Nixon's victory speech becomes audible in the background.

Muriel Humphrey: [*Laughs.*] Well, it was really a terrific experience for our whole family and all, and—

Lady Bird Johnson: And I think you have a place in the hearts of the people that'll just—will always be remembered. Both of you do. And Hubert's last statement was just so eloquent and gallant, and just—I just loved it.

Muriel Humphrey: That's wonderful. Gosh, I just wish we could've carried it for you folks.

Lady Bird Johnson: [*Laughs.*] And tell all—I better—If you're going where I think you might, tell all the fish hello for me.

Muriel Humphrey: [*laughing*] I will. That's exactly what we're going to do, dear.

Lady Bird Johnson: OK.

Muriel Humphrey: We're going to leave about Friday.

Lady Bird Johnson: That'll be wonderful.

Muriel Humphrey: Are you going to be up in Washington?

Lady Bird Johnson: By tomorrow, I think.

Muriel Humphrey: Well, maybe you and I'll bowl a little tomorrow night, or something—

Lady Bird Johnson: Goody, goody!

Muriel Humphrey: —after we get back?

Lady Bird Johnson: I'd love it. I'd love it. [*Muriel Humphrey acknowledges.*] Call me as soon as you get back.

Muriel Humphrey: When we get back, I'll give you a call.

Lady Bird Johnson: Just one second.

Muriel Humphrey: Yeah.

President Johnson: We love you, and you were wonderful, and whatever we got, we'll divide it 50/50 with you.

Muriel Humphrey: Oh, thank you, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Good-bye.

Muriel Humphrey: It was a great experience.

President Johnson: God bless you, darling.

Muriel Humphrey: Thank you—

President Johnson: Bye.

Muriel Humphrey: —very much.

President Johnson: Bye.

Muriel Humphrey: Here's Hubert—

The call ends, and the line disconnects.

End of excerpt.

CITATION: "Lyndon B. Johnson, Hubert H. Humphrey, Muriel Humphrey, and Lady Bird Johnson on 6 November 1968," Conversation WH6811-03-13718, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Johnson Telephone Tapes: 1968, ed. Kent B. Germany, Nicole Hemmer, and Ken Hughes] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014—).

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