

Morris K. Udall -- Selected Speeches:

Keynote Address, Democratic National Convention New York City, August 11, 1980

[At Top: **EDITORS: Congressman Udall may deviate from this text. EMBARGOED: Until 10 pm, EST, August 11, 1980**]

Thank you, Congresswoman Ferraro ... a fine legislator ... a great lady and a real asset to this party and this country.

After that introduction ... I can hardly wait to hear what I have to say. I guess the first thing to say, is that we have a tough fight on our hands ... and we had better get to work.

In 1928, Governor Al Smith of New York was the first Catholic nominated for President. It was not a very tolerant time and it was charged that the Pope already had his bags packed to come to Washington and take over the country if Governor Smith won. The night he was clobbered by Herbert Hoover, Smith had a sense of humor ... he told a news conference that he had sent a one-word telegram to His Holiness at Vatican City: "Unpack!"

Governor Reagan feels pretty good about that big lead he has, but so did Tom Dewey. And if he's listening out there in Pacific Palisades ... this convention has a message: stop working on your inaugural address ... our message is, "**Unpack!**"

Franklin Roosevelt told of the 1930s tycoon who went to his Wall Street office each morning, paid a nickel for a newspapers glanced at the front page and threw the paper in the trash.

After a few days of this, the newsboy asked, "Why do you waste your money, look at the front page, curse and throw the paper in the trash?" And the old man said, "Son, it's none of your business, but I'm looking for an obituary." "But sir," said the boy, "the obituaries are in the back of the paper, not on the front page." "Believe me, kid," said the tycoon, "the obituary I'm looking for will be on the front page."

Some folks are already writing Democratic obituaries for 1980. I don't pretend that this will be an easy year. But this old Democratic mule isn't **that** easy to beat. And if we handle ourselves right in these next 72 hours, we can come out of here with a fighting chance to win. This is serious business we're involved in, but I can't help poking a little bit of fun at my Republican friends. These candidates they come up with always seem to be repeating history. And we're always tempted to recycle the humor.

You remember Governor Reagan telling the Young Americans for Freedom that he'll carry every state -- all 13. And if we have a nuclear attack, he'll ask Michael Landon to pull the wagons in a circle. And you know about Governor Reagan's newest movie contract ... with 18th Century-Fox.

Three weeks ago, I tuned in that Republican telethon from Detroit. Most of you won't believe what was going on. I saw Ronald Reagan ... I mean the **real** Ronald Reagan ... quoting with approval from Franklin Roosevelt!

That was a little like Spiro Agnew quoting from Walter Cronkite, on freedom of the press.

And there was Gerald Ford, naming Harry Truman as one of our greatest Presidents. That wasn't quite what Congressman Ford was telling the folks in Grand Rapids back in 1948.

Old "Give Em Hell Harry." What a gem he was. In his retirement days, Truman was asked why he gave the Republicans hell. And he answered, "I never gave em hell ... I just told the truth, and the Republicans thought it sounded like hell."

Everybody knows we're behind, and sure we've got a tough road ahead these next 90 days. We don't gather in this hall as some kind of game. There are serious things at stake ... like the kind of country we're going to have

in the next generation. We'll be selecting the head of the world's most powerful country, the man who will hold in his hand the power of survival or destruction. For good or ill, the man we select will be guiding the destiny ... not just of the United States ... but to a large extent, of this entire planet.

Yes, strange things are abroad, are happening these days. Our party, the Democratic Party, has been chastized by Republicans as long as I can remember on the subject of fiscal responsibility.

Great old GOP speeches about you can't spend yourself rich, money doesn't grow on trees, don't borrow, reduce the national debt. The party of Calvin Coolidge has warned as long as I can remember that we can't spend ourselves rich and that there is no free lunch.

And now, here in 1980, they meet in Detroit...and tell us there is a free lunch ... that you really **can** spend yourself rich.

This free lunch they promise now is the discredited Kemp-Roth-Reagan tax plan, and it's the Republican promise to the American people ...

Democrats and sensible Republicans and Independents, nearly every reputable economist, hard-pressed business people and good, conservative editors **all** agree that you can't have \$140 billion in tax cuts, \$100 billion in new defense spending, and a balanced budget. And I'm not making any of this up.

Let me give it to you another way:

A fellow knocks on your front door and says he has a new plan. He wants to handle your family finances and he proposes three things he'll do for you:

- * First, he's going to cut your income by 30 percent.
- * Second, you can spend more money for travel, education and things you want.
- * Third, your budget will be balanced so you can get out of debt.

Any sensible American would laugh this guy off the front porch.

There was a Texan running for Governor back during the Depression. His name was Pappy Lee "Pass the Biscuits" O'Daniel. His campaign would go into a little town with a hillbilly band, play some music, gather a crowd and then Pappy would tell the folks about his plan for the State of Texas ... to give every family \$100 a month so the kids could have shoes and clothes and food on the table. Then they would play some more music.

Finally, in one little town, a heckler said, "Tell us, Pappy, where is the State of Texas going to get all the money to provide \$100 a month for every family to buy shoes and clothes and put food on the table?" And Pappy stared at the heckler a little while and then said, "Let's play them another tune, boys."

If you believe this funny-money Kemp-Roth-Reagan tax plan will work, you'll believe that Ronald Reagan really wanted George Bush... or that Henry Kissinger is truly humble.

We haven't had such brilliant GOP logic since Calvin Coolidge's keen insight: "When the great masses of people cannot find work, we have unemployment." If Cal were alive today ... as some famous Republican once said ... he'd be turning over in his grave.

Business Week magazine said two years ago of this Kemp-Roth-Reagan magic money that: "Kemp-Roth would add \$100 billion to a deficit that is already dangerously swollen. It would touch off an inflationary explosion that would wreck the country and impoverish everyone on a fixed income."

Republicans have consistently had the support of the giant multinational and the huge businesses that dominate our economy and our lives. And the more they talk about competition and free enterprise, the less we see of it.

The big conglomerates have always been on the side of the Republicans, but in their hearts they know it's the small business people of America who keep our economy going, and they know the truth of the old joke that if you want to live like a Republican, you had better vote Democratic.

Democrats don't just preach free enterprise, we practice it. FDR saved the free enterprise system and American business has nearly always done better under Democratic Presidents.

Business and government have talked a long time about deregulation. But this Democratic Congress and this Democratic Administration have deregulated the airline industry and deregulated the trucking industry and we're about to deregulate the railroad industry.

This party has been **for** competition, **for** giving small and medium businesses a better piece of the action, **for** letting the new and innovative companies have a chance.

Well, we always seem to get too much partisan rhetoric. Good guys have their convention in New York, and the bad guys, in Detroit. Americans understand that. It's part of our system.

But we are all Americans first, and I think the people want us to get together ... business ... government ... and the working people ... and get going on making our country work. We ought to lay it on straight and true and not just point the finger of blame.

The truth is that serious difficulties lie ahead. We should not insult the intelligence of the American people by holding out some painless "quick fix" for all that ails us today.

History will record, I believe, that we are in a major period of transition ... more difficult than we have had in this century. And there are no simplistic answers. Progress, change, prosperity have been our goals. We always have had slow, steady progress for the last century, as we became the first major industrial nation.

Then, after World War II, something very different happened. In the last 20 years from 1948 to 1968, real income of working families doubled.

I mean the **real** income after inflation and after taxes ... doubled. Inflation was 1 or 2 percent. All at once, we had the jet age, the space age, the computer age...we put a man on the moon, we built 100 million automobiles, the biggest highway network in the world. Productivity went up every year.

My generation thought we had discovered the Golden Fleece. We took annual pay raises for granted, along with annual dividend increases. Bigger ... better ... more. It reminded me of the old song, "Those were the days, my friend ... we thought they'd never end."

But end they did. The **next** decade from 1968 to 1978 ... saw real income of American working families not double ... or increase 50 percent ... or even 10 percent. The fact is, real income barely stayed even. Productivity dropped. The steady increase of U.S. oil production peaked in 1971. And we started on a dangerous diet of ever more expensive foreign oil.

And there is no quick fix. We face problems as we change our lives to use less energy, to rebuild our outmoded industrial plants, regain our productivity, get tough and competitive again.

Yes, we need energy. Coal and oil will play a part in our future and we're going to use both. And along with that, we're going to conserve ... and we're going to use safe, renewable energy resources ... like solar, and wind, and geothermal, and anything else we can find.

This Democratic Congress and this Democratic Administration have worked together to turn our energy situation around. In 1980, due to conservation programs of the Congress and the Administration, we'll be using 1.3 million barrels less per day than was the case when this Administration took office.

This turnaround is permanent. We are heading in the right direction.

Rumors have it that we may have a quarrel or two at this convention. That's nothing new to our party. Will Rogers used to say, "I belong to no organized political party ... I'm a Democrat."

We do have fights and we kick and yell and scream and maybe even scratch a bit ... but we fight because we're a diverse party and because we've always tried to listen up ... to new ideas.

Republicans want to boast of unity. Let them! How difficult can it be to unify that narrow-based party? You can line up 100 average Americans and you'll have 45 Democrats, about 35 Independents, and only 20 Republicans.

If you get just 11 percent, you control one of the major parties, and that's the way it's gone with the Republican Party for most of the last 20 years. Is it a broad-based party? Look at their Detroit convention: overwhelmingly white, 71 percent male, middle-aged and in the \$45,000-a-year bracket.

I suppose my friend, Barry Goldwater, to most Americans could be considered conservative. Mr. Republican. Yet, four years ago, the Arizona delegation, controlled by Reaganites, denied this man a delegate seat at the Republican Convention. Mr. Republican himself was not welcome.

Why? I'll tell you why -- and it tells something about the modern GOP: the sin of Barry Goldwater was that he had endorsed a dangerous liberal for President -- Gerald Ford!

Since Lincoln's time, the Republican Party has held an honorable place in our history. Most of the time, it **was** broad-based. There were strong conservatives, but a welcome as well for moderate Easterners like Saltonstall, Case, Aiken, Javits ... and for moderate Westerners like Earl Warren and Tom Kuchel.

But today, we see a GOP that is increasingly narrow. It has become a party with no left or no center ... dominated by the radical right, urging radical economics at home and belligerent policies abroad. Increasingly, there is little room in the Republican Party for a Howard Baker, a Bill Scranton, a George Romney, a Chuck Percy, a Mary Crisp.

Elephants don't forget old grudges and there was **barely** room in Detroit ... even in a grudging way ... for a small tribute to a former Vice President of the United States the late Nelson Rockefeller.

Harry Truman once said that the differences Democrats have with one another are nothing compared to the differences we have with Republicans. He was right. Our party embraces different groups, individuals, and we try to build and keep a broad-based party. And that's been the secret of our success.

But this week, while we're arguing among ourselves, all of us should ask that the fight be clean and fair, and all of us should remember that the real battle comes in November.

Remember the words of Winston Churchill and his constant critic, a woman Member of Parliament who in exasperation, said, "Sir Winston, if I were your wife, I would put poison in your coffee." To which Churchill replied, "And Madam, were I your husband ... I would drink it."

So we do have our fights. But let none of us poison the well. We need every part of this Democratic coalition.

In this media age, political parties seem to be losing strength. But this old donkey, the oldest political party in the world, is still alive and respected. Let me tell you another reason why it has survived.

In almost any society like ours, people tend to divide into two competing philosophies.

Both philosophies are honorable and both are needed, and both are part of the mainstream -- the ground between the 35-yard lines, where most plays take place. These are the conservative philosophy which says, "Stop, slow down, we're losing the old values, don't change too fast." But the liberal or progressive philosophy,

always competing, says, "Sure, we need to keep the old values, but the solutions of yesterday are not adequate for today."

Franklin Roosevelt compared this society of ours to a tree. The tree grows and becomes large and after many years, dead branches appear and the tree looks unhealthy. The radical says, "Cut the tree down..it's no good." The reactionary says, "Don't touch it." But the prudent conservative and the prudent progressive say, "Just a minute ... there's a lot of good in that old tree. Let's get in and prune those dead branches so some new shoots will come out, and spread some fertilizer around the roots. This old tree will help us for many years to come."

I think this is why, when faced with war or emergency, the working people and the solid families of America have chosen Democrats to lead. Our party has made mistakes, but we have made more advances and we have been a party which believes that the job of leaders is to lead.

This party of ours has held power for 32 of the last 48 years because we have stood for three essential things, and you can sum them up on the back of an envelope:

- * One, we have been the party of **change** during war and depression and crises of all kinds. Democrats are optimists who think that problems can be solved ... or at least, that we ought to try.
- * Two, we have been the party of the **disadvantaged** in our society. This is the party that cares about the widow in the nursing home, with the kids grown up and gone away. Sick people, poor people, the small businessman and the young American trying to find a decent job.
- * Three, we've been the institution through which the waves of immigrants, the blacks and the Hispanics ... the Jews, the Russians, the Germans, the Irish, the Poles ... have all worked their way into full participation in our national life.

And I have a message for a special group of people ... the women of America ... you were the victims of a double-deal in Detroit ... and I want to tell you tonight that ERA doesn't mean **Elect Reagan Anyway** ... it means **Equal Rights for Americans**, and this party is going to see the ERA through, to ratification.

Someone once said, if there's a way to lose, Democrats will find it. We may just fool them this time.

Someone tells the story about the tourist in Maine, who came to a junction only to see that both signs read, "To Augusta."

The tourist yelled to a farmer in the field, "Does it make any difference which road I take?"

The old farmer yelled back, "Not to me, it don't."

There are two roads we can take as Democrats in 1980. And believe me, the one we choose **will** make a difference.

We can follow the path of 1968 when that beloved American, Hubert Humphrey, lost to Richard Nixon, and how some said then that there was no difference between the two. There are people here tonight who remember those days and how a few of us doing a little more could have made the difference...and how this beloved man, Hubert Humphrey ... **would** have made a difference ... to people's jobs, lives and between war and peace.

Or we can follow the other choice, the choice of 1948, when President Truman faced almost certain defeat ... when there were two independent challenges, one on the left **and** one on the right. Yet, we rallied around a good, simple, direct and courageous man who knew where he wanted the country to go and who took us there.

As we leave this hall this week, let's remember both stories.

I suggest the road to follow is the path of forgiveness and magnanimity, and the path of Democrats pulling together, putting our differences behind us for the sake of a better country. If we're going to have some fights this week, so be it. But we should promise there will be no low blows.

And if you don't feel all that unified by Thursday, let me recommend Dr. Udall's Patented Unity Medicine. Take one tablespoon, close your eyes and repeat: **President Ronald Reagan**.

We've got a lot of kick left.

So don't let them divide us ... conservationists from labor, farmers from consumers, blacks from whites, Sun Belt from Snow Belt. Let's reach out to sensible Republicans and Independents who share our views.

Will Rogers once visited the White House and Calvin Coolidge asked him to tell the latest jokes. "I don't have to, Mr. President," said Will, "you've appointed them all."

Well, the Republican nominees are no joke. Their platform is no joke. They are deadly serious. We're not playing a game here about which party can win an election. We're talking about the future of this country, the kind of country we're going to have, about war and peace.

Americans are not ready to wreck the economy with crazy schemes. Or to give up on a healthy environment. They want firm policies against the Soviet Union, but no reckless arms race. They are willing to accept discipline and change. They want a fair and compassionate government. They would like to see a balanced budget, and waste eliminated.

Alben Barkley, Harry Truman's famous "Veep," used to tell the story of the young man hitchhiking on a back road, up in the hills of Kentucky, in moonshine country.

An old man in a pickup stopped. The two men bounced along a bit and the old man said, "Son, there's a jug under the seat, get it out." He did, and the old man said, "Have a drink." The boy said, "Sir, I really wouldn't care to."

The old man pulled a gun and said, "Have a drink." The lad said, "Under the circumstances, don't mind if I do." He took a drink ... his mouth burned, his teeth felt loose, his stomach felt like it was on fire. The old man said, "Now, you hold the gun on me, and I'll take a drink."

So let's point the finger at he in our midst who strikes the low blow...and be gentle with each other. This November, it could make a difference.

Back during the celebration of the bicentennial, as thousands of people poured into Washington to see the fireworks on the night of that Fourth of July, I drove past a camper from out of town. The motorist had put a placard over one window and it read, "America ain't perfect ... but we're not done yet."

That old man kind of said it all. America is **never** done ... like a poem, or a painting.

This nation we love will only survive, if each generation of caring Americans can blend two elements:

- * **Change**, and the ability to adjust things to the special needs of our times;
- * And second, **stability**, the good sense to carry forward the old values which are just as good now as they were 200 years ago.

Thank you.

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