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M E E T T H E P R E S S

Produced by Betty Cole Dukert

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1976

GUEST:

EUGENE J. McCARTHY

Independent Presidential Candidate

MODERATOR AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:

Bill Monroe - NBC News

PANEL:

Linda Ellerbee - NBC News

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MEET THE PRESS

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MR. MONROE: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy.

In 1968 Mr. McCarthy, then an anti-Vietnam Democratic Senator from Minnesota, took the unorthodox course of running for President against the Democratic incumbent. After the Senator's strong showing that year in the New Hampshire primary, President Johnson announced he would not run for re-election. Mr. McCarthy is now making his third try for the presidency, this time as an independent. His supporters hope to get his name on the ballot in more than 40 states.

We will have the first questions now from Linda Ellerbee of NBC News.

MS. ELLERBEE: Senator, your campaign was based in part on the theory that disenchanted Democrats, particularly liberals, would switch to you. After New York, disenchanted Democrats seem rather hard to come by. Fritz Mondale is expected to pull in the liberal vote.

On a practical basis, are there enough votes out there for you to justify continuing the campaign?

MR. MC CARTHY: Actually, we didn't anticipate getting many disenchanted liberal votes from the Democratic party. We thought we'd get some and I think we will. I think the number will increase as time goes on. We hoped to really appeal to the roughly 60 percent of the people who didn't vote in the 1974 election.

MS. ELLERBEE: A recent Harris poll that was unpublished showed you getting ten per cent of the vote in a three-way race with Carter and Ford. There is a new Harris poll due out. I have not seen it, but reportedly it says your percentage is reduced to five percent. Does this mean those independents are now happy with the Democratic choice?

I don't really know what it means. I don't know what the first one meant. I thought at the time it was relatively high. We had hoped that the first public poll, after it was known I was running, would show something like five to ten percent and when we saw ten percent, I thought that was rather on the high side.

MS. ELLERBEE: Do you think your candidacy was any factor in Carter's choosing Mondale?

MR. MC CARTHY: I don't really know what went into the choice of Senator Mondale. If Mr. Carter had asked me to pick the Vice President for him and said, "Look, you have got to pick one that is within range, don't pick -- you know -- if you pick George Wallace, I won't take him;" that I probably would have settled on any one of three. I would say Glenn or Stevenson or Mondale, as being the best person to have on that ticket in terms of our campaign and I think that the choice of Mondale from our point of view was as good as we could have hoped for.

(Announcements)

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MR. WILL: Senator McCarthy, I guess there are three possible effects your candidacy could have. You could get elected; you could take enough Democratic votes away from Carter to elect Ford, or you could perhaps throw it into the House of Representatives, which in all likelihood, will be Democratic and will elect then Jimmy Carter.

Does it bother you that you might be responsible for the election of Mr. Ford?

MR. MC CARTHY: No, I don't think so. The issues we have raised, both the substantive ones and procedural ones I think are so important that that is the risk we will have to take. When I consider the differences between Ford and Carter as I see them developing, I can't conceive of a better time in the 25 years I have been in politics of which one ought to take the risk. The chances of spoiling the differences between those two candidates is so minimal that I think we are justified entirely in the judgment we made a year and a half ago.

MR. WILL: Could you tell me what some of those substantive issues are where you believe that Ford, which says he is close to Reagan, is also very close to Carter?

MR. MC CARTHY: Let me talk about one that isn't substantive, I suppose. One is the conception of the presidency. Something I have been writing about and talking about for at least ten years. I see very little difference in Carter's

conception of the office as distinguished from that of Ford. As a matter of fact, in some ways I think Ford may have a slightly better constitutional conception of the office than Jimmy Carter has.

When Carter, for example, says he will take personal responsibility for the CIA, that is what Nixon said. It is not enough to take personal responsibility. You want some constitutional and statutory protection.

When Carter says that only one voice can speak for the morality of the country or the decency of the country, he is saying almost what Nixon said when Nixon said he was "the" moral leader of the country.

This is not a presidential function. I don't mind a President who has some moral influence, but to say one voice speaks -- Jimmy Carter isn't going to be my moral voice.

The substantive ones relate pretty much to the platform. I see little difference between Carter and Ford on the question of militarism, for example. It is very difficult. I think the measurable difference now is that Carter, I believe, is against the B-1 but told someone he might be for it after the election.

On all of the other issues, as I see it, there is no substantive difference between the two.

I see little difference in terms of the ultimate achievement, in terms of improving economic and social

conditions in the country as between the positions of the two parties.

MR. BRODER: Senator, have you decided on who your runningmate will be?

MR. MC CARTHY: No, we haven't. Actually, what we are doing is running a different person in almost every state. We intend to have the equivalent of a convention sometime after the Republican convention is over, at which time we intend to name a Vice President who will be chosen by the electors when the Electoral College meets and also to name what we would consider to be our principal cabinet appointees.

MR. BRODER: There has been a report that Senator Julian Bond of Georgia might be that runningmate. Is there any substance to that?

MR. MC CARTHY: I think you would have to say that is a possibility, but we haven't talked about it and there is nothing formal about it and we intend really to wait until after the convention of the Republicans, at which time we hope to have a meeting of the people who will be the presidential electors in all fifty states.

MR. BRODER: I would like to go back to your comment a moment ago to Mr. Will about the concept of the presidency. Mr. Carter says that he believes in a strong, independent and aggressive president. Is that not the kind of president that we need in this country today?

MR. MC CARTHY: I don't really know what it means. That supposedly is what Lyndon Johnson was and that supposedly is what Richard Nixon was, and I think we need a constitutional presidency.

There is lots of power in the presidency which is well within the range of the constitutional limitations and I would expect to exercise that power.

MR. BRODER: You seem to be making a distinction between a constitutional presidency and a strong presidency. Why are those two in contradiction?

MR. MC CARTHY: I don't say that there is. The point I made about Mr. Carter was, when he said he would take personal responsibility for the CIA, I don't think the Central Intelligence Agency should be an instrument of the President, a personal instrument; that it ought to be directed as other agencies of foreign policy and military policy are directed with the sharing of power with the Congress.

MR. MONROE: Senator McCarthy, in a recent public television program with Robert MacNeil you said at different times during the program that the Democratic party in the past eight years had excluded you, punished you, ignored you; that you felt left out of Democratic party processes; that the party had rejected your senatorial colleagues such as Moss, Gruening and Gore. It sounds as if you were running now to get even with the Democratic party.

MR. MC CARTHY: I said that would be sufficient reason, if that was all I wanted, but that the real emphasis is on the positive and I suggested that as evidence that the party was changing along the way and that it was not the kind of party in which I wanted to run and I anticipated on the basis of that record that the party wouldn't stand for anything much in 1976. But the campaign -- I think that is the only time I have mentioned those things in any program and our whole emphasis has been on the positive and will be.

MR. MONROE: In connection with the possibility that you might hurt Jimmy Carter this year, could you not claim to be as important as any other individual in the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, considering the fact that Hubert Humphrey, after he was nominated, and needed your support, your enthusiastic support -- he lost by just a razor's edge -- you notably did not give him any enthusiastic support.

Some people think you might have helped him get elected.

MR. MC CARTHY: It could be. I have not yet found anyone who has said they would have voted for Hubert if I had endorsed him ^{more} enthusiastically or if I had endorsed him a month earlier than I did.

Until I find that one person, I will have to hold that I don't think I was responsible for it.

If you want to press that, you know, in the name of unity and responsibility, the polls showed me before the

Democratic Convention beating Nixon by from five to seven percent in '69. They showed Humphrey losing by just about what he lost by. Yet these responsible Democrats, who are now so concerned about Richard Nixon having been elected, were quite willing at that time to take a chance on losing to him, as the polls indicated they would, rather than in the name of unity to support me.

Well, I suppose I could say if Johnson-Humphrey wanted to take responsibility for losing the 14 million margin they had between '64 and '68, that I might take responsibility for 300,000. It is in that range I think that we ought to pass judgment.

MR. MONROE: Are you running for president this year more as a politician or more as a poet, professor, lecturer, or humorist?

MR. MCCARTHY: I don't know that you have to separate those things out. The man generally considered to be the best president of the country was a humorist, Abraham Lincoln. He was also a published poet. Lincoln had three or four poems published in the papers of southern Illinois in the 1840s and had a rather interesting exchange with friends about how important he thought poetry was.

So, if we want to run it across the board, I will compete with the other candidates on the conception of the presidency. I will argue economics with them. We can test our wit and

we can have a poetry confrontation and maybe we will have a showdown in the sports arena at the end.

And I think on all counts we are ready for them and we will let them pick the weapons and the field and see what happens.

MS. ELLERBEE: Senator, considering the possibility that you might end up being a spoiler for Jimmy Carter, have you had any pressure from the Democratic party or anyone in it to drop out?

MR. MC CARTHY: No, I haven't had.

MS. ELLERBEE: Nothing at all?

MR. MC CARTHY: No.

MS. ELLERBEE: In 1968, and in 1972, you were "Clean the "White Knight" Gene,"/and there was a certain passion associated with your campaign. In 1976 you seem to have some trouble getting people to take you seriously. Where did the passion go? Did you lose it or did the public?

MR. MC CARTHY: I think it is an altogether different time. The issue is different; the issues are different. It was highly emotional in 1968. I think almost anyone who challenged the war position then would have elicited somewhat the same response that I did.

This time we are asking people to make rather restrained and rational judgments about the issues and also about the political process. As a matter of fact, I think the response



we have gotten so far in terms of people responding to our petition effort has been more than encouraging. If you can get over 50,000 people to sign a petition in the State of Maryland, it means there is an interest and I think that this will build.

We knew in the beginning really that we would have to wait until the distraction of the two conventions was out of the way before we could get really serious attention and as of now our efforts have gone pretty much on schedule.

MS. ELLERBEE: Have you been treated fairly by the media?

MR. MC CARTHY: Oh, I never really argue about that. I can see why the media have some trouble. I mean, giving us time when they had all the other distractions. They could make excuses. Occasionally, when I watch the evening news and see what they do put on, I feel I-- maybe just because I am, I ought to get on. Walter Kronkite, two or three weeks ago, spent two nights talking about the boy who had been raised by the apes. They discovered that he hadn't been; first they thought he had; then they retracted two nights later. I think it was two minutes each night. They found out the child had just watched television too much, and I thought that I might demand equal time with the ape boy at least for one night of two minutes.

Other than that, we are not really complaining much about it.

We may later on because we are counting on this as being essentially a media campaign because we are going to have to reach the people who normally don't come out.

We won't have 45,000 people in Fenway Park this time.

MR. WILL: Senator McCarthy, in a recent column you are quoted as saying that Carter is demagogic in just about everything. Can you give me some examples?

MR. MC CARTHY: Well, I could give you -- I don't know whether I really said in just about everything. I have said I worry about his language, and I think language is important. I think you really know -- if you have to change the scripture, "By their 'words' ye shall know them," and I find words that Carter uses that do disturb me.

For example, within a few months after the Kent State killings, as Governor of Georgia, he said that he would send out the National Guard, which is all right, but then he said, "with live ammunition and with orders to shoot to kill."

Well, you don't have to put those two phrases in, it seems to me, unless you are trying to stir something. In cases, he said, of riots, as I recall, and student unrest. It was the words "with live ammunition and orders to shoot to kill."

Recently in a foreign policy speech he talked about detente. Well, I think you can criticize detente -- not very much -- I think Ford is doing as well as anyone could be expected to do with it. But that wasn't it. It was the language he used, which was that the Soviets were using it as a cover to carry on their world revolution. Well, where does the word "world revolution" come from? It is this kind of language that creeps into it too regularly. As I said, I guess it disturbs me. At least I have noted it, and I think it is on the edge of demagoguery.

If you go back to the rather well publicized matter of his statement about Calley, he said Calley was a scapegoat. Well, I don't think Calley was a scapegoat. I think there may have been other people who should have been prosecuted in that case, but Calley was convicted of what he was guilty of. He didn't carry anybody else's guilt. And this is essentially what a scapegoat does, if we are going to use the language properly.

And he said the prosecution was bad for morale. I don't think it was bad for morale. The morale of the troops in Vietnam was destroyed not by the trial of Calley, but because they were called upon to do things in that theater of war very similar to what Mr. Calley did, and to say that this destroyed the morale is, I think, a misrepresentation.

And then some four or five years later he called it a racist war. I don't think it was a racist war. I don't think you use words like "racist," for example, unless you are prepared to really historically and objectively demonstrate that it is true. I don't think that it was a racist war.

MR. WILL: Senator, there is a lively interest in the country as to whether or not Mr. Carter is a liberal or a closet conservative or what-have-you. You recently defined a liberal. You said, "A liberal these days is someone who helps a man drowning 40 feet from shore by throwing him a 25 foot rope and saying, 'I have met you more than half way.'"

MR. MC CARTHY: "Gone more than half way," yes.

MR. WILL: Does this mean that your criticism of liberal programs these days is that they don't go quite far enough, or is it more fundamental?

MR. MC CARTHY: It is really more fundamental than that. You really shouldn't try to save a man who is dying simply by throwing out a rope. You ought to do more than that. My criticism is principally that the programs that the liberals are supporting have little relevance to the real problem.

Take for example -- well, I will give you three examples. They are talking about antitrust action. Well, antitrust action has not had any significant bearing upon operation of our economy I suppose since 1893, probably. We have a whole wing of the Senate office given over to the Antitrust Subcommittee, and every year the man comes out, like Groundhog's Day, with a chart, and he says "The concentration of control in the corporation is greater this year than it was last year; give me 5 million more."

So he goes back in and he comes out the next Groundhog's Day, and it is worse.

This approach has not had relevance I suppose since the economists 50 years ago began to talk about the economics of imperfect competition. What they ought to be talking about is proper social direction of the corporations, and the corporations



I think will respond.

Let's take the oil companies. The problem of the oil companies has not been that they were too big. Really what happened was that they provided us too much cheap gasoline and oil over too long a period of time. They got us hooked on cheap fuel, and that is what we ought to be talking about. That is the real concern, instead of antitrust action.

The income tax, reform of the income tax: We have long since reached the point where any more tinkering with the progressive rate is going to do anything significant about the economic or social problems of the country, and to suggest that we are going to close a few more loopholes when most of them were -- I helped to write much of the present code. I was on the House committee for 4 years and 12 years on the Senate Tax Committee, and I know what is in the code. And it is nonsense to suggest that this is a vital issue.

The third thing is their full employment act, which is 80 percent fraud, in the sense that it may take care of 1.5, maybe 2 million unemployed workers at great cost, and to suggest that the full employment act will take care of 6 to 8 million people who are out of work in this country is sheer nonsense. So those are three points.

MR. BRODER: Senator, why have you refused to disclose your income tax and health records as the other candidates have done?

MR. MC CARTHY: Well, I am quite willing to expose my assets, to let anyone know. What I am waiting to do is for a real confrontation with someone like John Gardner. I will say, "John, I will give you my assets. What you have got in your pocket -- you give me yours, and we will have an exchange of assets."

MR. MONROE: John Gardner being the head of Common Cause.

MR. MC CARTHY: Well, he is one of the principal advocates of it.

But I have no objection. I have revealed my assets before. I don't really think that the question of income is a matter that should be involved. I did say I would consider doing it when I was first asked about it, if the paper that wanted this information would publish my position on the economic issues that face the country. I told the medical group I was quite prepared to do it if they would publicize my position on health and medicine in this country. As you also know, I said that after reading about the physical disabilities of the other candidates, I feel like the Bionic Man.

MR. BRODER: I didn't quite understand your answer. Did you say that you are or are not willing to disclose your income tax records and your health records?

MR. MC CARTHY: No, I don't think I would expose my

income tax records; I don't think they should be. I think there is too much exposure of income tax within the government. I think I would say no to that.

MR. BRODER: Let me ask you about one other economic issue then. You have proposed that employment be spread in this country by reducing the work week from 40 to 35 hours.

MR. MC CARTHY: Roughly that, yes.

MR. BRODER: I am not clear whether you have also suggested there be a proportionate decrease in the wages of those workers.

MR. MC CARTHY: Actually I would prefer a shortened year. I have said that as you moved on this, that there would be pressure against wage increases. If we control inflation we have taken care of a six percent wage decrease every year in any case. We can put the arithmetic on this altogether, David, and make it work. But there will be some pressure against wage increases and pension increases. There will be some pressure on prices, there will be some pressure on profits. The question is, what kind of a society do you want? Do we want to accept the economists' view now that 6 percent unemployment is tolerable in this country; that we are going to surplus 8 million people and thereby give credence to the Marxist criticism that capitalism eventually will surplus large numbers of people and hold them there in readiness to be used only in time of war?

It is a question of what kind of society you want.

We reduced hours and working time in 1938. That was a work redistribution program. And 30 years later, with all the progress of automation and technology, we say "Well, we can't do it, you know, because of the economic consequences."

I think we can tolerate and bear whatever economic consequences arise, and what we can't tolerate are the social consequences of 7 or 8 million people chronically out of work.

MR. MONROE: We have less than a minute.

Senator McCarthy, do you think that Jimmy Carter's religious beliefs should be an issue in this campaign?

MR. MC CARTHY: Well, I don't really know what Jimmy's beliefs are. I don't see them as bearing particularly upon the campaign. He hasn't really quite told us what he believes. What he in effect says is he has a rather vague religion which he holds to very strongly. We went through that with Eisenhower. It didn't really hurt. And I see it as having no bearing upon the campaign, and I don't see it as having any significant bearing upon how he might act as President, or how he might conduct the office.

MR. MONROE: In just a few seconds, does it concern you that he is a Southerner?

MR. MC CARTHY: No. It concerns me that he has got the same wrong ideas about what to do for the country as the Northern liberals in the Democratic Party have.

MR. MONROE: Thank you, Senator McCarthy, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

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