PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. MORATORIUM

Pacifica Radio Archives: “Protests, Rallies, Demonstrations”
(Funded by The Ford Foundation)
Reported by Steve Bookshester and Dale Minor, with interviews by Julius Lester. From Pacifica Radio’s coverage of the Democratic National Convention. Features sounds from downtown demonstrations and the Convention floor. Examines the political struggles on the floor of the Convention, and features Julius Lester’s interviews with black delegates who talk about the confusion and corruption of the process, as well as reports on the battle on the hill outside the Convention. Includes reports by Elsa Knight Thompson about the demonstrations and Allen Ginsberg’s address to demonstrators and the Chicago police. Broadcast on KPFK, August 28, 1968. Pacifica Radio Archives Number BB4550. Program length: 60:00

We appreciate your comments, additions and corrections. Please address them to: Brian DeShazor, Director, Pacifica Radio Archives, 3729 Cahuenga Blvd., West, North Hollywood, CA 91604. Phone: (800) 735-0230, e-mail: pacarchive@aol.com. Also contact Pacifica Radio Archives for information regarding audio CDs.

Transcript

CONVENTION COVERAGE IN CHICAGO, 1968

[Sound: Voices, organ music, etc. On the floor of the Democratic National Convention at the International Amphitheater in Chicago]

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: Good evening. This is Pacifica Radio. This is Pacifica Radio’s continuing coverage of the 1968 Democratic National Convention from the International Amphitheater in Chicago’s Stockyards area. This is Steve Bookshester, along with Dale Minor. Here at the Amphitheater, we’ve had a long, very interesting, somewhat confused night here. Earlier this evening, the Unit Rule was abolished for at least this Democratic
National Convention. Now, we’ve just passed a vote on the seating of, uh, minority
groups, the minority report on the Texas delegation, actually, and in that vote, which was
considered, as well as the earlier vote, a test of Humphrey’s strength, the Texas delegation
will be seated as it was picked, with Governor John Connally’s Texas Democratic Party
that was involved in the (UNCLEAR) 600 to 800 vote in favor of seating the regular
debtation. Dale?

DALE MINOR: I was just thinking, Steve. I was wondering whether one should
considered the music that we’re currently hearing, which is, in fact, the floor sound
coming to you, uh, live, uh, whether or not we should consider that as, uh, uh,
symptomatic of this Convention, or uh, Mayor Daley rising in anger and snarling at
Walter Cronkite and, uh, CBS.

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: Well, this is, uh, - they’re playing “Some Enchanted
Evening.” It hasn’t exactly been an enchanted evening. There have been plenty of fights
– the fights that always plague the Democratic Party, but are worse than ever this year.
But, at least, it’s been somewhat of an enchanted evening for the Humphrey forces.
Shortly after the vote on whether or not they would vote on these credentials fights
tonight, a vote that gathered only 650 to 750 votes for the opposition, one of the
members of the McCarthy staff, whose been with the McCarthy campaign almost since
its inception in New Hampshire, walked by me in the corridors and said, “Gene
McCarthy doesn’t have 650 votes in this convention and Jesse Unruh went out and
proved it with that, by calling for that Credentials Committee vote. The McCarthy
people – at least some of them – are very annoyed that Speaker Unruh did that, but the fact is that, it’s just been a particularly confusing day here and we expect more to come with the platform fight tomorrow, and it’s been confusing inside and outside and we hope to tell about all that in the next hour.

DALE MINOR: At least, uh, more confusion we expect to come, uh, tomorrow. Uh, the evening began with the, uh, formal hot air, uh, and cliches of all nominating conventions in the American political system and, uh, but very early in the evening, storms began brewing on the floor, uh, which were first formalized and, uh, in the minority report on the unit rule. (ORGAN MUSIC CONTINUES)

DALE MINOR: In one case, uh, the California delegation is reported seriously split and, uh, at war with itself. Pacifica’s William Winter talked to Carmen Warshaw, the National Committeewoman-elect for California, about prospects of a floor fight, when the report of the Rules Committee was made, and Mrs. Warshaw, a member of the California delegation originally pledged to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy [Democrat, New York], made this outspoken comment. (SOUND OF CONVENTION HALL CONTINUES)

CARMEN WARSHAW: Mr. Winter, I have never – I have been to a Convention since 1948. I have never seen the Rules, the conditions that exist today in this Convention Hall. I, uh, am amazed at the chaos, both in the program, in the seating, in the ability to move around. I can’t tell you what will happen. I don’t know what a Committee report will be. Some members of our Committee of Rules and Platforms have been told there
was a meeting. When they get to the place where the meeting is supposed to be, it is not there. Uh, I do not quite understand it. I’m beginning to. I hope it’s not true, what I’m seeing here today.

WILLIAM WINTER: What do you think you’re seeing here today that you hope is not true?

MS. WARSHAW: Well, uh, Major Yorty wants – uh, wanted to run for Senate, came to a California Democratic Council meeting and said it’s wired, rigged, and stacked, and I’m beginning to get this feeling at this Convention.

WILLIAM WINTER: You think this Convention is stacked for Humphrey?

MS. WARSHAW: It’s stacked for, uh, as some of our young people might say, for the Establishment.

WILLIAM WINTER: Do you think there’ll be any protests on the floor if that should turn out to be so?

MS. WARSHAW: I think there might be some upsets. I don’t know if they will be major ones, in terms of Rules, in terms of Credentialing. Uh, whoever is the nominee, I feel, a great majority will go along, however, I hope there will not be such resentment that it will hurt the chances of the Democratic Party because I think that’s the Party for the people in the United States.

DALE MINOR: But then, Winter interviewed California delegate, Harold Willins, who definitely did not agree.

WILLIAM WINTER: It seems now that, uh, there’s a good deal of sentiment building in
this Convention for the idea that the Convention is *stacked* for Humphrey. Now, let’s suppose that Hubert Humphrey *does* get the nomination, since you and members of the Kennedy delegation have, in the past, opposed Humphrey due to identifying with the [LBJ] Administration, how do you think you’d feel if Humphrey *does* get the nomination? What would you do about it?

DELEGATE HAROLD WILLINS: I’d feel pretty awful, I must say. As to what I’d do about it, uh, it’s very hard to project. First of all, I feel that Humphrey would have no possibility, no reasonable chance at all to defeat Nixon. I think a Humphrey nomination would insure a Republican walk-away in the election. So, it’s my hope that enough delegates and *leaders* here in this convention recognize and accept that fact, and will be guided accordingly. If that, uh, eventuality of a Humphrey nomination *did* develop, I must say that I’d have to re-assess my position.

WILLIAM WINTER: It’s going to be quite a quandary for many people, won’t it?

MR. WILLINS: (WE HEAR OTHER SPEAKERS IN BACKGROUND) Yes, it will, indeed. Because many of us who feel that, uh, the world is *new*, and that, uh, the new realities must be faced, uh, would be very much dissatisfied with a man like Humphrey who is pretty much stuck in the mid-forties.

WILLIAM WINTER: And you feel, then, that there may be a lot of – there may be some defections in the Democratic Party?

MR. WILLINS: Oh, I’m convinced of that. I –

WILLIAM WINTER: Do you think the people who supported Senator Kennedy
[Robert F. Kennedy] or favored Senator McCarthy or McGovern might vote for Nixon, if Humphrey got the Democratic nomination?

MR. WILLINS: Uh, my feeling is that many would. I must say that I, myself, am considering doing that, and that’s a real turn-around for me because I consider myself a more or less enlightened, liberal person – all those adjectives are confusing, but nevertheless, that pretty much describes me – I remember when Nixon viciously destroyed Helen Gahagan Douglas in California. So, it’s a real switch for me to say that I might find myself supporting this, uh, very unlikable, indeed, detestable, man. Nevertheless, uh, I don’t see too much difference between Humphrey and himself and the thing that might swing me to Nixon is the belief that he might have a better chance of extricating us from Viet Nam. I’m, uh, as you know, in Southern California, I develop uh, commercial properties. It’s very hard for me to imagine having an architect who designed one me be the man to tear it down and, uh, I consider Humphrey as one of the architects of the disastrous Viet Nam policy and that weighs heavily in my mind in terms of a, what I would really call a non-choice otherwise, between Humphrey and Nixon.

DALE MINOR: That was William Winter on the floor with the California delegation. Steve?

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: You know, Dale, I was just thinking. And so, we have Mr. Willins, who says he might vote for Nixon if Humphrey is nominated and, before him, Mrs. Warshaw, who had nice things to say about Ronald Reagan. So, there’s a great deal of continuing dissension in the Democratic Party. Another part of the dissension here at
the Convention occurred in the New York delegation earlier this evening when New York
was polling itself on whether or not it would go as a whole in opposition to the seating of
the Texas delegation – the credentials challenge that we heard just awhile ago. At one
point, it looked like there was actually a fist fight that was going to break out. Evidently,
what had happened is that, earlier today, the New York delegation had met; had decided it
was a racial issue, had decided to go unanimously against the seating of the regular Texas
delegation. One of the people who was not at that meeting was Under Secretary of
Commerce Howard Samuels, who – and this is part of the argument that ensued as a
result of Mr. Samuels misunderstanding –

(CROWD NOISE, BACKGROUND VOICES – RECORDED EARLIER)

VOICE: …He put up that Minority Report…

VOICE: Yes

VOICE 1: He even said this issue was not as clear-cut.

VOICE 2: It’s not a clear-cut issue.

VOICE 1: Not as clear cut, but he pointed out all of the arguments and unanimously all
alternate and all delegates voted to support it. If you want to change your vote, you’re
entitled to. (BACKGROUND VOICES)

VOICE 3: 189 to 1. That’s all. It’s better that way anyway. John, announce 189 to 1.

VOICE 4: Who is the other one?

VOICE 3: Who is the other one? I don’t know, someone back there.

VOICE 4: All right. 188 to 2.
VOICE: …if that’s the way the Delegation feels, it ought to be unanimous.

(LAUGHTER)

WILLIAM WINTER: The New York delegation’s just decided, after a heated fight…

STEVE BOOKSESTER: And certainly, the New York State Delegation had decided, after a heated fight, that it would go 190 votes to none in opposition to the seating of the Texas delegation, a delegation that, as we mentioned, was seated. At one point, there was some mention on the floor, that if Texas was not seated, a number of other Southern delegations would walk out. Dale?

DALE MINOR: Uh, what dissident groups should or should not do as a, uh, in order to voice their, uh, dissidence and their unhappiness over various issues is, in itself, a major and continuing issue in the caucus rooms and floor conversations uh, and, uh, delegates who belong to what has been called the Black Caucus are no exception to this rule, as has been reported, uh, by Julius Lester earlier this evening from the floor.

JULIUS LESTER: This is Julius Lester. I’m on the floor of the Democratic Convention and I’m talking to one of the Black women delegates from New York State. What’s your name?

JUANITA WATKINS: Juanita Watkins.

JULIUS LESTER: And where are you from?

JUANITA WATKINS: St. Albans, Queens County.

JULIUS LESTER: St. Albans, Queens County. What do you think the, uh, Black Caucus is doing in relationship to the convention?
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JUANITA WATKINS: Well, unfortunately, because of a New York State Caucus, which lasted all afternoon, I was unable to attend, uh, the Caucus that was set up – the Black Caucus that was set up for one o’clock today, but I do know that one of the things is to urge and push this voter registration. I did attend last night’s session, and this voter registration and voting – because even those of us who do register don’t always vote and we’ve got to get out and, uh, make this felt. Another thing that has been done, with the help of many of our White brothers and sisters, has been to push on the important committees, such as Credentials and Rules for changes which affect large groups of Black people, particularly in Southern states.

JULIUS LESTER: Right, right. Is there any possibility that the Black delegates from New York State will vote for Channing Phillips from Washington, D.C. on the first ballot, who’s going to be a “Favorite Son” candidate?

JUANITA WATKINS: I haven’t heard anything about it, so I really can’t answer that, uh.

JULIUS LESTER: Right. What are your own feelings about it?

JUANITA WATKINS: This is the first I’m hearing about it, so I wouldn’t …

JULIUS LESTER: Okay, okay. You’re not going to comment right now.

JUANITA WATKINS: No, because – You caught me cold. I’m hearing about it from you for the first time.

JULIUS LESTER: Okay, thanks a lot. Uh, what’s your name, sir?

GUY BREWER: My name is Guy R. Brewer.
JULIUS LESTER: And where are you from in New York State?

GUY BREWER: I’m from the fair county of Queens.

JULIUS LESTER: Queens, okay. One of the questions I’m asking all of the Black delegates I can talk to while I’m on the floor, is just what do you think the, uh, Black Caucus is going to do as a, uh, body here at the Convention?

GUY BREWER: I don’t know. Uh, so far, I, uh, have not, uh, been in contact with them. We seem to be a little disorganized here insofar as actually getting together with, uh, all of the Negro delegates from over the country.

JULIUS LESTER: What would you like to see them to do with anything, as a body?

GUY BREWER: Well, I would like to see them organize in a manner in which they could exert their collective influence. Now, according to the National Committee, the figures released by Louis Martin, the Deputy Chairman, there are slightly over three hundred Negro delegates here. Now, three hundred, in a tight fight like the way this thing is this year, if they were organized, and spoke as a monolithic unit, they could make a vast difference in this convention. They could, they could swing a great deal of power.

JULIUS LESTER: There is some talk among some of the Black delegates of, uh, voting for Channing Phillips from Washington, D.C. on the first ballot, who’s going to be a “Favorite Son” candidate – Black candidates, I mean, Black delegates supporting him. What are your feelings about that?

GUY BREWER: Poppy-cock, a waste of time and energy.

JULIUS LESTER: Why do you think so?
GUY BREWER: What? – Why do you want to engage in the exercise in futility? You know, the man hasn’t, uh, got a chance. You haven’t even got all the Black delegates organized. What good does it do to put somebody up and let him get, uh, forty-one votes? It doesn’t make any impact at all.

JULIUS LESTER: Could I ask you one last question, which is –

GUY BREWER: Surely.

JULIUS LESTER: Who are you going to be voting for when the balloting starts?

GUY BREWER: I have not made my mind up. I ran as an uncommitted candidate. I am still uncommitted and, uh, I have got to wait to see what the candidates – how they shape up on many things, not only Civil Rights, but on our immoral, illegal war in Viet Nam. Uh, being of the age group that I’m in, I have a long, tribal identification, you might say, with Hubert Humphrey, but, uh, Mr. Humphrey has put me through some agonizing moments. I, uh, hope that he, uh, adopts a position on the war that would permit me to support him. But so far, that has not happened and I cannot say whom I’m going to vote for.

JULIUS LESTER: I’m talking to another Black delegate of the New York State delegation. What’s your name, sir?

EDWARD ODOM: Edward J. Odom.

JULIUS LESTER: And what district are you from?

EDWARD ODOM: I’m a delegate at-large from Nassau County.

JULIUS LESTER: From Nassau County. One of the questions I’m asking all of the
delegates is, “What type of action do you think the Black Caucus should take while they’re here at the Convention?”

EDWARD ODOM: Well, one thing, I think they ought to defend, uh, the many challenges, uh – I mean, defend, as a group, all of them who are delegates – all of these challenges that are coming up from the South regarding the proper apportionment of delegates. I think the Black Caucus certainly ought to, uh, to back them in every way.

JULIUS LESTER: One other question I wanted to ask you is, uh, there has been some talk – There has been some talk of the Black delegates voting for Channing Phillips from Washington, D.C. on the first ballot. He’s a “Favorite Son” candidate and he’s Black, and I was wondering what’s your thinking about that?

MR. ODOM: I think it would be symbolic action, uh. Many things, many things that have been accomplished in this country arose after some symbol. I would tend to go along with such action as that. It would be the first time that a Negro had ever been nominated and I think it has meaningful significance.

JULIUS LESTER: Okay, thank you very much. I’m talking to another Black delegate. What’s your name, sir?

TED CHILDS: Uh, Ted Childs.

JULIUS LESTER: And from where in New York are you?

TED CHILDS: From Nassau County. Delegate at-large. I’m also a candidate for State Senate, in the Fifth Senatorial District.

JULIUS LESTER: How do your chances look?
TED CHILDS: Well, I, I hope good. I hope good.

JULIUS LESTER: Okay. Uh, what type of action do you think the Black Caucus should take, while you’re here at the Convention?

TED CHILDS: Well, I think that, uh, number one, I think the most essential thing we can possibly do is to support all the challenges, uh, and make sure that the delegates, particularly from the Southern states get, uh, representation and, uh, the one thing I think that we can consolidate around, is to decide they’re supporting all the challenges, particularly Alabama and Georgia.

JULIUS LESTER: There’s been some talk of the Black Delegates supporting Channing Phillips, who’s a Black minister from Washington, D.C., who’s going to be running as a “Favorite Son” candidate on the first ballot. What’s your thinking on this?

TED CHILDS: Well, it’s certain to be a symbolic thing. We haven’t gotten together. I, myself, have not met with the Black Caucus. I think I would support anything that the Black Caucus did put forth. I think it’s a very symbolic gesture.

JULIUS LESTER: Who do you think is eventually going to get the nomination?

TED CHILDS: Well, I, I would imagine McCarthy – with tongue in cheek. (LAUGHS)

JULIUS LESTER: Who would you like to see get the nomination?

TED CHILDS: I would like to see anybody who has a good record or performance for Black people and, certainly, we can’t, uh, forget the performance of Humphrey over a period of twenty years. I think that McCarthy does mean change, because he hasn’t been tested, really, as far as the Black community is concerned, but he certainly is a man for
change. I think he’s the kind of man who would dedicate himself to the problems of the Black community.

JULIUS LESTER: I heard some talk this morning among New York State delegates about a McCarthy/Ted Kennedy ticket. How do you feel about that?

TED CHILDS: Really good. I couldn’t think of a better one.

JULIUS LESTER: Okay. Thank you very much.

TED CHILDS: You’re very welcome.

JULIUS LESTER: I’m talking to another Black delegate from the New York State delegation. The first question I want to ask you is, uh, what do you think the Black Caucus should do at this Convention? What type of action do you think they should take?

RALPH BOYD: Well, the Black Caucus has an opportunity – The delegates and the alternate delegates have an opportunity to evaluate all the camps in this Convention on what they stand for and what they intend to do. I think, at the conclusion of this Convention, we’ll definitely know what course America’s going to go into. I think we’ve reached a cross-road of Democracy now. We know how the Republicans stand. We know the policy in which they already adopted. We know this is definite. The course at which the Democratic Party follows the next two or three days will determine the future of America.

JULIUS LESTER: Right. There is some talk of the Black delegates all voting for Channing Philips, who is a Washington, D.C. Black minister who is going to be running as
a “Favorite Son” candidate, and voting for him on the first ballot. What’s your feeling about this?

RALPH BOYD: Well, unfortunately, perhaps I have not been in communications – and this comes as somewhat of a sudden thrust upon me, because I know nothing of the movement at all. I’m not in a position to, uh, be committed because I don’t know anything of such a movement. Now, this could be something that’s spontaneous and I would like to, uh, more briefed on this whole situation.

JULIUS LESTER: One last question. Whom do you want to, uh, see get the nomination?

RALPH BOYD: Well, I’m for, uh, Eugene McCarthy. At the outset, I was for a Democratic alternative since last October when the organization in the city of Schenectady and the county uh, wanted an alternative to the Johnson policy in Viet Nam and we, at that time, when the organization was established in October, we had – we didn’t have any idea at all who the individual or candidate would be to oppose the Johnson Administration foreign policy. Since that time, I think it was in November, when Eugene McCarthy came forward at the American who showed the courage and the conviction – who started from the grass root movement, that’s a grass root movement, without, uh, any real backing or finances and so forth – and so far, he has been consistent with his – with what the Committee on Democratic Alternative stands for.

JULIUS LESTER: And, uh, one last thing. I don’t think I asked you your name.

RALPH BOYD: Ralph F. Boyd, Sr. I’m President of Schenectady NAACP. Also, I’m a
former past (UNCLEAR) of the Veteran of Foreign Wars and a delegate at-large from the City and the County of Schenectady. I was appointed Delegate At-Large as a result of the Syracuse meeting on Friday, a week ago. I ran, uh, for, as a result of the efforts of the McCarthy people, and the great people of the Schenectady County on the McCarthy ticket. I won, uh, the City of Schenectady and the County overwhelmingly. I ran second to the Corning Machine in Albany. However, I was defeated as the elected one because of the Democratic stronghold in Albany. However… [FADES OUT]

DALE MINOR: That was, uh, Julius Lester interviewing Black members of the New York delegation on the Convention floor earlier this evening.

(BACKGROUND SPEAKER: “On this vote, the ‘Yes’es’ are 1, 368; the ‘No,s’ are 555. The minority report is rejected.”)

DALE MINOR: Not all of the activities taking place in connection with this Convention are taking place in the International Amphitheater. Since yesterday, some of it has been taking place in Chicago’s streets and parks. Here, with that part of the story, is Pacifica’s Elsa Knight Thompson.

[DEAD AIR – WE HEAR ELECTRONIC BUZZ]

DALE MINOR: - due to someone’s error and we’ll be back with Elsa Knight Thompson in just a moment.

(SOUND OF CONVENTION ACTIVITIES CONTINUE ON THE BACKGROUND)

FLOOR SPEAKER: - the delegation also includes 82 alternates, 41 of whom shall be
certified by the Georgia Democratic Party and 41 of whom shall be certified by the
delagation of loyal, National Democrats, provided –

DALE MINOR: - floor, but we don’t know at this point just what’s going on.

FLOOR SPEAKER: - that no delegate or alternate certified by either group, shall be
accredited until he shall have subscribed the following declaration: “ One, I am a bona fide
Democrat who has the interests, welfare, and success of the Democratic Party at heart
and who will participate in the Democratic National Convention in good faith. Two, I
will not support the candidacy of any persons for the offices of President and Vice
President of the United States of America, other than the nominees of the Democratic
National Convention in the 1968 general election. Provided further that any vacancies
occurring in the authorized membership of either group, by reason of the failure or refusal
of delegates certified by …”

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: Dale, what we’re hearing now in the background is Governor
Richard Hughes of New Jersey introducing the Credentials case on Georgia – the
Credentials Committee recommendation, which was, in fact, Governor Hughes’
recommended compromise on this case, was the half the delegation be made up of
members of the regular delegation – that is, the delegation chosen by Georgia Governor
Lester Maddox and State Party Chairman James Grey, and that half that delegation be,
uh, members of the Georgia Loyal Democrats, lead by Representative Julian Bond.

FLOOR SPEAKING: (CONTINUING, OVERLAPPING) - each of said groups to
subscribe to the four-point declaration, shall be filled by alternates certified by each of
said groups who do so subscribe; provided further, that all delegates and alternates accredited pursuant to this resolution, undertake to take all necessary steps to place on the November ballot in Georgia, Democratic electors that place the nominees of this Convention. Mr. Chairman, I request and move that this resolution that five minutes of time be reserved for me and additional other speakers in support of the Resolution. I’ve given you a list of those who wish to speak, opposed were a minority…(INAUDIBLE) STEVE BOOKSHESTER: So, at this point, we’re, uh, coming up on the floor with the fight on this Georgia recommendation. STEVE BOOKSHESTER: Uh, and uh, now I believe we’re just about ready to hear Elsa Knight Thompson introducing Pacifica’s coverage of, uh, extra-curricular activities in Chicago last night and today. (PHONE RINGS; CONVENTION SPEAKERS IN BACKGROUND) FLOOR SPEAKER: - Fifteen minutes will be allocated for those talking on behalf of the Minority Report. The Chair is pleased and proud to present the President of the Burrough of the Bronx, the Honorable Herman Badillo (APPLAUSE). STEVE BOOKSHESTER: One can hope, but it doesn’t always come true. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, I speak on behalf of those of us who dissent vigorously – (CUTTING TO REPORT ON DEMONSTRATORS IN THE PARK – HEAR TAPE REWIND) ELSA KNIGHT THOMPSON: …Jean Genet…
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(SOUND: TRAFFIC, VOICES, DOGS)

DEMONSTRATOR: Last night was a victory for us. We had this whole area tied off and they had to stop us from going through the Loop, by closing the bridge. Now, if they – There are going to be growing numbers, thousands and thousands. Our numbers are going to double and triple, coming to Chicago. If [Mayor] Daley wants the Revolution to begin in Chicago, he wants Chicago to be honored, uh, by having that event occur here, just as Chicago was “honored” by the Haymarket Riots, okay, then let Daley call it. Uh, we’re not, we’re not leaving Chicago. I’m not leaving Chicago. They’ll have to take me out of here in a box. I’m not leaving Chicago. We’re gonna stay and we’re gonna come here for the reason that, that we came here and, uh, I think that’s about all I have to say.

DEMONSTRATOR: Just one more thing, one more thing, several things. We, we know that what’s happening to us has been happening to our Black brothers ever since this country was founded and now we’re being treated like them. We know that what’s happening to us goes on everyday in West Oakland to the Black people there and to the Black Panthers. We know that, uh, that, uh, there are Black political leaders who are framed on charges and in jail right now, like Huey Newton and we intend to support them and to fight for them and they’re gonna support us and fight for us.

(SOUNDS OF DOGS BARKING, ENGINES)

ALLEN GINSBERG: I’m speaking in my role as the “King of May of Prague,” elected by 100,000 people in the Park of Culture and Rest in Prague, 1965…

(SOUND: CONVENTION FLOOR, SPEAKERS)
STEVE BOOKSHESTER: That, of course, is Allen Ginsberg, speaking earlier today.

This, of course, is Pacifica Radio’s 1968 Democratic National Convention coverage, coming to you live from the International Amphitheater in Chicago. This is Pacifica Radio, Chicago. We pause now thirty seconds for station identification.

KPFK ANNOUNCER: This is KPFK, listener-supported Pacifica Radio in Los Angeles at 90.7. We are bringing you, live from Chicago, the Pacifica Radio coverage of the Democratic Convention. We will be broadcasting every day between six and seven and between 8:30 and 9:30 PM, the live coverage from Chicago.

(SOUND OF CONVENTION RESUMES)

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: This is Pacifica Radio, Chicago. This is Pacifica Radio’s coverage of the 1968 Democratic National Convention, live from the International Amphitheater on Chicago’s South Side. We continue now with coverage of events that occurred earlier today, in connection with the Yippies and the National Mobilizations to End the War in Viet Nam. Here’s Allen Ginsberg.

(OUTDOOR SOUNDS RESUME)

ALLEN GINSBERG: The conditions in Chicago, at present, are very similar to the authoritarian Marxist conditions in Prague in ’65 and ’68 today. The ban on demonstrations proposes violence. The State proposes violence when it doesn’t allow younger people to assemble calmly and peacefully without the sound of motorcycles (CHEERS AND APPLAUSE). The original Yippie proposition was a “Festival of Life.” Timothy Leary wanted to come because he figured he would be in jail in any case, and the
only way he could stay out of jail was if he came to Chicago and cheered everybody up a bit, and ended the anxiety syndrome that’s been laid down by both media and government. The situation we’re in the middle of now, is that we haven’t got a permit to stay in the park, which we applied for a long, long time ago, although, as Jean Genet remarked earlier in the car coming up, such rights are old human rights. We don’t have a permit to sleep in the park, although it’s obvious, if the Mayor wants to maintain law and order, the proper thing would be to find a place for the young people here to put their bodies so they’d stay out of trouble. The young people here need a place to retire to, and need a sanctuary. The Mayor’s not allowing a sanctuary at night. Thus, at eleven, large bands of police move in and move everybody out to the street over there, where people have nowhere to go. Therefore, they’re clogging the streets; therefore, the police move in; therefore, obviously, there’s going to be violence. Because, both the police are out of their heads, and some of the Yippies are out of their heads, and the Mayor is not taking that into account and trying to calm the situation by providing sanctuary - calm, tranquil place. So the cause of the violence, ultimately, is the disorder created by the city in not allowing a calm Convention meeting to take place here. (APPLAUSE AND CHEERS)

ALLEN GINSBERG: What to do about that disorder? I would be in favor of marching, with the Mobilization on Wednesday, if the Yippies were hip enough to take off all their clothes and march down toward the meeting place chanting “Om.” (APPLAUSE) That would probably calm the police if they were not too anxiety-stricken by the nakedness or the spirituality. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) An alternative proposition would
for - be for the police to chant “Om,” which would be a weapon in their hands, much more efficient for maintaining law and order than their guns and nightsticks. (CROWD RESPONSE ‘Yeah.’ SCATTERED APPLAUSE) It’s an obvious, practical alternative if the State wants order and doesn’t want disorder. But the State has been coming on dumb, and thus we’ve had disorder. What to do about the march? I don’t know. This was originally to be a “Festival of Life,” not a confrontation. There were people among the Yippies that wanted a confrontation. Stew [Stew Albert], I think, wants a confrontation because he believes it’s historically necessary to defend his rights that way, that his skillful means is to stand his ground. My own feeling is I don’t want to get my head busted in, and I don’t want anybody who came, knowing that I was coming here, to have their head busted in. So I’m not going to march formally as a Yippie. I’m going on the Mobilization march as an individual, but not as a leader of Yippies. And I don’t know if I’ll march from here if it looks like a bloodbath-scene. The problem is that both Abbie [Abbie Hoffman], Jerry [Jerry Rubin], Stew [Stew Albert], to some extent, are more radically militant, want to defend their liberties in a Constitutional way by maintaining the ground that they, both as human beings and as constitutional citizens, are allowed to occupy. I feel that the police of Chicago, the Mayor, and the Democratic Party are all too irrational to deal with in a rational manner. (APPLAUSE)

ALLEN GINSBERG: I went to see the Mayor’s, uh, representatives a week and a half ago and spoke to Mr. Bush, whom Dick Gregory says is the actual controller of the Mayor, and to David Stahl, who is the Mayor’s representative to meeting the Yippies,
explained that I didn’t want to get my head busted in. Mr. Bush said his children read my poetry and they might be around here, too, and he didn’t want his children’s head busted in. (SOMEONE IN CROWD SHOUTS: “Lenny Bruce Lives!”) So, the proposition, in order to make Lenny Bruce live calmly, (PERSON IN CROWD: “Truth is what is.”) was to have everybody permitted to sleep in the parks, and permitted to assemble in the parks and permission for loud speakers to keep order. All those permissions were denied and so we have the consequent disorder of the moment. (DOG BARKING) I don’t think it would be a good idea for the Yippies to get involved in a fight with the police. I’m sure the police are not interested in a fight, are you? (LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE) Sir, are you interested in violence seen? Well, come on! Respond! We’re trying to end the problem, not continue it. Okay, so the police are unresponsive. (CROWD COMMENTS, “He just walked away,” etc.) Who is the head of police here? (SOMEONE IN CROWD SAYS: He said, ‘Oink!’ LAUGHTER, CROWD APPLAUSE) Mockery of the police is not going to stop the problem. Mockery of the police is not going to stop the problem either. So, who is the head of the police here now? (CROWD RESPONSE, “They have no leaders. They’re leaderless. They’re anarchists.”) Is the Sergeant here? Is there anybody in authority with the police? Will you newsmen please notice that there is no, like, mutual conversation with the police when it’s attempted? So, we’re stuck with the problem of a State which doesn’t want to communicate with the citizens. (PERSON IN CROWD, “Let the snakes loose!”) The proposition, on one hand, is ‘Let the snakes loose.’ On the other hand, like, let the doves
loose. (PERSON IN CROWD, “Right.”) I’d say let the doves loose if you’ve got the
imagination. (APPLAUSE, “Yes.”)

JEAN GENET: [SPEAKS IN FRENCH, TRANSLATED BY GINSBERG] First,
please tell them that I took very much Nembutal last night to forget that I was in
America. (LAUGHTER, CHEERS AND APPLAUSE) (GINSBERG CONTINUES TO
TRANSLATE) I have very little to say. But the houses and the buildings I see
(SOMEONE IN CROWD, “Where was the little children?” WITH RESPONSE FROM
CROWD OF “Shut up.”) I like plants. I love much flowers. (GENET CONTINUES
TO SPEAK IN FRENCH) I wait for the moment and I have waited a long time when it
will be necessary?

UNKNOWN TRANSLATOR: I will wait. I will wait as long as necessary.

ALLEN GINSBERG: And I will wait as long as necessary. (GENET CONTINUES TO
SPEAK IN FRENCH)

UNKNOWN TRANSLATOR: ‘Til all the plants and all the flowers cover over all those
buildings and render them poetic.

ALLEN GINSBERG: ‘Til all the plants and all the flowers re-cover the buildings to make
them poetic. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF “Yeah.”) (GENET CONTINUES)

UNKNOWN TRANSLATOR: I will wait as long as necessary for America to rot.

ALLEN GINSBERG: I will wait as long as necessary for America to rot. (GENET
CONTINUES) And you have begun. And I – Wait – (SOMEONE IN CROWD SINGS,
“Double your pleasure, double your fun…”) What’s that?
UNKNOWN TRANSLATOR: We’ll do what we can.

ALLEN GINSBERG: We’ll do whatever we can. (That’s easy.) (GENET CONTINUES) (CROWD “Thank you”)

ALLEN GINSBERG: I find the hippies very pretty, very beautiful, and very curious interesting. (GENET CONTINUES)

ALLEN GINSBERG: Uh, the ones I love most are the ones with the blue helmets, the revolvers (CROWD LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) – the blue dress. (APPLAUSE)

UNKNOWN TRANSLATOR: The people who don’t dress in normal fashion, in other words.

ALLEN GINSBERG: That will dress unconventionally also. (LAUGHTER)

(GENET CONTINUES) Yeah. If they do permit the curious dress of the funny helmets, the blue helmets, the revolvers, and the tear gas bombs, in the Convention, then why do they not permit the equally interesting dress of the people assembled here? (APPLAUSE)

ELSE KNIGHT THOMPSON: This afternoon, Pacifica reporters took their mikes onto State Street, where a large march protesting the arrest of Tom Hayden, headed for police headquarters at Eleventh and State. This is reporter Phil Watson.

(SOUND OF STREET MARCH, CHANTS, TRAFFIC, ETC)

PHIL WATSON: - Oh, I guess that’s the West side of State Street, uh, heading in a direction around the building, along Eleventh Street. In addition to the chants of ‘Free Huey,’ they’re now chanting, ‘Free Hayden,’ in Chicago. (SPEAKER WITH MEGAPHONE IN BACKGROUND)
PHIL WATSON: The demonstration has grown from the earlier announced figure of five hundred, to several thousand. (CROWD SHOUTS IN BACKGROUND) There’s poet Austin Black [Sp?] participating. (SPEAKER ANNOUNCEMENT AND CROWD CHANTING) The chant is ‘What do we want?’ The answer is ‘Revolution!’ The chant is ‘When.’ The answer is ‘Now!’

PHIL WATSON: The demonstration has stopped at the corner of Michigan and Eleventh Street. Uh, the police are saying that they have the green light. They are now blocking traffic and they should move out, but they seem to be standing and having some sort of conference.

SOMEONE IN CROWD: Ask him how all those guys are dying in Cook County Jail mysteriously. Three of them so far this week.

PHIL WATSON: This week? Some spectator out of the crowd, as you heard, is complaining that three young people have died in Cook County Jail and that we should ask police about that. (CHANTING IN BACKGROUND: “Hell no, we won’t go”)

SOMEONE IN CROWD: Ask him about the (UNCLEAR) Mr. Jones.

PHIL WATSON: This is Phil Watson again. I’ve crossed the street, walked up from Eleventh and stayed into Grant Park and the demonstration has moved up on a hill, across from the Standard Oil Company. Uh, they’re up on – What’s the monument there, young lady? Do you know? - There’s an impressive monument with horse and rider and standard barrier of the Mobilization Committee, uh, they have all climbed the horse and, if I had a camera, it would be a great shot to take.
PHIL WATSON: Now, you’re part a medical unit. Can you tell me what part you’re
taking in this demonstration and who you are, first of all?

WOMAN: Yes, I’m a physician, and this young lady is a nurse and we’re both members
of a group called The Medical Committee for Human Rights, and this group, together
with the Student Health Organization, which consists of health professional students who
have somewhat more progressive views than most, are working together with the
Mobilization and the other groups in the demonstrations to give First Aid, should it
become necessary.

PHIL WATSON: A police unit has just arrived on the scene. Some dozen officers. And
ordered the demonstrators off of the statue. I’m now walking up towards the base of the
statue, so I can tell you why they’ve chosen this statue. (CROWD SHOUTS) They are
mounted on the horse of the statue erected by the State of Illinois in the Honor of Major
General John A. Logan in 1864. And now the police are moving forward, dropping Billy
clubs, telling demonstrators to get off the statue. They’re holding – (“Get off there!”
CROWD SHOUTS) And the police have moved in, and very forcefully moved the
demonstrators off the statue. There’s one young man who’s kind of afraid to come down
and there are four friendly officers at the bottom of the statue persuading him to come
down. He’s a little high up, so they can’t go up and get him, it seems. (CROWD
NOISE) (SLIGHT CHUCKLE) Let me get around and see this. Excuse me, excuse me.
(SOMEONE IN CROWD “Keep up the support”). My luck. I’m going to run out of
tape. There’s a young man on top of the statue. He’s gonna have to be taken down.
(CROWD CLAPPING AND SHOUTS, “Get the Fire Department!”) SHOUTS OF “Yeah!” The officers are now attempting to climb the statue to bring the young man down physically who is sitting on the head of Major John A. Logan. Now, a young cadet is climbing up and he’s going to take the young man down. (CROWD NOISE) They have the young man by the leg, and the young cadet hit the young man in front…

ELSA KNIGHT THOMPSON: The young man was duly removed, and our reporter caught in the dissent, rolled down the hill with him and the police cadet. After he had re-assembled himself, he went on with the marchers. At one point, the marchers met a group of young Nixon supporters and violence very nearly ensued. But it ended up being verbal violence only.

PHIL WATSON: It seems that the Mobilization group has met a small group of Nixon supporters and you have a young argument– (UNCLEAR)

(EXCHANGES BETWEEN GROUPS, “Go to Viet Nam, don’t get a – UNCLEAR.

“You’ve got 20 millions blacks, twenty million Blacks ghetto-ized in this world. That’s why you have a (UNCLEAR) – That’s why, that’s why – You’ve got a million – You’ve got to go through twenty years of prison for “J’s” – Why aren’t you a social worker? Why don’t you join the police corps?…You’re not accomplishing one thing – the Hell, the Hell, I got to Columbia University, I go to Berkeley - Go to Berkeley, Go to Berkeley – Go to Wisconsin – Look how things are changing? -- You haven’t done one thing to help it! – Nixon doesn’t even have a good sign of progression – You’re campaigning for war! I
mean, he doesn’t even given himself a – Spiro T. Agnew is a venereal disease! – Jesus

Christ, brother, what’s wrong with you? Join us, man! – You’ve got to understand. You expect orders from the – You’ve got those foul plastic hats. You put Nixon on it, you put Humphrey on it, you put McCarthy on it, Dewey, Truman, Calvin Coolidge, anyone you want! It’s all the same plastic. Reality, brother – Who do you think is best? - Nobody. I think the Movement. I think the people – the people – are best -- That’s where it’s at. Not this crap. Let your hair grow, screw a girl, do whatever you want. – In any other country you wouldn’t be able to live – And they don’t have as much freedom as we do, either. – Oh, Freedom --They want freedom, go to Germany, go to Czechoslovakia. Go to Red China? Go to China? You’d be dead, you’d be dead.

PHIL WATSON: The demonstrators have, uh, kind of dispersed, but at the same time, there are spectators and Nixon supporters and Humphrey supporters, and that little incident there was between, uh, - an argument between, uh, Nixon supporters and some of the Mobilization youth, and they were having a philosophical discussion of ‘does any candidate matter at this time?’ and they’re trying to encourage the young Nixon supporters to take off their Nixon buttons and join the Mobilization. This is Phil Watson on Michigan Avenue, across from the Democratic National Headquarters.

ELSA KNIGHT THOMPSON: And so today’s demonstration, in protest of the arrest of Tom Hayden, drew to a close opposite the Hilton Hotel, which houses the Democratic Party headquarters. Julius Lester reports.

JULIUS LESTER: Now the police are – the youth are moving in behind the police and
are yelling and waving red flags. The police are marching in single-file very, very slowly, casually, sauntering you might say – they, in their cool act, I guess – going toward the statue where the students are. More youths are moving on to the hill. We’ll see just what happens. It’s about, uh, I guess a quarter-to-six in the afternoon. The Youth are yelling, ‘Take the hill! Take the hill!’ The police are lined up at the base of the hill, but not facing toward the hill, but facing toward Michigan Avenue, and they are smiling and chatting with each other, and just sort of standing.

JULIUS LESTER: What are you – What’s your reaction to what’s going on, brother?

SPECTATOR: I don’t know, man. Man, (INAUDIBLE) –

JULIUS LESTER: - the demonstration’s wrong or the cops are wrong?

SPECTATOR: The cops are wrong, man, yeah.

JULIUS LESTER: Why do you think they’re wrong? What have they been doing?

SPECTATOR: They’re hitting with the clubs, man. I don’t appreciate about it.

SPECTATOR: Next thing they’re gonna be spraying mace.

JULIUS LESTER: Think they’re going upside the head, for what?

SPECTATOR: Staying up on the hill.

JULIUS LESTER: Staying up on hill? Anybody been arrested? Today?

SPECTATOR: Took one man’s camera and broke it, and he was just taking pictures, man. It’s wrong.

JULIUS LESTER: Let me ask you this. Would you go up on the hill?

SPECTATOR: Yeah, I go up there if I want to, yeah. We’re Black Rebels.
JULIUS LESTER: You’re Black Rebels?

SPECTATOR: We are Mighty Rebels.

JULIUS LESTER: What are you all rebels against?

SPECTATOR: Against the cops.

JULIUS LESTER: Against the cops? Well, that’s all right. Okay, thanks a lot.

(CROWD SHOUTS)

JULIUS LESTER: The students are yelling, “What do we want?” “Revolution.” When do we want it?” “We want it now!” The police are still standing and doing nothing. About five or ten minutes have passed and, uh, nothing has happened.

JULIUS LESTER: Where are you from?

SPECTATOR: New York.

JULIUS LESTER: Are you from New York? And have you been sleeping – trying to sleep out in the park across town?

SPECTATOR: No, no, I was there last night when they busted it, but I was – I’m moving downtown.

JULIUS LESTER: You’re living downtown, uh huh. What’s the demonstration that – Has there been much brutality or arrests today?

SPECTATOR: No, not a hell of a lot of brutality. A lot of kids are pissed off because they got hit once, but they’re not really smart, that’s all.

JULIUS LESTER: Yeah, Yeah. Okay, thanks. Thanks. (CROWD CHANTING IN UNISON IN BACKGROUND: “NOW” “NOW”) The students are standing up and the
Viet Cong – Waving Viet Cong flags waving in the breeze – with uh – It’s quite a dramatic picture with the status – at the base of the statue, this general that has an unfurled flag on a staff in his hand. He’s sitting on a horse with his hand raised against the evening sky here in Chicago, and beneath that, the vibrant red and blue flag of the, uh, of the NLF.

Now, they’re chanting, “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh.” The atmosphere here is not at all tense. There are several hundred on-lookers, both, Convention people and, uh, young people. The police are still lined up on the side, very casually--and what seems to be shaping up is one of those rather, well, what I would consider senseless confrontations where, uh, if it develops into a confrontation – where the kids are on the hill and the cops are at the bottom of the hill, and who’s gonna take charge of the hill is the issue at-hand. And, uh, if there’s a confrontation, it really won’t have, uh, very much meaning because when the cops want the hill, they’ll take the hill. Now, they’re yelling, “Get the pigs out! Get the pigs out!” Someone has pinned a, uh, fastened a *red* handkerchief, or flaming red bandana to the chest of, uh, General Logan, I believe it is. I don’t know who General Logan was. I think it was a Civil War general. The General looks quite impressive in the sunset with his red bandana hanging from his chest, his arm raised high in victory.

[SOUND: CHEERS, ETC.]

JULIUS LESTER: The cheers you hear are, uh, accompanying the withdrawal of the Chicago police who are sauntering now away from the base of the hill into the sun, that as Carl (UNCLEAR) standing here commented. And so, the, uh, the “battle of the hill,” the second battle of the hill has been postponed. There was an earlier one today, when a kid
PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
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got on the horse with General Logan and was beaten when he was finally pulled off. So I understood from people who were here.

JULIUS LESTER: So, with the withdrawal of the Chicago police, the battle of the hill will not be and the youths, some seven minutes after the police withdrew, are slowly beginning to wander down from the hill, as the sun goes down and a very, very chilly breeze begins to come off Lake Michigan.

[SOUND: CONVENTION FLOOR, VOICES, BACKGROUND SPEAKERS]

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: The “Battle of the Hill,” I was going to say, turned into the “Battle of the Streets,” with one thousand-to-two thousand demonstrators, according to reports that we have. Going into the streets, going into a downtown area of Chicago, being dispersed later. Again going into the streets where there was rock-throwing at police. The police retaliated. Two cameramen beaten up, and several hours ago, the police clearing out Lincoln Park, the Yippie encampment, with teargas and mace. We have only about one minute to wrap up here. The Credentials fight on the floor now is the fight over the Georgia delegation. The Credentials Committee recommendation is that the delegation be split 50/50 between the regular Georgia delegation and the challengers lead by Julian Bond. It is expected that that Committee recommendation will pass.

STEVE BOOKSHESTER: You’ve been listening for the past hour, and we hope you will be listening again through the rest of this Democratic National Convention, twice each evening to Pacifica Radio’s coverage of the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the many events surrounding it, inside and out. From the International Amphitheater in
Chicago. Good night, Dale.

DALE MINOR: Good night, Steve.

(FLOOR SPEAKER IN THE BACKGROUND – “…credentials of the only established the Democratic Party in the State of Georgia, just how tyrannical this action dignifies the American…)

KPFK: That was a report live from Chicago, along with some recorded tape in the segment there.


NOTES:
1. Unit Rule. A rule of procedure at a national political convention under which a state’s entire vote is cast for the candidate preferred by the majority. [Source: Answers.com]
7. Jesse Unruh (1922-1987) Democratic Member of California State Assembly and


15. Julian Bond (b. 1940). Chairman of the NAACP and first President of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Bond was a founding member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a Democratic member of both the Georgia House and Georgia Senate.


25. Nembutal is a barbiturate drug.


27. John A. Logan (1826-1886) Union General, United States Civil War.

28. NLF, National Liberation Front (of Viet Nam)


30. Search Pacifica Radio Archives Public Access Catalog for sound recordings on all noted people and topics. http://www.pacificaradioarchives.org

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