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Millionaire H.L. Hunt Talks Politics

BY VERA GLASER
Chicago Daily News Service

ATLANTIC CITY — One of the world's richest men is holed up here in a shoddy hotel room, watching the Democratic convention on a scratchy rented TV set.

He is H. L. Hunt of Dallas, who's worth an estimated \$700,000,000, give or take a few oil wells.

Without batting an eye, he suggested we go out to dinner — at a cafeteria. We settled for a \$9.65 dinner (for both of us) in his hotel room — plus a \$2 tip.

He talked politics, mostly from a reclining position, and confided he won't give one thin dime to the presidential campaign of Lyndon Johnson or Barry Goldwater.

HUNT'S extensive right-wing activities have convinced some that Goldwater is his man but he insisted that he won't make his choice known until shortly before election day.

At one point he observed: "My being for Johnson or Goldwater might cost one of them 200,000 to 300,000 votes."



H. L. HUNT
Totes his own luggage.

Asked why he is in Atlantic City, Hunt said, "I go to conventions. I went to the Los Angeles Democratic convention in 1960 for the purpose of getting Johnson nominated. I went from there to Chicago to try to keep Henry Cabot Lodge from getting the vice presidential nomination."

Hunt also appeared at the Republican convention in San

Francisco last month and earlier at the Cleveland governors' conference.

HUNT FLEW into Atlantic City on the second day of this dull convention and went directly to Haddon Hall, a fading Boardwalk hotel, where he had been booked into minimum-priced Room 910 under an assumed name. He resisted a bellhop's efforts to carry his bag.

I was taken to Hunt by Earle B. Mayfield Jr., a Dallas attorney whose card reads "Practice restricted to oil, gas and tax matters."

Mayfield and two other men received me in a hotel room two floors below Hunt's. One was "Pete" White of Dallas, a lawyer. The other, a man named Dwiggin who works for the federal government in El Paso, was described as an old "college mate" of President Johnson.

When I asked if the trio were on Hunt's staff, all three hesitated, then said no. "I'm just a friend of the family," Mayfield said. When he phoned 910, we were told to come up at once.

HUNT IS soft-spoken, friendly and humorous. A tall,

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egg-shaped man, he wore a dark blue silk suit and bow tie, blue monogramed shirt and gold watch. His skin is porcelain up to a wavy fringe of white hair. The eyes are blue flames. His mind is razor sharp and he looks like a gentle old man until he glares from beneath his brows.

"Take notes on this, please."
"Turn on the television before you go."

HE SEEMED somewhat sour on President Johnson. "I wanted Johnson for President because of his tremendous faculty for getting things done. In 1960 he had a reputation as a conservative.

"I thought if Kennedy was elected he would turn as far to the right as his father would want him to and as the Pope would want him to. It would be a great thing for freedom. Kennedy had no chance to be elected without Lyndon.

"This administration has been very bad. They have used Republican New Dealers in it of whom I thoroughly disapprove."

He named Sec. of State Dean Rusk, Treasury Sec. Douglas Dillon, Defense Sec. Robert McNamara, former Central Intelligence Agency chief ~~Allen Dulles~~, Christian Herter and John J. McCloy.

HUNT JINGLED a handful of coins as he phoned room service for dinner. When the table was squeezed between bed and chair he signed the check and scrawled something that looked like a \$2 tip. He polished off duck and applesauce with a glass of skim milk and peach ice cream. As we wheeled the remains into the hall, Hunt lifted my coffee cup and drained the remainder.

In 1960 Hunt waited until 10 days before the election to

announce his support for the Democratic ticket.

"Lyndon had not a thought in the world that he would take the vice presidential spot. I began to advance the idea that it was his duty to do so two days before the presidential balloting."

Hunt would not say how he exercised his persuasion on then-Sen. Johnson.

HUNT SEES his prime mission as "making anti-communism, or patriotism, fashionable. It can be done. The country has to be saved at the grass roots.

"I never made any talks until I was 70 years old. I have no formal education but read newspapers avidly at the age of 3."

Hunt says he is "vastly overrated in every way. I am not as bad as they say I am. I am not nearly as good as they say I am."

AS WE WALKED to the elevator Hunt expressed the view that "people who are elected will turn in about as good a performance as the thinking of their constituents permits. The press, which of course is predominantly pink, will respond when the thinking of the people improves."

Asked why he recently relaxed his ban on reporters and photographers, Hunt said he wanted to get more of his ideas across.

"About five years ago I changed my mind. Until then the only time a photographer would take my picture was when he caught me picking my nose."

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