September 14, 2004 CBS Evening News Report

Rather: President Bush took his re-election campaign today to a Las Vegas convention of the National Guard Association. What some were waiting to see and hear was whether he would finally fully address still unanswered questions about his own service in the National Guard. CBS' John Roberts has the inside story.

John Roberts: To hear President Bush tell it today, there was nothing to suggest even the hint of controversy surrounding his stint with the National Guard. In fact, he barely even mentioned his service.

Bush: Nineteen individuals have served both in the Guard and as President of the United States and I'm proud to be one of them.

[Applause]

John Roberts: But Democrats today had plenty to say about the President's record—rolling out a new Internet ad highlighting unanswered questions challenging him to clear the air.

Terry McAuliffe, Chairman DNC: He lies about his military record, he's gonna lie about his healthcare plan, his education, Leave No Child Behind, he's gonna lie about job creation.

John Roberts: The President has yet to weigh in on new documents about his National Guard record made public last week by 60 Minutes. But in a radio interview, First Lady Laura Bush became the first White House insider to publicly doubt their authenticity.

Laura Bush: You know they probably are altered and they probably are forgeries.

John Roberts: However, Laura Bush offered no evidence to back up her claim and CBS News continues to stand by its reporting. In Las Vegas, Guard members acknowledge the controversy has provoked some deep thinking. But they believe Lieutenant Bush served honorably.

Colonel Dick Turner: I know he had to go through pilot training and what he did to fly the 102 and the training that that takes just to be proficient in it on a day-to-day basis. So, he did his duty, I'm sure.

John Roberts: For the families of some Guard members, it's not the past that's important it's the present. Sergeant Sherwood Baker was killed in Baghdad April 26th, betrayed, his brother claims today, by a President who went to war on a lie.

Dante Zappala, Brother of Sergeant Sherwood Baker: My brother died trying to make an honest man out of George Bush, hoping to still find those elusive weapons of mass destruction.
John Roberts: Iraq will be a central theme of John Kerry’s address here on Thursday. And, while he won’t mention the President’s military record, Democrats plan to keep the issue alive, fighting what they see as an attempt by the Bush campaign to turn the focus from the questions to those asking them. John Roberts, CBS News, Las Vegas.