

EXHIBIT 9A

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH BEN BARNES

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #1

00:57:42:14 (OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

00:59:24:24 (REFERENCE TONE)

SLATE:

01:00:12:02 One hour 10

01:00:17:09 15

01:00:17:23 16

01:00:18:07 17

01:00:19:03 18

01:00:20:03 19

01:00:20:21 20

DAN RATHER:

01:00:24:13 First of all, thank you for doing this.

BEN BARNES:

01:00:25:14 Glad to be here. Yeah.

DAN RATHER:

01:00:28:04

Let's get a little background. You were Speaker of the Texas House at age 28.

BEN BARNES:

01:00:33:04

I think it was 26, Dan.

DAN RATHER:

01:00:33:23

Twenty six. I stand corrected. What was that like?

BEN BARNES:

01:00:40:04

Well, first of all it was a long time ago. But-- it was-- fascinating and it was a very interesting time in which to be in-- in Texas politics and America politics. The negative was Vietnam. The-- positive was the fact that we were doing so many things.

01:00:57:06

John Connolly was governor. Lyndon Johnson was President. A lot of exciting things were happening. The space center was coming to Texas. Higher education appropriations were doubling and tripling each the legislature met. Texas was moving and-- and

to play a small role was very exciting for
a-- particularly for a young man.

DAN RATHER:

01:01:14:07

Well, set the scene for me. At the time
what was about to develop in Texas politics?
What was in the presses developing?

BEN BARNES:

01:01:24:13

Well, Texas was a one party state. John
Tower had gotten elected to the United
States Senate in a special election when
Lyndon Johnson became Vice President. And
then there was only one Republican
Congressman I believe-- Congress George Bush
from-- the River Oaks area of Houston.

01:01:40:29

And-- and so that we did not have two
parties. It was the beginning of the two
party system in Texas, but-- Lyndon Johnson
was going to be wrestling with Vietnam. And
it was gonna divide the country and it was
gonna cause a lot of problems in Texas. It
was going to-- to be a-- a political

revolution as opposed to evolutions that normally take place in states.

DAN RATHER:

01:02:03:00

Well, view for me who the major players were.

BEN BARNES:

01:02:06:04

Well, obviously-- President Johnson, Senator Ralph Yarborough.

DAN RATHER:

01:02:08:29

Democrat?

BEN BARNES:

01:02:10:23

A Democrat. John Connolly-- a Democrat governor. Preston Smith, the Democratic lieutenant governor. All of our state office holders were-- Democrats. And-- there was only Republican in the state Senate when I presided over the Senate as lieutenant governor and I think maybe two or three Republicans were in the house when I was Speaker.

DAN RATHER:

01:02:28:29

And George Bush, now we know called George

Bush one, was a Republican Congressman?

BEN BARNES:

01:02:35:20

Yes, he was.

DAN RATHER:

01:02:37:01

And where did you fit in?

BEN BARNES:

01:02:39:12

Well, I'm not too sure that I was just--
very glad to be at the party, as young as I
was. And-- and having been elected and--
and having the opportunity to serve at the
time. And then to be elected lieutenant
governor-- there's only been three people
that have taken the trip from one side of
the capitol to the other and I-- that was a
great honor. But-- I don't know exactly
where I fit in. I fit-- I fit in-- as a
person who was very, very interested and
excited about the great things that I think
we were doing for Texas?

DAN RATHER:

01:03:10:21

Well, would you argue if I said this was
sort of the pecking order in the Democratic

party's power structure. Of course President Johnson was President. John Connolly, governor. Then Preston Smith. Communist governor Preston Smith as lieutenant governor. That would be probably the pecking order. And as Speaker of the House, you fit in somewhere below that?

BEN BARNES:

01:03:29:27

Yes, that's correct.

DAN RATHER:

01:03:31:15

All right. now you became lieutenant governor when?

BEN BARNES:

01:03:34:28

In 1969. I was elected in 1968.

DAN RATHER:

01:03:39:01

And the lieutenant governor has more power than most lieutenant governors in Texas. For example, he controls the agenda in the State Senate?

BEN BARNES:

01:03:46:29

Yes. And the speaker and the lieutenant governor really control the purse strings of

Texas. Our office of governor is a relatively weak office. Our constitution was written at the conclusion of the Civil War. And a Democratic legislature wrote a new constitution and wrote the governor of Texas-- the office of the governor of Texas into a relatively weak position.

DAN RATHER:

01:04:08:21

We had the draft. What was called Universal Military Training at that time. How did that fit into the picture and the tumultuous events surrounding the Vietnam war?

BEN BARNES:

01:04:18:26

I was a supporter of President Johnson's position on the Vietnam War and I-- traveled through the United States passing resolutions at various organizations that I was a member of and supporting his position on Vietnam. As did almost all of the elected officials in Texas.

01:04:35:25

It was a very turbulent time, Dan. It--

young people were taking to the streets. President Johnson spoke on an event on the University of Texas campus. And there were some two or three thousand students and other people in the streets. And interrupted the President's speech. And it was really-- almost unsafe for President and Mrs. Johnson to return to their car that night and for us all to depart that building. It's hard for people that weren't alive at that time to understand the-- the animosity and the-- and the outright-- despising, even as far as hate, that existed-- in people that were opposed to war.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:15:18

And the attitude toward the draft by this time had become what?

BEN BARNES:

01:05:19:01

Well, it had become-- it-- it-- it had become-- very, very difficult for moms and dads who had young men that were draft age

to accept-- particularly later in the Vietnam conflict. To accept the fact that their son or dau-- or their son-- was gonna have to go-- to Vietnam. And that was not something that-- that-- that anybody wanted-- for their children to do. Certainly not anybody that I (UNINTEL).

DAN RATHER:

01:05:43:16

You almost corrected yourself. You said son or daughter and then you said sons. 'Cause daughters are not eligible for the draft?

BEN BARNES:

01:05:50:11

They were not in that. And it's-- it's changed in the last-- 30 years with-- with women playing such an important role in our military. But-- not-- not in the '60s.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:58:26

I wanna ask you to go back and tell me the story. Tell me the whole story. Tell me the truth, the whole truth about what happened with George W. Bush and the draft and the National Guard. Start at the

beginning. Take me right through it.

BEN BARNES:

01:06:15:14

Well, first of all I wanna say that I'm not here to bring any harm to George Bush's reputation or his career. I was contacted by people from the very beginning of his political career when he ran for governor and then when he ran for president and now he's running for re-election. I've had hundreds of phone calls of people wanting to know the story.

01:06:39:23

And I've been quoted and misquoted. And the reason I'm here today, I really wanna tell the story. And I wanna tell it one time and get it behind us. And again it's-- this is not about George Bush's political career.

01:06:49:03

This is about what the truth is. About the-- the time in which I served and-- and the role I played. Sid Adger (PH), a friend of the Bush family, came to see me and asked me

if I would recommend-- George W. Bush for the air national guard. And-- I did.

01:07:05:20

And I talked to a General Rose, who was the commander of the Air National Guard. I don't know whether my recommendation was the absolute reason he got in the Guard. He was a Congressman's son. He graduated from Yale. He was a person that would have been eligible.

01:07:18:03

But there was a long list of people waiting to be-- or hoping to be a candidate for-- the Air National Guard and for the Army National Guard. That was one route that young men had to-- to-- to go to-- or that was available to a very special few to-- be able to avoid being drafted and being able to avoid-- going to Vietnam. Although some National Guard people later went to Vietnam.

DAN RATHER:

01:07:43:10

Ed Adger (PH). Who is he?

BEN BARNES:

01:07:44:17

Sid Adger is a-- was an oil man.

DAN RATHER:

01:07:45:13

Sid Adger.

BEN BARNES:

01:07:47:25

He's deceased now, Dan. He-- was a friend of the Bush family and a success oil man-- in Texas that was a-- friend of Bush family and a friend of mine.

DAN RATHER:

01:07:57:19

Was he a contributor to your political campaign?

BEN BARNES:

01:08:01:14

I don't know. I-- I would be surprised if he-- if he was not a contributor. I've tried to make everybody a contributor to my political campaigns in Texas that had any money. But-- I-- I suspect he probably gave s-- a small contribution. I don't remember that. That's-- nearly 40-some odd years ago now.

DAN RATHER:

01:08:19:21

What-- people such as Mr. Adery frequently gave money to political campaigns on both sides?

BEN BARNES:

01:08:24:28

Oh, that's true in Texas. And-- and-- but you-- you also gotta remember that there was a-- a Democratic side that had about-- 200 elected officials and a Republican side that had two elected officials. So it was very easy to people to get to Democrats as well as Republicans. I think later-- it may be that maybe Sid Adger might-- might have been a-- a card carrying Republican. But I don't remember what his party affiliation was.

DAN RATHER:

01:08:47:05

When he came to see you, how did he get access to you? Did he call you? Write you a letter?

BEN BARNES:

01:08:51:08

Oh, he just called. I-- I was a-- a young-- ambitious-- office holder. I don't think I

probably-- turned down-- very many-- very few people. Or I-- everybody got to see me that wanted to see me. I tried to make that possible.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:09:09

So he came here to see you, do you remember what he said?

BEN BARNES:

01:09:12:26

Well, it's been a long time ago, but he-- he said basically would I help-- young George Bush-- get in the Air National Guard.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:21:08

And you said to him that you would-- you could do that?

BEN BARNES:

01:09:22:28

I said that I'd be happy to call General Rose-- who was the commander there at National Guard.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:27:09

Help people understand what's the relationship between-- you were then Speaker of the House?

BEN BARNES:

01:09:31:12

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:32:05

What's the relationship between the Speaker of the House and the general of the National Guard?

BEN BARNES:

01:09:37:16

Well, I don't know that there's an automatic relationship there. But-- General Rose happened to be a personal friend of mine also is what-- as well as a political friend. But the-- National Guard is--is really a branch of the state government.

01:09:48:24

While they-- they receive federal appropriations they still-- rely on the state legislature for various and sundry legislations. So any speaker or lieutenant governor or governor is gonna have some influence-- with the national guard. And the governor of Texas appoints the general, who is the commander of the-- of

the National Guard?

DAN RATHER:

01:10:06:26

It's been a long time ago, but do you remember whether you called him or wrote him?

BEN BARNES:

01:10:11:23

No, I really don't. Whether I called him or wrote him. More than likely I called him, but I don't think I wrote him. The Air National Guard was in Austin where the state capital was. And more than likely I picked up the phone called General Rose.

DAN RATHER:

01:10:23:11

And roughly, what would you have said to him?

BEN BARNES:

01:10:27:08

Dan, I got a lot of young men from prominent families in Texas in the National Guard. Not that I'm necessarily proud of that. As I reflect back, particularly after I walked through the Vietnam Memorial Recently in Washington and saw the thousands of names of

the young men who lost their lives there--
it's a fact that I'm not really proud of.

01:10:51:18

But I was a young, ambitious politician--
doing what I thought that was acceptable,
that was important to make friends. And I--
and I recommended a lot of people for the--
for the National Guard during the Vietnam
era. As speaker of the house and as
lieutenant governor.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:08:16

And you recommended George W. Bush?

BEN BARNES:

01:11:09:04

Yes, I did.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:10:15

Had you ever met him?

BEN BARNES:

01:11:10:22

No, I had not.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:12:23

Met his father?

BEN BARNES:

01:11:12:24

I met his father. I-- I knew his father.

And-- and his father was a-- a fine
Congressman who-- who worked-- who worked--
very closely with-- those of us in Texas who
were trying to get things done.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:24:13

And you said you did this for others. Had
you done it for others before you asked for
some-- like we normally call preferential
treatment--

BEN BARNES:

01:11:31:11

I'm--

DAN RATHER:

01:11:30:05

--for President Bush?

BEN BARNES:

01:11:32:16

I'm sure that I had done it previously. I
don't-- I don't remember the exact order.
But I know I-- I had done it for others I'm
certain, but-- at that time.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:39:17

Well, I used the phrase "preferential
treatment." Perhaps I shouldn't have.
Would you describe it as that? A request

for pres-- preferential treatment? Or how would you describe it?

BEN BARNES:

01:11:47:19

Oh, I would describe it as preferential treatment. There were hundreds of names on the list of people wanting to get in the Air National Guard or the-- the Army National Guard. I think that would have been a preference to anybody that didn't wanna go to Vietnam that didn't wanna leave-- we had a lot of young men that left and went to Canada in the '60s-- and fled this country.

01:12:07:20

But-- those that could get in the Reserves or those who could get in the National Guard meant that they could serve-- and get their military training. And chances are they would not have to go to-- to Vietnam. The Vietnam-- era was different from the era now in that Air Natio-- all National Guards and Reserve units-- have been called into-- into military fighting now.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:27:26

And what year was this, Ben?

BEN BARNES:

01:12:30:00

1968.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:31:16

By 1968, casualties in Vietnam were running high.

BEN BARNES:

01:12:36:03

Yeah.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:37:06

Did you or did you not think at that time, "I'm a little uncomfortable with this." Or did you have long talks with your conscience? A lot of-- our best young men were going into that green jungle hell and dying or being maimed for life.

01:12:52:25

Did it-- did you say to yourself, "I'm a little uncomfortable with doing this?" Or were you at that stage of your life and your political career where you just said, "Look, this is the way business is done." Help me

understand that?

BEN BARNES:

01:13:04:11

It would be very easy for me to sit here and tell you, Dan, that I had-- I wrestled with this and lost a lot of sleep at night. But I wouldn't be telling you the truth. I-- very-- not eagerly, but I was re-- readily willing to call and get those young men into the National Guard that were friends of mine and-- and supporters or mine.

01:13:23:25

And-- and I did it. Reflecting back I'm-- I'm very sorry about it. But-- but, you know, it happened. And-- and-- and it was because of-- of my ambition, my youth, my lack of understanding. But-- it-- but it happened. And it's not s-- as I said, it's not something I'm necessarily proud of.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:44:28

You've thought about it a lot since then?

BEN BARNES:

01:13:45:28

I've thought about it an awful lot. And you

walk through the Vietnam memorial,
particularly at night as I did-- a few
months again. And-- I tell, you'll think
about it a long time.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:55:15

How do you feel about it now?

BEN BARNES:

01:13:58:08

Well, I don't think that-- that I had any
right to have the power that I had to be
able to choose who was gonna go to Vietnam
and who was not gonna go to Vietnam. That's
a power. In some instances when I looked at
those names, of-- maybe of-- of determining
life or death. And-- that's not a power
that-- that I wanna have.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:22:18

Too strong or not to say that you're ashamed
of it now?

BEN BARNES:

01:14:24:20

Oh, I-- I think that would-- that would be
a-- somewhat of an appropriate thing. I'm
very, very sorry.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:31:05

Okay. Did George Bush Senior call you to thank you or write you to thank you?

BEN BARNES:

01:14:39:11

I've been asked that question many times and I don't think that he called me. And-- and-- newspaper reporters have gone through my-- the archives and looked for letters. I-- it'd be impossible for me to remember if I'd gotten a letter.

01:14:49:28

Or it could-- if-- at that time that-- that George-- that President Bush appeared on the scene, that was 32 years at that time. Now it's almost been 42 years. To remember would have been difficult. But-- I think everyone has-- ascertained that there's-- no such letter exists. And I don't remember him calling me or running into me and saying thank you.

DAN RATHER:

01:15:11:10

Anytime since that time? It's been a long

time and you've crossed paths any number of times since then?

BEN BARNES:

01:15:14:19

Well, we've kind of crossed paths. He's never said thank you-- for that. I mean we've had very warm conversations. But, you know, a lot of time-- a lot of time has passed. It's not-- sometimes people don't think if it-- 20 or 30 years has gone by that they-- that they even remember that they need to say thank you.

DAN RATHER:

01:15:29:20

Okay. What was your relationship with the Bush family at that time you made this request for the National Guard to make a place for George W. Bush? Did you know the family well? Did you know the father well?

BEN BARNES:

01:15:40:09

I knew the father. I didn't know him well. He was a Congressman. If-- people are historians or-- remember history that far back-- in Texas, that were people that were

speculating that-- that in 1970 George Bush was gonna run for the Senate.

01:15:58:18

And there were people speculating that I was gonna run for the Senate in 1970. I didn't run and Lloyd Benson did run. And he-- and he defeated Senator Yarborough in the primary. And then he-- and then he ran and defeated-- President Bush in the-- President Bush One as-- as you correctly said.

01:16:13:19

President Bush One in the-- in the general election. So-- there was a possibility at-- at that time that I was making that decision that he and-- that his father and I might have been even running against one another for the Senate. But-- I don't know that that was a part of my thought process when I agreed to do the-- recommendation for Sid Anger.

DAN RATHER:

01:16:33:10

You say it's been a long time ago. It's

inside Texas politics. But what an irony, you were up and coming, fair to say a rising star in the Democratic party, with a-- not only a Democratic President but a fellow Texas President. Talk of you possibility running for a Senate seat in 1970.

01:16:52:20

George Bush won. Was a Republican Congressman. A rarity in Texas, fair to say, at that time who was thinking of running in 1970. And at that time, you used your influence to help get his son his place in the National Guard, it was being pretty well speculated you might be running again George Bush the first in 1970?

BEN BARNES:

01:17:15:19

Well-- that was probably a-- a correct assumption. If-- if I had to run I don't think Senator Benson would have run. And that-- and so-- politics might have-- the history might have been a little different .

01:17:29:26

But-- remember that in Texas we really still had just one party. And the fact that-- that I helped a Republican, that's-- that was not out of the ordinary because-- everybody that was-- in office-- was very interested in having-- all of the people of Texas to vote for 'em. Particularly the business community. Particularly the people that were-- that were-- prone to be Republican . So-- that was-- that was not anything unusual.

DAN RATHER:

01:17:55:21

Well, fair or unfair to say that George Bush One had some power himself. He was a Republican Congressman and seen as a rising star of his party. Representing a very wealthy district in the largest county in the state in terms of population.

BEN BARNES:

01:18:10:02

That's correct. He-- he was-- well known and-- and an-- and well liked.

DAN RATHER:

01:18:16:09

Let me get back the facts of the matter. By calling the head of the Texas National Guard and recommending George W. Bush for one of his coveted places, did it or not give him an advantage over somebody else who was applying for one of those spots?

BEN BARNES:

01:18:36:15

Well, I would-- say that being the son of a Congressman-- and from Texas and having a recommendation by my state official, certainly that would give-- a person-- a leg you.

DAN RATHER:

01:18:50:14

When you made that call, was there any doubt in your mind that he probably would get the spot?

BEN BARNES:

01:18:59:00

I don't really-- remember, but I would think that-- that I was not surprised-- when I learned that he'd gotten in the Air National Guard. And I don't remember when I learned

and at what time it-- and what stage of the process that I even learned-- that he may have been in the Guard before I ever was told that he-- that he'd gotten the position.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:20:01

By the way I asked you whether his father ever thanked you or not. You said you have no recollection of him ever doing that. Don't think he did. Did George W. Bush himself, even as an aside or perhaps with some humor, say to you, "We appreciate what you did?"

BEN BARNES:

01:19:33:21

Well-- he dropped me a note saying that he appreciated-- my memory being-- that is his father, that we'd never talked about it. He had no idea-- probably as a 22-year-old or 21-year-old graduate of Yale what was happening-- as far as his application was concerned. And-- and-- he-- said that he was pleased that I was able to remember for

a mutual friend of ours-- how the process had worked.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:00:15 When was that? I mean the last five years, 10 years?

01:20:02:26 (OVERTALK)

BEN BARNES:

01:20:03:07 Oh, that was in 19-- it was-- after he'd gotten elected governor.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:09:03 Well, in at least one and I think several of the authorized biographies of President Bush, it's been said that his deal was he-- and I quote from the book, "Just happened to get one of these spots." Did anybody just happen to get one of these spots in the Air National Guard?

BEN BARNES:

01:20:28:13 I can't answer that with any real certainty, Dan. I would be-- somewhat surprised if-- if a lot of people got in the Guard, particularly during the-- the late '60s when

Vietnam was at the-- the really heighth
(SIC) of its intensity. It-- 'cause there
were such long lists of people and so many
people wanted to get into the Guard.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:51:18

You haven't talked about this in a very long
time. Why?

BEN BARNES:

01:20:57:22

Well, I really don't believe in the politics
of gotcha. I-- really don't appreciate
what's happening today in the American
politics. I really didn't think that what
happened-- that long ago had-- had a lot to
do with the-- with a man's ambition to be
governor or-- or even later to be President.

01:21:18:23

I-- that's-- that's not my nature to get
involved and-- and wanna be political. And
that's not why I'm here today. I-- I-- I
really-- think that politics have gone the
wrong direction rather than right direction
in this country. And that's another thing

that I'm not very proud of. I'm not real proud of our political system today.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:38:09

I wanna follow up on that. But first, did anybody ever ask you, let me put it directly, to keep your mouth shut?

BEN BARNES:

01:21:42:12

Oh, well-- I've been encouraged to be quite-- by-- starting with-- be quiet about a lot of things. My wife encourages me to be quiet a lot about a lot of things. But-- no-- there's obviously a lot of people that don't want this-- this issue discussed. And-- and some people that do-- do want it discussed.

01:22:00:23

But I'm not-- I-- again, I wanna repeat, I'm not here because of people's tellin' me that I should talk about it or that people are tellin' me that I shouldn't talk about it. I'm here because I feel that I needed to set the record straight.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:13:16

And you thought you needed to set the record straight because?

BEN BARNES:

01:22:15:13

Because I think it was wrong what I did. And it was wrong what happened. But it's been talked about and been speculated on by so many different people in several-- different ways. And I-- and I-- I really wanted-- the American people to know exactly what the facts were.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:33:17

You said because it was wrong. What was wrong with it?

BEN BARNES:

01:22:38:01

Well, I think the system was wrong. That a young-- 20-- eight-year-old or 29-year-old Speaker of the House could pick up the phone and call a general and-- say-- "I want so and so in the National Guard." And-- and-- and some of the time it happened.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:51:18

When I asked if anybody that-- ask you or indicated to you to keep your mouth shut, going back through the '70s, '80s, and '90s, anybody say to you, "Why don't you just forget that?" Or did anybody say to you, "You better not say anything about that?"

BEN BARNES:

01:23:11:19

Well, I-- I don't really-- wanna talk about what-- what people said or what they didn't say. You-- in politics-- in this partisan days, everybody wants to have an opinion and everybody-- you can get advice in the barbershop on whether you oughta talk about something or not. So I've had a lot of advice. But-- but-- I'm following my own conscience today.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:35:07

You said-- I'm gonna come back to what you said was the current atmosphere in American politics. How would you describe that atmosphere?

BEN BARNES:

01:23:46:25

I think the country is probably more divided today then it's been since the Civil War. I certainly was not alive-- although some people probably think I was alive at the conclusion of the Civil War. So I wasn't there the-- first hand.

01:24:00:02

But I believe that this country is-- is very severely divided. Families are divided. Friends are divided. Communities are divided. Churches, schools. It's not healthy.

01:24:11:17

I have a letter in my possession from my grandfather who wrote to my uncle who was on Iwo Jima. And-- in the first paragraph he talks about the crops are in the ground. We've had ground rain. He's trying to write a-- a kind of letter to cheer my uncle up. But he says in the next paragraph that, "I'm very concerned about the fact that-- that

the religious right in this country--" and he talked about a person that was on the radio that was-- talking about the-- religion and politics had to mix. And-- and that-- and that we should get involved because-- God was telling us to do this. And-- and-- and God was telling us to do that.

01:24:50:17

And I'm like-- my grandfather in 1943 speculated that-- he was very concerned because he thought it was very important in this country to keep the separation between church and state. And-- and I believe that very strongly also.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:04:20

Did or did not-- what's become known as the "swift boat negative campaign ad attacks" on Senator Kerry influence your decision to come forward in any way?

BEN BARNES:

01:25:17:26

No, I've-- matter of fact the speech that I

made-- about four or five months again when I talked about the seein'-- being-- visitin' the Vietnam memorial and talking about the fact that I've-- that I was not proud of what I've done. That was five-- four or five months before the swift boats. So the-- that's not what caused me to come forward.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:33:06

This-- an excerpt from that talk is what's been on the Internet here--

BEN BARNES:

01:25:37:02

Yes, (UNINTEL).

DAN RATHER:

01:25:36:04

--for a little while.

BEN BARNES:

01:25:38:12

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:40:03

I wanna come back to some of the characters involved in (UNINTEL) profile. General Rose. Did General Rose have the make or break decision on who went in the Air National Guard?

BEN BARNES:

01:25:51:19

Yes, he was commanding general.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:53:14

That's the person you called to--

BEN BARNES:

01:25:54:23

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:55:17

--put in a word for George W. Bush. What kind of person was General Rose? Was he political? Apolitical? Was he connected? If so, how?

BEN BARNES:

01:26:03:03

Well, I-- would describe him as a very-- able-- military-- commander. And I'm not in the position to be very judgmental about a (UNINTEL) is good. But he-- he-- he seemed to be-- very serious about his duties and take it very seriously.

01:26:18:10

He was a-- a-- very personal fella. He-- the Rose family. He and his-- and his two sons and wife were all wonderful-- wonderful

people. And General Rose is deceased now.
But I-- I had very high regard for him.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:31:03

Was he a Democrat or Republican?

BEN BARNES:

01:26:32:17

Oh, he was a General.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:35:26

Politically connected? Did he know the
Bush's? Did he know the Johnson's?
Connolly's?

BEN BARNES:

01:26:38:17

Well, he knew-- he had to know Governor
Connolly because Governor Connolly was in
office and he was there at St. General. I'm
sure he knew-- President Johnson, being from
Texas. I don't know whether he knew
Congressman Bush or not. I've never
discussed it with him.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:51:26

Did you know the man General Stout who was
in the direct line of command?

BEN BARNES:

01:26:55:28

Yes. I met General Stout.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:56:19

Who was he and what was he like?

BEN BARNES:

01:26:59:18

Well, he was a-- an assistant. I guess he-- maybe he had the title of-- of assistant-- Air (UNINTEL) General. And he was-- the assistant to General Rose. I didn't ever have a lot of-- contact with-- General Stout. So I had no personal relationship with him.

DAN RATHER:

01:27:17:27

I've been told that he was well connected-- in the Houston community and with the Bush's. Do you know that to be a fact?

BEN BARNES:

01:27:22:24

No, I-- I don't have any knowledge of that.

DAN RATHER:

01:27:27:27

Let me come back to-- what-- what would have been the consequences if you had not put in a word for George W. Bush?

BEN BARNES:

01:27:34:09

Well, I don't think-- there would have been any consequences. Sid Edger might not have-- been happy with me. But I didn't-- I-- I never thought-- never even thought about what the consequences would have been if I hadn't made a recommendation.

DAN RATHER:

01:27:48:01

Did he have any power to punish you in any way other than to say, "Well, Ben Barnes is not a good fellow because he didn't do what I told him to do?"

BEN BARNES:

01:27:54:18

Oh, I-- not-- probably not. But, you know, as a young office holder and an ambitious young man, you never really thought about the consequences if you didn't do something. You were all looking for something else to do to make some more people happy. And that's-- that would have been what was going through my mind.

DAN RATHER:

01:28:11:29

Some people are gonna ask, "Well, was this something unique to Texas? This kind of political influence in getting these National Guard slots?" Do you have any recollection? Do you have any information or knowledge of whether this happened in other states? Or was it something that just happened in Texas?

BEN BARNES:

01:28:26:11

Dan, I have no first hand knowledge. But I knew other Speakers and other President's of the Senate and I have-- just-- just from very vague memory-- some discussions that I had with them that they were working with their-- National Guards. Getting people in during the Vietnam conflict. So I'm sure that it was not something that's unique to-- just to Texas.

01:28:49:03

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

* * * END OF AUDIO * * *

* * * END OF TRANSCRIPT * * *

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH: BEN BARNES

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #2

SLATE:

02:00:05:00	Three--
02:00:06:04	Four
02:00:06:12	Five
02:00:06:27	Six
02:00:07:24	Seven
02:00:09:00	Eight
02:00:10:00	It's two hours--
02:00:10:27	Nine
02:00:11:21	Ten
02:00:11:23	Eleven.
02:00:13:16	

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

02:01:43:15 Did you get a number of people, deferments
of this sort, if we can call it that, or
into the guard? Or was this a rare case?

BEN BARNES:

02:01:53:12

There were several, Dan. There-- there were-- a number. Not-- not a lot. But there were-- there were several young men-- that I got into the Guard-- I helped get into the Guard.

DAN RATHER:

02:02:04:04

And is there a profile for all those people that you helped get in a Guard? A general profile?

BEN BARNES:

02:02:09:13

Probably. Maybe with-- with one or two exceptions. But probably a general profile. They were somebody that was-- that was known, or known to me, or-- or friends, or political supporters.

DAN RATHER:

02:02:18:25

Well, here's the point. Was this or was this not something pretty special? Or were you kind of running your own, "Get out of the service," operation, as House Speaker?

BEN BARNES:

02:02:29:09

Oh, no. It was-- it was something that was very special. I mean, and again, it's something that I'm not very proud of. That's one of the reasons I'm here.

DAN RATHER:

02:02:38:03

Uh-huh (AFFIRM). And I want to move on. So, it was-- these were special cases. It wasn't something you did by the-- by the dozens of hundreds?

BEN BARNES:

02:02:47:17

No.

DAN RATHER:

02:02:51:28

You're a Democrat. Lifelong Democrat. You're a supporter of John Kerry. Fair to say that you're in Senator Kerry's inner circle?

BEN BARNES:

02:03:00:10

I don't know that I'm in-- in his inner circle. I know I'm-- I'm a supporter-- of-- of Senator Kerry. And I've supported him from the very first.

DAN RATHER:

02:03:06:21

And-- you know that there are people who seeing this are gonna say, "Well, Ben Barnes came forward now because he wants to help Senator Kerry's campaign." (PH) How do you answer that?

BEN BARNES:

02:03:16:21

Well, I've been helping Senator Kerry's campaign-- from the first-- first day announced. And-- when I started being quoted on the internet, and other th-- and being quoted other places, some as I said, correctly, or-- and other times, incorrectly, I just thought it was time for me to once and for all, there was just too much speculation. There are too many people that are putting words in my mouth.

02:03:42:18

Too many things that were se-- being said that were wrong. I decided that I-- I wanted-- to set the record set. And I wanted to-- to let-- the American people

know exactly what happened.

DAN RATHER:

02:03:56:13

I know that you must have said to yourself before you came here for this interview, "Boy, there's one thing. If I don't get across anything else, there's one thing more than any other I want to get across in this, '60 Minutes' interview." And if you were saying that to yourself, I want to give you an opportunity now to make sure that you've said what you came to say, how you intended to say it.

BEN BARNES:

02:04:18:12

I came to say, what I've attempted to say exactly what the facts were in 1968, and what I did, and what I did not do. I did not come here to-- to play havoc with Governor Bush-- with President Bush's Presidential campaign. I did not come here to-- to do anything-- personal-- against President Bush.

02:04:39:20

This is not-- I'm not here as a Kerry surrogate. I'm here as a-- as a person who-- who served our state, and who made-- decisions. Some right decisions, and some wrong decisions. But I wanted to let everyone know exactly what the facts were back in-- in that year of-- some 40 years ago.

DAN RATHER:

02:04:55:12

And review for me quickly now Chester-- checklist of what you consider to be the most important facts about your involvement with getting George W. Bush into the International Guard.

BEN BARNES:

02:05:07:04

Well, Sid Adger (PH), and not the Bush family came to see me, to ask me to get-- President Bush-- George W. Bush into the International Guard, which I made the call to General Rose (PH). And he was accepted. Whether he was accepted solely because of my call, I do not know. As-- as we have

discussed, he was the son of a very prominent Congressman from Texas.

02:05:28:25

And I don't know what happened after he got in the Guard. I don't know what happened-- from really in his life, from 1960-- 8 until-- until-- when he surfaced in Texas as the owner of the-- one of the owners of the Texas Ranger baseball team, and then came back, and ran for Governor. And that's when our paths crossed again.

DAN RATHER:

02:05:48:19

Did you get any reports on how he was doing in the International Guard?

BEN BARNES:

02:05:53:15

No. I-- I didn't get any reports.

DAN RATHER:

02:05:54:23

Nobody said whether he's doing a good job, or bad job? You just never heard anything?

BEN BARNES:

02:05:57:19

I-- I-- I-- I never heard anything. And I-- I don't think I ever heard a report on any--

from any of the young people that I got in the International Guard. But that was a long time ago.

DAN RATHER:

02:06:10:01

Uh-huh (AFFIRM). You (UNINTEL PHRASE) in politics, to say the least. Were you surprised when accusations, and I underscore the word, "Accusations," that George W. Bush didn't complete his commitment, his six year commitment to service? Were you surprised to hear those accusations?

BEN BARNES:

02:06:27:01

No, I was surprised to hear.

DAN RATHER:

02:06:29:18

Why?

BEN BARNES:

02:06:31:06

Well, you know, I-- I think that-- that-- I didn't know him. I knew his family. And I have tremendous respect for his-- for his father-- for his father's military record, and for his service-- and the various incendiary positions he-- he'd served our

country. I have-- I had tremendous respect for the Bush family. And so-- I-- was surprised to hear that.

DAN RATHER:

02:06:51:08

Well, George Bush one, if we can call him that, President George Bush one had-- an exemplary war record. Combat zone, hero of World War II. When the request came to get his son a privileged, a-- a special place, were you surprised at that?

BEN BARNES:

02:07:13:29

Dan, to be very honest, I don't think that I really was familiar with President Bush's-- one's military record when Sid Adger came to my office. It's not something I thought about. I respected-- President Bush as a Congressman, President Bush one as a Congressman. I don't think I-- or my memory does not-- does not-- even allow me to-- to remember that-- what his military record was at that time.

DAN RATHER:

02:07:41:11

And you may not even have known what his military--

BEN BARNES:

02:07:41:14

And I-- no, not-- not a well-- well not have read his biographical on that issue.

DAN RATHER:

02:07:47:07

Yeah. Is there anything that you wanted to say coming in here that you haven't said about this?

BEN BARNES:

02:07:52:06

No. I think we've said-- everything that I've wanted to-- to-- to get said today.

DAN RATHER:

02:07:57:09

What question haven't I asked you that I should have asked?

BEN BARNES:

02:08:01:02

Well, you could have asked me about how much younger I was than you. But I don't think you were gonna ask me that.

DAN RATHER:

02:08:08:29

Well, let me ask you this. It may not be a

question you think that I should have asked you. But are you concerned about possible retribution? You're in business now. You make your living in business. Are-- is there-- fearful of retribution in any way, shape or form?

BEN BARNES:

02:08:24:28

Oh, I've got a lot of faith in this country. I didn't come here for political reasons. And I hope that I don't-- I-- I hope I'll not be punished politically or economically for my presence here today. That's not what motivated me. And-- I hope that's not what-- what motivates people that disagree with me about the Presidential race.

DAN RATHER:

02:08:44:02

Well, I want to keep you just a minute longer to come back to something you said earlier, which was about you're disappointed in the atmosphere in which the Presidential campaign is being raced. You've been around politics a long time. You've seen the best

of it.

02:08:56:11

You've seen the worst of it. You've seen the hard to tell part of it. But you've been through a lot of rough stuff, on both sides, Democrat and Republican. In your experience, has there ever been a time when it was as rough and nasty to run for public office as it is today?

BEN BARNES:

02:09:19:13

I've never seen anything quite like it. It-- it was not like this in 2000. It's-- it's-- it's a-- it's a different atmosphere in 2004. 1968, when I helped the President-- Vice President Humphrey run for reelection, he was running-- with the Vietnam around his neck.

02:09:36:22

We'd had a convention in Chicago where people had taken to the streets, and tried to keep-- a convention from being held. And-- and Mayor Dailey (PH) had to use tear

gas to dispel people, where people could even get back in the hotels, and get into the convention center. And I thought that was a moment that I had lived, that I would never see again. But while people are not necessarily in the streets, the-- the personal animosities that exist, and how personal these-- this campaign is, is something that I think's very unhealthy for America (SIC).

DAN RATHER:

02:10:05:03

Ben Barnes, I thank you.

BEN BARNES:

02:10:08:13

Thank you, Dan.

02:10:10:12

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE AT THIS POINT, THE INTERVIEW IS OVER, AND THE TECHNICIANS ARE WORKING ON THE DIFFERENT SHOTS, WHILE MR. RATHER AND MR. BARNES CHAT.

END OF AUDIO

END OF TRANSCRIPT