

EXHIBIT 9C

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH BILL BURKETT (PH)

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #1

01:00:03:17 (OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

01:00:11:20 Hour and 12

01:00:15:04 14

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01:00:16:13 16

01:00:17:05 17

01:00:18:05 18

01:00:24:19 (OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

01:00:42:08 First of all, thanks for doing this.

BILL BURKETT:

01:00:43:16 Thanks for having me.

DAN RATHER:

01:00:45:05 Tell me the story of how you came by these documents.

BILL BURKETT:

01:00:49:23

Well Dan, I-- I think-- I think first, I have to set that story up to understand why the documents came to me. Of course, I'm-- I'm not gonna go into the details from 1997 to 1998 when-- when I actually saw the events-- of the-- destruction of documents out of-- of-- Governor George Bush's files. But I will bring it up that-- that-- in-- in Mr. James Moore, who came to me and asked to include us as part of a book-- which is out as--

01:01:16:03

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

01:05:31:14

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01:05:35:22

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01:05:38:06

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01:02:27:14

227

01:02:29:02

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

01:02:58:18

Thank you for doing this.

BILL BURKETT:

01:02:59:10

Thank you for inviting me.

DAN RATHER:

01:03:00:11

Tell me the story of how you--

01:03:02:12

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

01:03:09:27

Tell me how you came to get these documents.

BILL BURKETT:

01:03:12:16

Mr. Rather, I-- I'm not gonna go all the way back to 1997 and '98. But I think it's important for us to background just a little bit. There-- there were numerous interviews between '97 and '98, including Jim Moore. James Moore came to me and wanted to write a book and include some of our story and some of our occurrence (PH) in that book.

01:03:32:14

Following that, it was released in the-- at a certain time. And-- and in February, I was invited to do several national interviews. I'm sure--

DAN RATHER:

01:03:40:13

February of this year?

BILL BURKETT:

01:03:41:02

February of this year, yes, sir. And I--
and I'm sure that that was probably a
reason-- and I-- I know in this case it was
a reason that I was probably recognized as
somebody that might be a-- a-- a-- a way to
convey documents or convey information to
the appropriate authorities. After doing
those 202 interviews in 11 days--
approximately two weeks later, I get a
television call at our home. Now, I got
lotsa calls.

01:04:04:00

Most of those were hate calls. There were a
few calls that would say, "Colonel, you
think we did a good job," and this was one
of those kind of calls. And this individual
called and said that-- that-- they had
information.

01:04:14:29

They had filed that needed-- they thought that well, the information was, "Colonel, you did a great job on Hard Drive, or on Hardball." And-- we think that-- you could actually get this information to the proper authorities-- better than we.

DAN RATHER:

01:04:29:17

'Scuse me one second. Because I-- I wanna get a timeline going.

BILL BURKETT:

01:04:32:17

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:04:33:25

That in February of this year, 2004--

BILL BURKETT:

01:04:36:20

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:04:37:07

--you did some interviews because you were recognized as a person who knew something about-- President Bush's military background?

BILL BURKETT:

01:04:45:05

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:04:46:15

And that you had talked about the possibility of documents-- documents existing and that sorta thing?

BILL BURKETT:

01:04:51:20

Well sir, there was a rumor that's a well-known old rumor. In fact, the rumor's been for years. I first heard the rumor in 1997 that there were documents out of George W. Bush's file that were circulating-- within guardsmen or other people, throughout the state of Texas.

01:05:07:10

Now, I wasn't the only one that had heard that rumor. It was a fairly common rumor. I heard it the second time in 1998. I heard it again just before the election of 2000. I didn't push into those areas, even though I had been the involved who actually saw documents on a garbage can in which they were trying-- to-- to make sure, and-- they were trying to package a President, is what

they were trying to do. And I'm sure that that's the motivation.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:29:14

I'm gonna come back to that.

BILL BURKETT:

01:05:30:16

Okay.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:31:08

(UNINTEL) narrowed it now (PH). So, in early 2004, in February, you did interviews-
-

BILL BURKETT:

01:05:36:13

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:37:21

--of his past. But then you got a telephone call?

BILL BURKETT:

01:05:40:22

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:41:01

And about when was that?

BILL BURKETT:

01:05:42:27

The-- I mean, this is a guess on the exact date. But it was probably the last week of

February. I got a telephone call. And they wanted me to come to Houston in order to pick up those documents.

DAN RATHER:

01:05:53:22

What did they say to you in the telephone call?

BILL BURKETT:

01:05:55:18

Well, the first thing that they said was, "You did a good job on Hardball, Colonel-- give 'em hell," or something like that. And-- and-- they came back and said that they had documents that would-- that would shed new light on-- Governor Bush's file. I asked the question, "Well, what do you have?"

01:06:14:00

The information that was given to me was that this was Colonel Killian's (PH) co-- commander's correspondent file. And I said okay. So, what does that tell me? What does it show?

01:06:24:08

And the information was that was rec-- was relayed to me in that telephone call was that this whole show that the relationship described, the professional relationship described between First Lieutenant Bush and Lieutenant Colonel Killian that has been described in the image, is not correct, that Colonel Killian was a good commander.

DAN RATHER:

01:06:42:20

Now, was it a man or woman speaking to you?

BILL BURKETT:

01:06:46:05

Sir, it was a man-- excuse me, a woman speaking to me.

DAN RATHER:

01:06:49:15

So, you get this telephone call-- where, at--
- at your home?

BILL BURKETT:

01:06:53:12

We got this call at our home, yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:06:55:06

Okay. So, a woman calls you. You think it was late in February?

BILL BURKETT:

01:06:58:17

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:06:58:27

And she says she has some information she thinks you'll be interested in?

BILL BURKETT:

01:07:02:02

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:07:02:16

Now, pick it up right there, if you will.

BILL BURKETT:

01:07:04:07

Alright. At that point, they-- she wanted me to come to Houston as a ded-- at a designated point. She wanted me to come to Houston and pick up the files. I told her that I, you know, I wasn't all that interested.

01:07:14:22

I've got to tell you that I'd just been through the wringer in February. And in-- with all due respect, Mr. Rather-- with the treatment that I got on the interviews in February, I really didn't wanna go through

this again. Many of the interviews that I'd given, extended interviews-- certainly when I read the articles, it wasn't as if I'd even been in the interviews. So, I didn't need anymore of this trouble.

01:07:33:22

In addition, we had already received notice that-- my disability benefits were going to be cut. Now, I-- rather strange and coincidental. But we could see the retribution and the risk that was involved. I wasn't anxious to do this. So, I certainly wasn't gonna make a special trip to Houston, Texas, that's about 390 miles-- to pick up documents that somebody said was going to do something to somebody. I'm not a "gotcha" person.

01:07:59:03

But I did say that I was gonna be at the Houston Last Stock Show and Rodeo (PH). I sit as a member of the board of trustees at the American Cimenthal Assistance (PH), a

cattle breed (PH)-- we're cattle ranchers. That's what we are. And even though I am disable and unbele-- my wife is a cattle rancher. But I-- I'm-- I'm just-- I'm kinda along for the ride at this point.

01:08:17:01

But-- I was going to be at the Houston Last Stock Show and Rodeo on a certain day in which we were going to have the Houston Cimenthal Association sale. And I let them know the time and place, and that I would be at the Texas Cimenthal Association booth.

DAN RATHER:

01:08:32:24

This was one conversation with the woman who called in you think late February? Or was it two con--

BILL BURKETT:

01:08:37:25

It was two conversations. It was an initial conversation and then there was a coordination conversation-- that I was given a number to call at a certain time within a time block, to let them know time and place.

And that's basically what it was.

DAN RATHER:

01:08:50:12

And do you know where the woman was?

BILL BURKETT:

01:08:52:11

Oh. What-- when I called, it was a Holiday Inn, room 148 in the Holiday Inn in Houston. I do remember the room number.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:00:02

Do you have the telephone numbers?

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:01:08

We're working on that now.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:02:26

Okay. Aright. I wanna get back to the narrative, then. So, she first called out of the blue, so to speak--

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:09:17

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:09:23

--after you had made-- these television, radio, newspaper interviews about George Bush's military record?

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:20:07 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:20:13 And what you saw was the difference between--
- the reality and the image put forward?
Would that be far to say?

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:27:11 Well, that was her characterization, not mine.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:29:14 Okay. So, she calls you out of the blue-- gets you at home. And then there's one additional call in which you said, "Look, I'll-- this is where we'll meet?"

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:39:10 No. I didn't-- no. Let's not take it that far. I said this is where I will be. And I think that's an important distinction there. I was not-- I wasn't seeking this out, really. It was coming to me. But I was not aggressively seeking it out.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:51:16 And so, you go to the Houston Stock show?

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:53:23 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:54:10 As you do most years?

BILL BURKETT:

01:09:56:01 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:09:57:06 And you were where at-- on what day and what time, and what happened?

BILL BURKETT:

01:10:01:18 Well, I-- I-- rather than give you a calendar, lay-- let me give you a specific date by event. At the Texas-- Cimenthal Association sale, I was sitting in the Texas Cimenthal Association booth along with friends.

01:10:15:06 And an individual, a man-- came to me with an envelope as we had arranged, an envelope. It was a mani-- a manila envelope. And he

gave me the envelope. And he said, "Are you Bill Burkett?" And I said yes, I am. And-- everything was there. And he gives me the envelope.

01:10:30:17

I quickly looked at the envelope. I really didn't even open it at that time. And we had quick pleasantries. And I turn around the say something to somebody else. And he was basically gone.

DAN RATHER:

01:10:39:24

Did that man give you his name?

BILL BURKETT:

01:10:41:02

No.

DAN RATHER:

01:10:42:24

What did he look like?

BILL BURKETT:

01:10:44:04

The man was-- roughly six foot-- six foot one. He was dark complected (PH). I don't--
- I think it was more by sun than by-- by--
genetic makeup. Black hair and very
prominent brown eyes.

DAN RATHER:

01:10:58:13

Was it your judgment that he might have been of Latino heritage?

BILL BURKETT:

01:11:03:06

I didn't get that feeling. I really di-- I mean, it was not a strong-- not a strong print, no, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:10:16

And so, when was that? This was late February or early March?

BILL BURKETT:

01:11:13:20

This is gonna be early March. Yes, sir, early March.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:17:09

And you know the day because it was the day you were there to serve your time in the Cattleman's Association booth?

BILL BURKETT:

01:11:24:16

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:11:25:18

I wanna review. And correct me if I'm wrong. Because it's very important that we

follow this, that you did some interviews in February. You think as a result of the interview, for sure a result of the interview, a woman called you and said she had some material. Take me through that conversation again as best you recall it, the first conversation you had with her.

BILL BURKETT:

01:11:48:11

She-- she said, "Colonel, you did a good job on Hardball, sir." And I think the "sir," which-- which when we've discussed-- previously with some of the CBS folks, was-- was-- meant something to me. "Give 'em hell, sir."

01:12:04:22

I've got some things that you probably can do more with than I-- than I can. And it really needs to get to the appropriate source to make sure that whatever is out there can be-- can be had (PH)."

DAN RATHER:

01:12:15:09

And you talked to her for awhile and--

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:17:07

Very, very short conversation. I took it more as-- I had had a few pleasant complimentary phone calls after those February-- February interviews from guardsmen and from former guardsmen in Texas. And-- and I took it as one of those.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:31:29

Which-- about how many minutes would you say this conversation--

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:34:27

No more than five.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:37:11

I wanna get back. You said she called you at least twice, "sir?"

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:40:13

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:41:22

And that indicated to you what?

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:43:17

Probably either a junior officer or an enlisted person.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:47:25 Or someone with-- who knew the military--

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:49:14 Certainly somebody with in-- the intense
military knowledge, yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:52:13 Because you were a colonel?

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:54:06 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:12:56:09 And did you arrange to call her back, or she
arranged to call you again? How--

BILL BURKETT:

01:12:59:25 I-- she told me that I-- we could set up a
time. And-- and I could call at a certain
place. And it was my judgment, and I made
that second call.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:08:07 And how long between the first call and the
second call?

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:10:25 I-- that's-- I'm gonna say three to five

days, no more than that.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:15:07

So, you called--

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:16:07

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:16:09

--and the number was a Holiday Inn in
Houston?

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:18:07

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:19:08

Do you remember which Holiday Inn?

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:20:11

No, I don't. But I do remember it was room
148.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:23:10

Alright. And in that conversation, how did
that go?

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:27:05

Well, it was-- it was really quite simple.
All that I did is say that well okay, I'm
gonna be at the Houston Last Stock Show and

Rodeo, and-- on this specific date at this time we're gonna be in the-- the Cattle Pavilion. From what I understand, we're probably gonna be on the northwest side of that pavilion, at least from what I said. But what you need to look for is the Texas Cimenthal Association booth, and I will be at that booth from-- I think it was two to four.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:51:07

A lotta people know that cimenthal is a-- is a kind of cattle.

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:53:21

It's a bait (PH) of cattle. Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:13:54:29

Go ahead. Was it a man or a woman you-- talking to the second time?

BILL BURKETT:

01:13:58:18

The second time was a woman, the same woman, I thought.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:02:12

Right. Was she-- did she have an accented

voice?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:05:00

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:06:14

What kind of accent?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:07:03

Hispanic.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:09:28

English good, broken?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:11:11

Oh, no, no. It was beautiful English. But still, you could-- you could pick up a slight accent.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:17:11

And so, you told her this, where you'd be?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:19:13

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:20:03

What time of day?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:22:00

I told her that I would be there from two to four, I think it was, that I-- I let her

know when I will be in that general area,
and to ask for me.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:29:09 Right. And so, then this man who's about
six feet tall-- dark hair, dark eyes--

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:36:13 Dark complexion.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:38:23 But you thought it was from sun.

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:40:07 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:41:29 And-- you did not think he was a Latino--

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:44:13 No. No-- it was not prominent.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:46:11 Aright. He hands you the-- the envelope?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:49:21 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:50:11 And did you open the envelope there?

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:51:16

No.

DAN RATHER:

01:14:52:28

Did you--

BILL BURKETT:

01:14:53:02

I just-- I just put it in-- I have a black portfolio that I carry with me. I just put it inside the black portfolio. And I didn't know if it was subconscious or if it was conscious. I just put it in there. I had business to take care of. Okay, fine, I got it.

01:15:07:13

Now, I went to-- I was parked out by-- on the other side of the parking. And-- those that know Houston and know the facilities there, will-- will recognize. This-- it was over by the practice field for the Oilers, or not the Oilers, the Texans, I believe it is now. And-- I was parked there. And-- several hours later when I finally went to the car, I opened the envelope and I looked.

And it was one of those "oh, my God" kind of reactions.

DAN RATHER:

01:15:33:16

Why?

BILL BURKETT:

01:15:35:06

I could see that even though this wasn't a smoking gun, that the comments that you've seen in those documents, that you-- you've seen them, placed a face. And it did actually change the image of-- Lieutenant Colonel Killian.

01:15:48:23

The image that had been broadcast was that-- Lieutenant Bush and Lieutenant Colonel Killian were buds. Now, that's-- that's a little hard for a Lieutenant Colonel to accept that a First Lieutenant is going to pretty well cast his own shadow. And he's gonna prove also what he's gonna do and what he's not gonna do. It's just not what a Lieutenant Colonel, as I am-- takes as norm (PH). And that has been the image that was

cast. And it's also in-- in the case of-- of the defense of that image, we've had a lotta three and four-star generals in active components and elsewhere that have said, "You know, the Guard was that way back then."

01:16:22:20

And-- and-- and the Guard, you know, it was rather an informal relationship, and we've heard the stories about the champagne unit at the 111. I didn't know Colonel Killian. I wished I had. But I didn't know Colonel Killian.

01:16:33:25

But I know a Lieutenant Colonel and I know a commander. I've been both. And-- and-- I just could not imagine that a First Lieutenant was gonna refuse to take a physical or that he was gonna not show up for duty. Because I've put a guy in jail before, for not doing that. So, it didn't fit. So, when I see the documents, I say

now, that looks real to me.

DAN RATHER:

01:16:54:19

You read those documents the first time in your car in the parking lot?

BILL BURKETT:

01:16:57:25

I quickly browsed 'em, yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:16:59:24

And then what happened?

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:01:11

I put them-- I had made a-- an agreement. And I'd made this rather informally. I just-- I-- to me, this is not a big risk thing. People trust me. I-- fine, I'll do it.

01:17:13:25

There was more of a concern about DNA than there was fingerprints. There was a-- some strange concern here that, you know, you gotta protect me number one, not tell anybody who it is. And I've given you the name of that individual-- to-- in your staff, the name of that individual, and

you're gonna-- you're protecting that source. But--

DAN RATHER:

01:17:30:13

But so we understand for the purposes of this-- of this interview, the person you gave that promise to was the woman who called you--

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:36:22

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:17:36:27

--and that you talked to the second time?

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:38:11

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:17:39:10

You promised her anonymity?

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:40:29

I promised her that I would protect her identity, yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:17:45:12

Now, I wanna get back to-- you have the documents. You take them back to your car. Car, pickup truck, what's--

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:50:16

No. It was a car.

DAN RATHER:

01:17:51:20

Your car. You look 'em over. And your reaction was?

BILL BURKETT:

01:17:56:03

"Oh, my God."

DAN RATHER:

01:17:57:27

Oh, my God, because you thought this was--

BILL BURKETT:

01:18:00:17

Well--

DAN RATHER:

01:18:00:19

--new information?

BILL BURKETT:

01:18:01:15

--first of all, I knew that the first question would be that-- were any of these documents the documents that I'd seen in the trash can? And they were not. This was something new.

01:18:12:02

That's the first reason for the "oh, my God." The second reason for the "oh, my

God" was-- was basically that-- this is--
this was real. This was a-- a-- a
Lieutenant Colonel is saying why-- why he
was having problems. He was basically
saying, "Look.

01:18:29:14

I've got a situation." And-- and by the
way, I still have a file from when I was a
commander 30 years ago, of a bad situation.
It's not a CYA file to me or most
commanders. It's a documentation file.

DAN RATHER:

01:18:42:07

CYA being roughly, "cover your backside?"

BILL BURKETT:

01:18:44:06

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. It's a documentation
file to explain what you did and why.

DAN RATHER:

01:18:50:18

So now, you're at your car. Did you--

BILL BURKETT:

01:18:51:24

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:18:52:06

--stay in Houston or did you drive--

BILL BURKETT:

01:18:53:22

No. I drove back that night. We left-- I left right-- early that evening. I got in the car. I thought about this a lot. It didn't consume me, but I did think about this a lot.

01:19:08:03

I felt though, enough urgency that-- and-- and I'm gonna give you a stock tip. I'm gonna give you a stock tip here. I felt enough urgency that I stopped at a Kinko's in Waco, Texas on the way home. And I did make copies. And I did destroy the-- the-- the documents that were given to me because of the DNA.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:26:01

Let me-- I wanna continue the narrative. But you're driving from Houston back to your place in West Texas?

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:31:03

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:32:13 And you stop at Waco-- at a Kinko's?

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:35:29 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:36:27 And you make copies?

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:38:03 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:38:19 And then you destroyed the originals?

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:40:19 Yes, sir, which was the agreement.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:43:17 Oh. You had agreed to that?

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:44:25 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:19:45:28 Well, let me go back to the agreement. The agreement was that you would protect the identity of the person who gave these to you.

BILL BURKETT:

01:19:50:03 Yes, sir. And that I would destroy the copy that was given to me. They were concerned about DNA-- which I thought was ex--

DAN RATHER:

01:19:57:27 They were concerned about DNA being on the paper?

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:00:01 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:01:15 Well, this was possibly a crucial point. And I wanna pursue it for just a moment. So, the-- this would indicate that the woman that you spoke with was of at least reasonable intelligence.

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:16:10 I-- I felt that, yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:18:11 And so, you told her that you would protect her identity?

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:21:21 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:22:19

There was some expression from her that well, the originals have to go, because they-- they might be able to get my DNA out of-- off of it.

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:28:26

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:29:10

Right? So, you stopped in Waco. You made a-- how many copies did you make?

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:34:10

I made one copy. Only one copy.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:37:16

Of how many documents here--

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:38:18

There were six documents and there was a cover page that said "Colonel-- good job on Hardball, give 'em hell," or something like that.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:47:23

So, you destroyed the originals?

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:48:28 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:49:19 And you kept the copies.

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:50:21 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:20:52:21 How did you destroy those originals?

BILL BURKETT:

01:20:54:14 In the parking lot outside Kinko's, I had my wife's lighter and I burned 'em.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:00:18 Was your wife with you on this trip?

BILL BURKETT:

01:21:01:26 No. She was not-- with me on this trip.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:03:13 You burned 'em?

BILL BURKETT:

01:21:04:03 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:04:29 So, now you have one copy of the originals?

BILL BURKETT:

01:21:07:15

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:08:15

And then what happened?

BILL BURKETT:

01:21:10:19

I go home. Like I said, I had-- I thought about this a lot. But it didn't totally consume me. But it-- it worried me. I didn't want anymore of the trouble that I'd just gone through.

01:21:24:10

And now, all of a sudden, what'll I have? I-- I think-- and-- and-- and-- and I've talked maybe with my wife and a couple of other people about this, trying to understand what my motivations were and my thought processes and trying to understand a combination of fear-- a combination of very deep concern. "What do I do now," is really what it came down to, is what do I do now? I put those files in cold storage.

DAN RATHER:

01:21:51:19 You put 'em in cold storage?

BILL BURKETT:

01:21:52:20 Yes, sir. I wanted them somewhere to where they would not be discovered, they would be safe, and they would not be in my possession.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:02:16 I don't wanna get mired down in details. But sometimes the truth is in the details. You drove from Waco and went home?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:09:00 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:09:15 With the copy of the documents that now you've destroyed the original (UNINTEL), and you took them home with you?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:16:00 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:17:25 And then you said you put them in a-- cold storage?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:22:17 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:23:18 At home or away from home?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:24:19 Away from home. About a mile-- about an hour and a half's drive from home.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:30:08 And you-- you took them to a cold storage place?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:33:07 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:33:19 Where-- to keep deer (PH) or--

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:35:23 Yes, sir. In essence, yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:40:04 And how long between the time you got home with the documents and you decided to take them to the cold storage?

BILL BURKETT:

01:22:46:12 Less than five days.

DAN RATHER:

01:22:48:01

Okay. So, you took them to the cold storage. How did you store it in the cold storage? Seem to me-- I don't know much about these lockers, but a long time since my youth. And deer stories, but wouldn't it be a little strange to put two envelopes in a--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:02:14

Yes, it-- it is. It is. But when you have your own locker in that situation, you put it at the bottom of-- or the bottom of a pan or something, and it's-- it's fine. You're not gonna get blood on it there. You're not gonna get anything else on it.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:12:24

So, you--

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:13:03

And it's outside of your own storage facilities. It's outside of your own files.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:17:14 I understand. So, you-- you had your own area of the--

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:20:14 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:20:25 Which is common?

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:21:18 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:22:14 And so, you put them there?

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:23:18 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:23:29 After about four or five days?

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:25:27 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:27:02 And you put them there because?

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:30:16 I've thought about that too. I think--
looking back at it-- I didn't wanna touch

this. I didn't wanna touch this. It'd already been painful. It'd been painful for a long time.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:42:26 On the other hand, you could've destroyed the copies, and that would've been it.

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:47:04 Yes, sir. I realize that.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:52:00 But you didn't do that because?

BILL BURKETT:

01:23:55:02 I don't know. I don't know.

DAN RATHER:

01:23:58:05 Well, if you don't know, you don't know.
But I wanna pick up the narrative now.

BILL BURKETT:

01:24:01:24 Okay.

DAN RATHER:

01:24:02:06 That you put them in the cold storage locker. And you put them there, that would've been late February or early March?

BILL BURKETT:

01:24:07:17

That would've been-- and I'm-- late March, by this time.

DAN RATHER:

01:24:10:28

So, we're now-- the timeline is, you get the calls in late February?

BILL BURKETT:

01:24:15:03

Mm-hm (AFFIRM).

DAN RATHER:

01:24:15:17

You go to the stock show-- in March-- early March. You take it home for a few days. Then you put them in a cold storage lock-- locker. And then what happened, Mr. Burkett?

BILL BURKETT:

01:24:27:16

Well, and-- and realize that this is still-- this is going-- ongoing also, that, you know, I-- I guess every news organization, major news organization for sure, your competitors for sure, in fact, some of the people that are bringing up the loudest points of concern over these documents

today, were actually trying to get the documents themselves or get some documents that were rumored to exist. I know that there-- there were long-term appeals from several different organizations coming to me saying, "Well, what did you see in the garbage can in '98 that you talked about in these interviews?"

DAN RATHER:

01:24:59:24

At this time, nobody knows you have--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

01:25:02:24

I don't think so.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:03:08

--at issue now?

BILL BURKETT:

01:25:04:14

I don't think so.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:05:24

What they were referring to when they came to you and said, "Well, you saw these things in 1997 and, you know, do you have anything from that time, as any (PH)-- can you tell

us," that was the spirit of those--

BILL BURKETT:

01:25:16:27

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:17:04

--conversations?

BILL BURKETT:

01:25:17:29

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:25:19:26

Well, then what happened?

BILL BURKETT:

01:25:21:02

Oh, the summer has gone on with a-- I-- there were inquiries that have been consistent throughout the summer for different people. And I-- and I think really, the rumor and the-- and-- everything else just continued to go, that the-- there are documents out there. This is a-- an election year.

01:25:37:26

There are political ramifications. Plus the President still doesn't have a complete set of files even after the February release.

There are still holes in the files. So, that brings up the issue of, "If it's out there, it's-- it's gonna come out." And I always seemed to be the center of that issue.

01:25:53:06

Probably because number one, my presence-- seeing documents in the garbage can, and probably number two, the February-- the-- the Bush-- Bush's War for Reelection book by James Moore, and probably number three, the interviews in February.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:08:28

So, let me stop and ask you now. Did you provide CBS News with the documents that are allegedly from the files of Colonel Killian?

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:21:14

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:23:15

We promised you confidentiality?

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:26:01

Yes, sir, you did.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:27:06

And we have, to the very best of our ability, kept that. But now you're coming forward.

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:33:23

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:35:16

But you are the person who provided us those--

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:37:12

You and U.S.A. Today.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:40:10

Now, you said you didn't want to have your identity revealed.

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:44:10

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:26:44:19

And that was part-- we said okay. We'll keep your identity confidential and keep it to ourselves. Now, why have you decided to come forward now?

BILL BURKETT:

01:26:56:19

Bill Burkett is not the issue. I mean, this is-- I sit here for the last ten or 12 days. And-- and-- I'm sure that everyone tonight-- is going to tune in and they're going to-- expect to see a man with two horns and a tail in a straitjacket. Bill Burkett's not crazy.

01:27:17:07

Bill Burkett is-- is-- is not on some hunt for George W. Bush. Bill Burkett is on a hunt for the truth. But this is not a passion. This is not something that I just decided to go out and do. I wanted to make a decision.

01:27:31:27

In fact, CBS came to me just like the others, just like U.S.A. Today, just like everyone else. In my mind, and with conversations with my wife, I decided that the only way anybody was gonna get those documents was if they had the capabilities,

if they had the talent, and if they had the-
- the resources to do it right. I'm not
interested in "gotchas." But you know what?
The Swift Boat Veterans for Truth
organization conducted an attack on Senator
Kerry.

01:28:04:11

And they did so not on the basis of so much
truth as on the basis of (UNINTEL). And I'm
gonna pick on the news media on this. It
took an awful long time for anybody to
really look at what was true and what was
false. Took a long time.

DAN RATHER:

01:28:16:22

In the swift boat--

BILL BURKETT:

01:28:17:27

In the swift boat thing. In this particular
case, I wanted to make sure that it wasn't
taken down that same path. But if you got
one candidate here that has a full file, it
should be scrutinized.

01:28:30:01

If you have another candidate here and-- and-- and-- and President Bush wants to run against Senator Kerry rather than as an incumbent, then fine. Let's put it on that scale.

01:28:38:21

He still doesn't have a complete file even though he said in February of this year that he would have a complete le-- release. It's still not there. Mr. President, just answer the questions. That's all. Just answer the questions.

DAN RATHER:

01:28:50:10

And you see the question as what?

BILL BURKETT:

01:28:54:07

Let's get a complete file out there. And where the gaps are, explain the gaps. You don't have to go to excruciating detail. The American people are not dumb. But let's just handle it. In fact, you know, Mr. Rather, I'm one of about eight retired officers that for the last year, has said

that the proper venue for this was on PBS, one of your competitors, or on CBS, or somebody else to have a mock trial situation or some kind of an-- a-- a situation to where you could look at the two candidates that wanna present themselves to the United States people and review their military file.

01:29:29:03

Then let's cut the crap. Let's get it out of this tit-for-tat and "he said, she said." Let's quit spending the millions of dollars in-- in-- in campaign advertising that seems to always be under the table and off the books, some of it connected to campaigns and some of it not. Let's get that into the right environment. And let's deal in facts. I am not the issue, Mr. Rather, nor are you. I'm not the issue.

DAN RATHER:

01:29:55:04

You'll forgive me if I say in recent days, it certainly seemed like you were an issue.

And with no intent to be self-serving, by any recent analysis, it appeared that I am also an issue.

BILL BURKETT:

01:30:08:19

Absolutely. I agree-- and-- and I-- I wanna tell you that I-- I am very honored to be in your company, sir.

DAN RATHER:

01:30:14:28

Well, I appreciate that. Let me get back to the-- and I do appreciate--

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH MALE VOICE

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #2

02:00:08:24 (OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

SLATE SLATE:

02:00:11:12 Hour two--

02:00:12:29 12

02:00:13:21 13

02:00:14:11 14

02:00:15:02 15

02:00:15:27 S--

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

SLATE SLATE:

02:00:24:22 Speeding.

QUESTION:

02:00:25:03 Well in your narrative we're now sometime in
early August.

MALE VOICE:

02:00:29:05 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:00:29:06 And you've seen the Swift Boat ads. And you have these documents. Are they still in the frozen locker?

MALE VOICE:

02:00:36:04 Yes sir they are.

QUESTION:

02:00:40:10 Should we call that a meat locker? Or you don't wanna call it a meat locker.

MALE VOICE:

02:00:42:19 Well whatever you wanna call it.

QUESTION:

02:00:44:02 Okay.

MALE VOICE:

02:00:44:03 Still the same thing.

QUESTION:

02:00:45:06 Still the same.

MALE VOICE:

02:00:45:22 Facts don't change with words.

QUESTION:

02:00:48:02

True. So the meat locker papers are still in the meat locker in early August.

MALE VOICE:

02:00:54:07

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:00:54:13

When you're reading these Swift Boat things. Now you've had a lot of time to think about it. I wanna take you to-- to early August. You had a lot of time to think about it. Did you believe right the way through that the documents were authentic?

MALE VOICE:

02:01:08:28

From the first moment I saw 'em.

QUESTION:

02:01:10:22

Well let me go back to the first moment you saw them. I wanna take you back to that parking lot outside the Houston Astros home ballpark, the stock show. You're in the parking lot. You open the envelope up that you have been given. You see them for the first time and what jumped out at you

besides the, "Oh my God! There's explosive material in here."

MALE VOICE:

02:01:32:12

Mr. Rather yeah. I wouldn't have had an oh-my-God reaction. I would've probable had an oh-crap reaction or an oh-worst-word-- if I hadn't thought that they were authentic. What's st-- struck (SIC) out to me was that as a colonel and as a former commander this is the way commanders do business. I still have a file of an individual that-- a situation that I had the background--

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:01:58:22

--and it just-- And for my turn-- time as a commander.

QUESTION:

02:02:01:03

Well when you were looking at these so you-- you said to yourself what as you read over them for the first time?

MALE VOICE:

02:02:06:01

Well I didn't-- I-- I didn't look at type

script. I'm not that kind. I-- I don't have that talent in testing authenticity. I-- the floor mats were generally correct I thought. They seemed to me to be. They seemed to be military jargon. They seemed to me to be a-- a flowing style that was similar to a commander of similar to something that I would--

QUESTION:

02:02:25:08 Well did-- did it not seem to you the way a commander would talk?

MALE VOICE:

02:02:28:13 Absolutely.

QUESTION:

02:02:28:09 And put in a memo.

MALE VOICE:

02:02:29:20 Absolutely.

QUESTION:

02:02:32:06 You say absolutely. You say that quickly and firmly.

MALE VOICE:

02:02:34:17 Oh without a doubt. I mean-- I've had no--

I have had no reservation whatsoever. And yet I wanna point this out. That when your people came to me and when your staffers came to me and your researchers came to me and we met the first time and I didn't meet with anybody else. I met with your people because I thought you had the assets. I thought you had the people that could do this right. And when we sat down I said and it was one of the-- the bargaining points that I had, "This-- if you're gonna do it I want it done right. I want it done fair. And if it's right it needs to be in the public record. If it's not then it doesn't."

QUESTION:

02:03:14:10

Thank you. Was there anything else that you read over-- you-- you tell me you had the oh-my-God you mentioned. Then as you go through them it was, "This reads right." What-- What convinced you so quickly that this is authentic. This is the real deal.

MALE VOICE:

02:03:33:29

Well I don't know what to say-- from a-- you know I don't think you'd go through that mental process. I just didn't see anything that was wrong. I mean I just-- it just-- it seems to fit. There was one particular th-- I was still no expert on the Bush files and I'm not today.

02:03:48:21

I've refused to get into that level of detail of-- But from what I understood of the Bush files the dates and events seem to events sequence. That there seemed to be a problem in early 1972 that arose. There was a meltdown or there was something that happened and I didn't know what it was. And I've never seen documentation as to what it was.

QUESTION:

02:04:08:15

This is very clear well let me say the record by any objective analysis seems to indicate that he did at least, at least

pretty well as a pilot in the early years before 1972, 73, 74.

MALE VOICE:

02:04:22:08

You know Mr. Rather I-- in-- in-- in 2002 I talked to an awful lot of people. Major Dean Rome (PH). Dean was, I believe, a roommate of-- of-- m-- Mr. Bush's at one time. I talked to Maury Udell (PH). We tal-- he was his flight instructor.

02:04:39:25

I've never fought the fact that the man was an absolutely talent. I've never fought the fact-- that he-- he produced well for a period of time. But there are gaps in the file and I haven't even fought that. But I've just said that there were gaps in the file and somebody produced the information.

QUESTION:

02:04:54:23

But anyway you looked at the-- you did say that you thought that well and based of what you had heard before-- heard before that clearly the Killian (PH) files indicate that

beginning 19-- certainly by 1973 that problems had developed in the Killian-Lieutenant Bush relationship.

MALE VOICE:

02:05:16:16

Nineteen seventy-two sir.

QUESTION:

02:05:17:29

All right --'72. But again I wanna go back to the parking lots.

MALE VOICE:

02:05:21:12

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:05:21:12

But you-- you looked through--

MALE VOICE:

02:05:23:00

Which parking log.

QUESTION:

02:05:23:29

The Houston parking lot.

MALE VOICE:

02:05:24:25

Okay sir.

QUESTION:

02:05:25:14

Houston parking lot. And you say to yourself looks-- What did you say? "This looks real to me. I think this is

authentic." Or, "I have suspicions about this."

MALE VOICE:

02:05:34:02 You'll have to bleep what I say-- what I said. I said, "Oh shit!"

QUESTION:

02:05:38:29 Because?

MALE VOICE:

02:05:40:15 I really thought that it-- yeah. It wasn't a smoking gun but to me it was like a photo at Abu Graib. That all of a sudden put a picture on it.

QUESTION:

02:05:50:21 Put a picture on--

02:05:52:11 (OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:05:52:11 That there was a problem in 1972, in early 1972 that the commander had a problem with Lieutenant Bush not doing something that he ordered him to do. Which in this case at least now rereading the files and I didn't read those files for a lot of months. I

took a quick snapshot. I took a quick read.

02:06:11:24

They went somewhere else and th-- I haven't really read 'em that much even this past week. But I did read 'em once this last week and two things struck out-- stuck out. One was that there was a problem in a physical and another was there probably was a problem in flight certification or other standards issues. And those were the two issues.

QUESTION:

02:06:30:01

I wanna l-- leap back to something you said earlier. I wanna do it because it occurs to me that I still haven't fleshed out-- it's certainly not clear in my mind what it is that you've got. When you open the envelope-- le-- let me even go back before that. When you talk the woman-- to the woman on the telephone--

MALE VOICE:

02:06:52:12

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:06:53:06

--did she say she had originals of documents? Documents or copies of documents? Or did she discuss that?

02:07:01:06

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:07:01:05

Well-- She didn't-- She didn't indicate that but what I actually received were photocopies. I consider them to be probably for second generation photocopies.

QUESTION:

02:07:10:22

So what you receive is not an original document--

MALE VOICE:

02:07:13:17

That's exactly right sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:15:03

What you believe and is it fair to say you believe to this day or-- or not that you received an authentic photocopy of an authentic original?

MALE VOICE:

02:07:23:27

Yes sir. And that's good to point that out.

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:27:19

Did you think that at the time?

MALE VOICE:

02:07:29:27

I didn't notice. I-- I guess I must've
expected photocopies rather than originals.
It was not an issue to me at the time.

QUESTION:

02:07:36:20

So when you go from Houston to Waco and you
stop at a Kinko's in Waco when you say you
destroyed the originals you mean you
destroyed--

MALE VOICE:

02:07:45:02

The copies given to me sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:46:17

The copies given to you.

MALE VOICE:

J 02:07:47:25

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:48:10

So you made copies of the copies given to
you.

MALE VOICE:

02:07:51:19 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:52:14 But you destroyed the copies that were given
to you because at the request of the person-

-

MALE VOICE:

02:07:58:08 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:07:58:27 --whose identity you said you wouldn't
reveal. That you said you would destroy
those.

MALE VOICE:

02:08:03:24 That's exactly right.

QUESTION:

02:08:04:15 So it wouldn't be DNA or something like--

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:08:06:25 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:08:07:23 Okay. Well those are I think two important
points. I move on now. You said--

MALE VOICE:

02:08:13:27 Sir if I could--

QUESTION:

02:08:15:07 Yes.

MALE VOICE:

02:08:15:08 --Mr. Rather let me go back on one point and maybe this-- maybe this'll answer something. I probably gave credence to this phone call because on the original call I asked the question. How did you get this? And-- that individual on the phone, the lady on the phone, told me that she was-- had been-- had gotten me-- She was supposed to destroy these files with the change of command after-- after Colonel Killian.

QUESTION:

02:08:43:21 She told you that.

MALE VOICE:

02:08:44:14 Yes sir. And I've passed that to your staff of course.

QUESTION:

02:08:47:22 So she said that she was supposed to destroy

these files when the change of command from Colonel Kill-- Killian to his successor.

MALE VOICE:

02:08:54:28

Which is the normal practice on a commander's-- correspondence file.

QUESTION:

02:08:59:24

Did she mention to you in any way that she'd been in the National Guard or worked for the National Guard?

MALE VOICE:

02:09:03:25

No and I didn't close that. I especially that I-- I got-- either she referred to it or, and I'm trying to recall that exactly. Either she referred to it or I got the impression that she was the clerk of that unit.

QUESTION:

02:09:16:03

You said she called you sir several times.

MALE VOICE:

02:09:17:27

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:09:19:14

Doesn't necessarily mean in military

background because in the culture of Texas a lot of times people will call a man--

MALE VOICE:

02:09:25:20

That's exactly right.

QUESTION:

02:09:26:03

--that they don't know. But so she called you sir and she said that she was supposed to destroy these files on a change of command.

MALE VOICE:

02:09:34:25

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:09:36:00

Well I think to any reasonable person that would indicate that either she was in the military or had worked with the military.

MALE VOICE:

02:09:42:29

Well to me all that it answered was that she had reasonable access and that's all that it answered.

QUESTION:

02:09:48:20

Well at the-- at the risk of being repetitious and I wanna make clear there's

an understanding that she just said to you
she had something she thought was
interesting and--

MALE VOICE:

02:10:00:08

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:10:00:28

Okay. And perhaps useful or valuable. How
did she describe it?

MALE VOICE:

02:10:05:18

Well it's something that-- I could do more
work than she could. I could-- I could get
it to the proper people better than she
could is the way it was related.

QUESTION:

02:10:14:04

And then when you got it, when you opened
the envelope, what you believed then and
believe now that you had were copies of
original documents.

MALE VOICE:

02:10:24:08

Yes sir. And authentic copies.

QUESTION:

02:10:26:16

And authentic copies. And you thought

you're not an expert on documentation--

MALE VOICE:

02:10:31:11

Oh no. No.

QUESTION:

02:10:31:22

--but you thought it was a first or second generation?

MALE VOICE:

02:10:33:24

Yes sir. That's the one I assumed it to be.

QUESTION:

02:10:35:25

And you took that to Waco, made a copy of that at Kinko's. Destroyed what--

MALE VOICE:

02:10:40:06

All that was given to me.

02:10:40:14

(OVERTALK)

QUESTION:

02:10:41:07

--on behalf of the woman had given you.

MALE VOICE:

02:10:43:18

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:10:43:29

And you put that in the locker.

MALE VOICE:

02:10:45:13

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:10:45:23 Okay. Th-- Those are just clean-up.

MALE VOICE:

02:10:47:18 Understand.

QUESTION:

02:10:51:08 (UNINTEL) we checked you out.

MALE VOICE:

02:10:54:08 I would expect you to.

QUESTION:

02:10:55:13 And your client and you have a reputation of being a truth teller. The *Washington Post* did a piece on their own investigation according to people in your county, even people who didn't particularly like you for one reason or another who basically said you're a truth teller. And it's frankly there's nothing more important to me and I would hope there's nothing more important to you and well you look me in the eye and tell me the flat, honest truth. When you first got these did you think they were authentic?

MALE VOICE:

02:11:28:20 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:11:30:00 Had you continued to believe they were authentic right the way through?

MALE VOICE:

02:11:32:26 I believe they're authentic today sir.

QUESTION:

02:11:34:25 And you still think they are authentic?

MALE VOICE:

02:11:36:08 I absolutely believe so sir.

QUESTION:

02:11:39:15 Even though you live in west Texas. That you don't live in hermet-- hermetically sealed environment you know what's been going on. That experts have come from left, right, center, above and below to say these documents are not authentic. They're forgeries. The integrity of them is-- nonexistent and bluntly put you and I both have caught a lotta hell about them.

MALE VOICE:

02:12:08:16

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:12:10:26

Tell me what you think about that and tell me why faced with that you still say, "I think these are authentic."

MALE VOICE:

02:12:18:28

Mr. Rather I-- first of all I'm not the issue and you're not the issue. The documents have to stand on their own. I am not an expert. I-- I-- I don't know what-- I don't even know what authentication tests are gonna be used or should be used.

02:12:33:01

But when your staffers came to me and I quizzed and insisted that certain, basic standards be met-- I've pretty well handed it off. But you know what doesn't change. What doesn't change is when you overlay the events along an events sequence line.

02:12:49:27

I'm an analyst. For 30 years nearly I've

been in the management consulting field in addition to being a traditional guardsman. Any guard-- I had analyst positions. The basic thing that you have to do is establish a common sense and a-- I hate to say it. I'm goin' back to what my-- my-- my rancher roots.

02:13:08:10

It's a common sense situation here. Did it happen or didn't it. Anybody in the world it's always easier to do it to cast doubt than it is to cast proof. But the old theory that all you have to do is knock one leg out from under a stool and it falls doesn't necessarily apply here.

02:13:26:13

The documents are not perfect. I'm sure everybody will say. There are probably problems in format. There-- in fact I heard the term or-- and I haven't followed this closely because I will not be knocked off center and I'm also not gonna relish and--

and-- and being called names. But-- terms like 'billet (PH) or other things. I don't know about that. I don't know. But it's a military term and-- and it fits. Everything fits.

QUESTION:

02:13:54:06

By everything you mean the information in the documents?

MALE VOICE:

02:13:59:10

I mean the-- the content. It fits a timeline or a general sequence events. And to me-- as a former commander and as a Lieutenant Colonel in dealing with a first Lieutenant. It fits. And that's as far as I can go on this.

QUESTION:

02:14:21:25

I understand. Now look the way on it 'cause I wanna think of it. But I just wanna pause--

MALE VOICE:

02:14:25:06

Sure.

QUESTION:

02:14:25:16 --for a second.

02:14:26:16 (BREAK IN TAPE)

QUESTION:

02:14:32:26 Is it your opinion with time to think about it that someone other than Colonel Killian made these documents? Put the information into the documents?

MALE VOICE:

02:14:45:04 Oh I-- I-- I think there are three plausible scenarios. One of them is a bright scenario and relatively simple. The other two are bunk. The first plausible scenario is that these documents are in fact authentic. That-- the secretary that you interviewed the other day and-- and I have really--

QUESTION:

02:15:02:27 Marin Knox (PH).

MALE VOICE:

02:15:03:27 Marin Knox. That Ms. Knox says that she didn't type 'em. That's fine. I am sure that her-- her typewriter was probably not

secured at all times. I'm sure that there was some accessibility to it. There was a-- a-- a scenario that they-- these documents could've been created at the same time, the same event sequence.

02:15:21:14

But what's important here is there would be very few people, a small handful of people, who would've known the command climate that Mrs. Knox the test was actually taking place at that time.

QUESTION:

02:15:34:20

When (UNINTEL) Mrs. Knox what she said the information here is almost exactly, precisely what Colonel Killian had made Mrs. Knox type up. But she said-- these documents she said that I think they look fake to me. And when asked why she said, "Well they use such terms as billets, some of the abbreviations." That she always used memo and memorandum as he (UNINTEL). Wanna be fair to Mrs. Knox. That's what--

02:16:05:10

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:16:05:16

I'd want-- That's what I want to do also. But from-- from-- from her, if we accept everything and believe you me and I haven't watched that in detail. But if-- if we accept everything that she says as fact and I think we have to because she had proximity. She had access. She was one of the key players. In fact she had the key to the door from the way understand it. How many other people had that same access?

QUESTION:

02:16:28:25

Well I don't know but Mrs. Knox told me-- that the typewriter was open, the room was open. I'd have to go back to (UNINTEL). But that's pretty much the way she said it.

MALE VOICE:

02:16:38:15

Okay. But still you had very few people who understood what Lieutenant Colonel Killian felt. You might've had Lieutenant Harris or others that were involved with in his direct

chain of command whether were aware of that. And there may have been other individuals. But I think it narrows the group down to a very small group of people. That's consistent in all three plausible scenarios.

02:16:59:03

The sixth scenario, the first being that the documents are real I haven't put in 1A which would be that they were recreated. And I-- And I-- And I really don't wanna go there for specific reason. It is a possibility I guess. But I somehow I can't fathom why. I mean if-- if you've got the real documents why are you gonna do somethin' else?

QUESTION:

02:17:19:16

Well none the less you had-- in-- in your mind--

02:17:22:17

(OVERTALK)

QUESTION:

02:17:22:20

--there're three possibilities that are plausible. One is that they're authentic. That's the one you believe.

MALE VOICE:

02:17:27:08

That-- That's the one I believe.

QUESTION:

02:17:28:06

--the other two.

MALE VOICE:

02:17:29:19

The other two would be somebody that has something against George Bush. But this would mean that they would've had to take files in 1984 which I believe did occur because I-- I believe that I did talk to the person or persons that were represented (UNINTEL) action. And they would've held-- had to hold it for some-- future date with an anticipation that George W. Bush or maybe someone else that was reference in the commander's conf-- correspondence file was going to be somebody some day.

QUESTION:

02:17:57:20

And they were taken in 1974. They were supposed to be destroyed at that time?

MALE VOICE:

02:18:00:25

I-- I don't know when the change of command

dates are. I'm-- and I-- if I set a date
I'm-- I don't know those dates.

QUESTION:

02:18:06:00 1974.

MALE VOICE:

02:18:06:22 Okay.

QUESTION:

02:18:07:08 'kay. Well pick up--

MALE VOICE:

02:18:09:08 And number 20 of those, if I could, number
20 would be the other dark scenario which
would be somebody pro-Bush who wanted to
establish denial and knowing the files were
out there.

QUESTION:

02:18:24:12 Well number three in your mind is the
possibility of a dirty trick, the devil
finesse.

MALE VOICE:

02:18:29:04 I think both two and three are dirty tricks.

QUESTION:

02:18:32:01 But what do you believe is the truth?

MALE VOICE:

02:18:34:06 Number one. Unqualified.

QUESTION:

02:18:37:16 That these are authentic.

MALE VOICE:

02:18:39:19 Absolutely.

QUESTION:

02:18:40:21 You believe that.

MALE VOICE:

02:18:41:16 Absolutely.

QUESTION:

02:18:43:14 Yeah I wanna now pick up an earlier timeline
if I can. We may come back to this if other
questions arise but--

MALE VOICE:

02:18:51:02 Okay.

QUESTION:

02:18:51:05 --now I must pause, take a little breath.
When did you first hear of the-- when-- when
did you first hear or learn that-- of the
insistence or the alleged existence of some
such files on George Bush?

MALE VOICE:

02:19:10:05 Nineteen-ninety-seven.

QUESTION:

02:19:11:24 Tell me about that.

MALE VOICE:

02:19:13:07 Oh it was just in passing-- I-- I-- I guess that-- you know being a traditional guardsman who has never really served on active-- or full time guard service before I went back to help with the strategic plan. There's a culture and a society. They're a fraternalism and every rumor in the world seems to bubble to the top and-- and while-- in my initial days-- working full time on the strategic plans for the Texas National Guard I heard it in passing as-- as a-- just a common rumor. It wasn't a hidden fact necessarily. It was just something accepted.

QUESTION:

02:19:47:09 And that was in brief?

MALE VOICE:

02:19:49:05

That-- there were files out there that, you know, Bush's files weren't complete and there were people that had portions of his files.

QUESTION:

02:19:56:22

So in 1997 you began to hear this as-- as rumor. As around the Guard talk.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:02:15

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:20:02:24

That there were files out there.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:04:04

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:20:04:25

That they were not particularly-- positive files.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:09:26

Well I think-- I think in context it the-- the way it was presented was this was a gotcha. He was about to run for reelection in '98. This was a gotcha. And the--

anybody already knew he was runnin' for President.

QUESTION:

02:20:21:10

Well he was serving his first term as Governor of Texas.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:23:26

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:20:23:27

He was about to run for a second term in 1988. But by that time there's a wide spread belief which was true that he was preparing to run for president.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:31:20

That's exactly right.

QUESTION:

02:20:33:02

And so this kind of talk was around and you first heard it 1997.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:37:03

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:20:38:27

Then what happened? You mentioned to me you were someplace which raised your belief that

this was true.

MALE VOICE:

02:20:44:25

Well-- the-- this didn't really have a play on me. As far as the rumor that files were out there. It really didn't have a play. In '98 after I got sick it was mentioned to me again more in line of hey-- you know you need some help. You need medical attention and you're not gettin'-- I went 150 days before the National Guard would even make a telephone call and all they had to do was say that the man was on duty orders. But they had to certify it and-- and my commanders refused to do that.

QUESTION:

02:21:11:21

This was in 1998 you were having trouble getting what you consider--

02:21:14:09

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:21:14:06

My illness.

QUESTION:

02:21:15:00

--your just-- just due. Your pension and

healthcare.

MALE VOICE:

02:21:17:20

My healthcare. Yes sir. And-- And-- in the process of those problems it was told to me, "Well you know-- you know well maybe-- maybe it would help leverage this situation." But I passed off. We didn't-- We didn't (UNINTEL) it.

QUESTION:

02:21:29:14

What will help leverage this situation?

MALE VOICE:

02:21:30:29

That-- somehow goin' out and getting these files and holding it over the governor's head. I wrote eight letters to the governor and he didn't-- he didn't even respond.

QUESTION:

02:21:40:05

I wanna talk about motive a little bit later. Let me hold the point here. You mentioned to me and you've mentioned to others that there was one particular time when you saw some documents or papers. When was that? Where was that and tell me what

that was.

MALE VOICE:

02:22:01:18

Most probably the most life changing event I've ever had Mr. Rather. I first overheard a conversation. I was standing outside General James' office. I had peeked my head in quickly. I had a direct access relationship to General James because I was doing strategic planning work and when you do--

02:22:22:16

(OVERTALK)

QUESTION:

02:22:22:15

General James is whom please.

MALE VOICE:

02:22:24:00

General James is the Adjutant (PH) General of Texas.

QUESTION:

02:22:25:22

First name?

MALE VOICE:

02:22:26:26

Daniel. And he is now the-- he is now the direct-- or he's the head of the Air National Guard of the United States.

QUESTION:

02:22:33:18

Okay but you-- you were around General James was it?

MALE VOICE:

02:22:37:22

Yes. I was j-- standing-- I peeked my head and I needed a quick answer on something. I peeked my head in and-- and when his door was open you peeked your head in. You get his attention for something quick. And I was fine. He was-- He was in a telephone call and I heard the-- the over-- I stepped back out into Henrietta Valderas (PH), his secretary's office way and I waited. And I overheard a telephone call.

02:22:57:15

Which basically was from-- and I'm not gonna get into exact words. We've been through this 100 times and it's-- it's not really a pleasant experience even to revisit this because this has been such a painful event for us. But the basic deal was-- from Mr. Joe Albah (PH) who I considered the Chief of

Staff for the Governor. And--

QUESTION:

02:23:17:02

(UNINTEL) the White House.

MALE VOICE:

02:23:18:13

I believe he-- I think-- I don't know if he's at the White House. He used to be FEMA Director I believe. But I don't-- I don't know. Mr. Albah, in passing, tells General James that, you know, we wanna get the files together. Karen Hughes (PH) is gonna write a book. Make sure, we wanna make sure there's nothin' in there to embarrass the Governor.

QUESTION:

02:23:33:29

That was the sense of conversation you got.

MALE VOICE:

02:23:35:06

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:23:37:16

The question. But your accounts at General James' office. You're actually only hearing his part of the conversation. Correct?

MALE VOICE:

02:23:44:09 No sir. It was-- It was on the box.

QUESTION:

02:23:48:09 Oh it was on the speaker box.

MALE VOICE:

02:23:49:02 Yeah. And it was a very casual conversation. And I felt bad about hearing it.

QUESTION:

02:23:54:22 And it specifically was Joe Albah at that time on the Governor's staff or if he's--

02:24:00:13 (OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:24:00:15 Probably the most recognizable voice in the State of Texas. Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:24:04:18 So he was on the speaker box with General James and he was saying what?

MALE VOICE:

02:24:10:10 He-- again he-- he told General James that-- we-- we need to get together some files together, one place. Karen Hughes is gonna

come out. Dan and Karen Hughes and Dan Bartlett I-- I was on that phone conversation as well. On--

QUESTION:

02:24:24:14 --Bartlett he's now the communications director at the White House.

MALE VOICE:

02:24:26:17 Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:24:28:29 So they said that Albah said they're gonna come out to do what?

MALE VOICE:

02:24:35:03 And look at the files, at the Governor's files, and-- Karen Hughes was going to write a book.

QUESTION:

02:24:41:18 Well on the face of it nothin' wrong with that?

MALE VOICE:

02:24:43:26 Nothing. Except the other part was make sure there's not anything in there that'll embarrass the governor.

QUESTION:

02:24:49:10

Let me stop you right there.

MALE VOICE:

02:24:50:27

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:24:51:09

Are you sure that's what you heard?

MALE VOICE:

02:24:52:27

Yes sir. Believe you me sir after what I've been through-- after what I've been through there's-- I guarantee ya I-- there is no way I would-- that I would ever back up on what I've heard.

QUESTION:

02:25:08:10

So that's what you heard.

MALE VOICE:

02:25:09:07

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:25:09:14

You made sure there's nothing in there that's embarrassing.

MALE VOICE:

02:25:11:29

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:25:14:12

What did you think at that time? What did you do if anything?

MALE VOICE:

02:25:17:13

That night and I know-- I know already know what Dan Bartlett and others are gonna say. But I've got to repeat this fact.

QUESTION:

02:25:27:01

Well just tell me straight out what you know, what--

MALE VOICE:

02:25:30:20

I-- I will. I will. That night-- a-- a very close friend of mine he and I were geographic bachelors together. With both lived outside of Austin but we stayed there during the week and when we were doing work full time. Mr. J-- George Kahn-- (PH) and I had dinner three, four, five nights a week. We typically-- I'd say 80 percent of the time we had dinner together. And I knew--

QUESTION:

02:25:53:13

George Kahn was doing what at that time?

MALE VOICE:

02:25:55:08

He was full time-- on full time staff with the Texas National Guard.

QUESTION:

02:25:59:03

Okay. So it's night. But the same day when you heard the--

MALE VOICE:

02:26:01:10

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:26:02:11

Go ahead.

MALE VOICE:

02:26:03:09

And I told George about it at dinner. I-- I told him that-- I told him I was very concerned about it. I had-- I had overheard the-- it's making-- it made me kinda ill. And I told-- you know to me it just troubled me.

02:26:14:12

I-- and I can't explain exactly why but it troubled me. It troubled me too ways. It troubled me that I overheard the conversation number one. And it troubled me

what I heard.

QUESTION:

02:26:23:22

So you told your friend-- he was a colonel at the time?

MALE VOICE:

02:26:27:04

No, no, no. He's Chief Warrant Officer.

QUESTION:

02:26:29:12

All right. So you told your friend-- Mr. Kahn about what had happened.

MALE VOICE:

02:26:34:04

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:26:34:18

You said you were troubled by it.

MALE VOICE:

02:26:35:26

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:26:36:13

What did he say?

MALE VOICE:

02:26:39:03

Yeah. I don't think he reacted that much that first night. He-- I think he tried to kinda sooth me. And-- And-- And-- And basically good friends, honest friends and

both of us are preachers' sons and-- and we had that-- that affinity. And plus a lot of other things. I think George just tried to call me a little bit and get my focus on things.

QUESTION:

02:26:59:09

And then what happened?

MALE VOICE:

02:27:01:27

I later in that week or shortly in the next week we were in the coffee area at the command-- in the command group and-- and General James and-- and General Marty and others were assembling and I was there also. We're assembling for a-- a meeting back in the conference room. And then General Scribner (PH) came in and-- the directive was given by General James that the folks from downtown were gonna come out. Bartlett and Hughes were gonna come out and they were gonna look at the files. He needed to get 'em together and-- and the comment-- was passed on, "Make sure there's not anything

there that will b-- embarrass the Governor."

QUESTION:

02:27:33:13

But you sh-- mention to me at one point that you had seen something.

MALE VOICE:

02:27:37:20

Well I saw it later.

QUESTION:

02:27:41:00

First of all let's get this in context. This was what year when you heard the telephone conversation.

MALE VOICE:

02:27:46:04

Nineteen ninety-seven.

QUESTION:

02:27:47:11

Nineteen ninety-seven.

MALE VOICE:

02:27:48:13

Yes sir.

QUESTION:

02:27:49:14

And okay. Now when was it that the other event observing event happened?

MALE VOICE:

02:27:57:11

Still in 1997.

QUESTION:

02:27:58:15

Still in 1997.

MALE VOICE:

02:27:59:12

Within three weeks or so of those two events.

QUESTION:

02:28:01:18

Do you remember what month that was?

MALE VOICE:

02:28:03:20

It was early spring probably May.

QUESTION:

02:28:06:17

That's when you overheard--

MALE VOICE:

02:28:07:03

April.

QUESTION:

02:28:07:10

--the conversations.

MALE VOICE:

02:28:07:24

Yeah.

QUESTION:

02:28:08:20

And so some weeks later what happened?

MALE VOICE:

02:28:12:01

Mr. Kahn was a smoker. And in the break area is-- Mr. Kahn also had the best set of

ears in the Texas National Guard. Would pick up every rumor. Knew what everybody was doin'. And-- And-- And also one of the most honest and-- and-- and-- and tremendous souls that there is. Mr. Kahn came up by my cubical, my cubical was located here.

02:28:33:23

His cubical was directly across to where we could turn chair and we would constantly banter each other. Tremendous friend. We had a lotta fun. I'm a workaholic. As a workaholic-- I also have to have a mother.

02:28:47:05

So Mr. Kahn was also my mother to make sure that I'd take a walk once in awhile or make sure I'd do other things and take care of myself a little bit. Mr. Kahn came by and he said, "Kern (PH) get your hat." So George and I probably had a little bit of profanity to go with that. And I'm not really proud of that.

02:29:01:28

But you know I blew him off and he said, "Colonel get you hat!" I said, "Aw George--" and he said, "Colonel get your hat. Let's take a walk." We go outside. I get my hat. By this time I know that Mr. Kahn-- who I trusted totally and still do. Mr. Kahn picked up his hat and we were off for our little walk and we go down the second floor rather than going to the ground floor we'd go past the-- I guess you would call it a rotunda area or whatever when you first walk into the-- to the Building Eight Headquarters. And we-- we passed those major-- main stairways which was rather odd.

02:29:37:10

We kept going down the-- the second floor-- hallways to the end of the building and then we went down the stairways and we took a very roundabout way. We ended up at the museum building, the old museum where there was a folding table. I think either-- I believe it was three chairs. It may have

been two chairs but there was a folding table and three chairs and General Scribner who I'd never met at that time but I knew who he was--

QUESTION:

02:30:00:16

General--

MALE VOICE:

02:30:01:09

Scribner. S-C-R-I-B-N-E-R I believe.

QUESTION:

02:30:04:19

First name?

MALE VOICE:

02:30:05:25

I don't know.

QUESTION:

02:30:06:14

N-- doesn't matter.

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

02:30:07:15

You--

QUESTION:

02:30:07:08

General Scribner. Was he there?

MALE VOICE:

02:30:08:08

General was his first name to me. He was there. Mr. Kahn and General Scribner knew

each other well. They were-- They were casual but respectful. And-- George went in, George Kahn went in. He introduced himself. Said, "Hello and-- and he introduced me." And they were in the process of doing something on that table.

02:30:27:27

There was a 15-gallon-- I think it's the 15-gallon, gray, gun barrel gray metal waist can at the end of the table. And I was standing right by the table. Mr. Kahn and General Scribner talked briefly and-- they talked about what was in the-- the-- what they were doing and he was talking about the photos and some of the other promotional materials and that were there in-- in-- George Bush's file.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH BILL BURKETT

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #3

04:00:51:17 Nine 50

04:00:52:00 51

04:00:52:19 52

04:00:55:17 (OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

04:01:23:04 So, you were telling me that-- you went with-- your friend, the one officer. And you went down and you saw the general doing what?

BILL BURKETT:

04:01:33:26 Well, there were-- there were several stocks of files on this folding table. And this folding table is out away from some small, old, open-top type officers that were on the southeast corner, I'd say approximately 30,

35 feet from the southeast corner. Here's a table that's just out in the middle of a concrete floor, gymnasium-style building. There were several sets of files. I'm standing by the garbage can. I'd been introduced.

04:01:57:15

I was very flat-footed and somewhat con-- comfortable. Typically, I don't walk around without a pen in my hand. And I don't walk around with a pad, maybe. And I was-- I was naked. I was totally naked.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:09:01

By that, you mean you didn't have pencil or paper?

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:10:12

That's-- that's exactly right. I mean, I mean-- (LAUGHS) I-- I was-- I'm often-- (LAUGHS) I-- I was-- I'm always clumsy when I don't have something in my hand. Mr. Kahn (PH) and he talked for a moment.

04:02:19:14

And he and-- he and-- and Mr. Kahn and General Scrudner (PH) went back to the office. And it was a very casual talk. They were-- they wanted to see pictures or something along that line, and left me right-- standing right there.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:29:11

Pictures-- old pictures of the--

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:30:21

Old pictures of-- of-- Governor Bush and some of the promotion photos they've done, and that sorta thing.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:36:12

Promotion photos during his time in the Guard?

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:38:09

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:39:00

As a--

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:39:20

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:39:26 The son of a prominent Congressman--

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:41:09 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:41:18 --along with a lot of other prominent people
includes Senators from (PH) Democrats.

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:44:19 Absolutely.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:45:28 A member of what I know as the champagne
squadron?

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:49:03 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:02:49:15 Okay, fine. Okay.

BILL BURKETT:

04:02:50:10 I-- I think that they used-- they probably
used-- Mr. Bush as-- as a PR tool as much as
they could. And they probably took a lotta
photos and did some things along-- I think
that was what they were doing today.

DAN RATHER:

04:03:01:25

So, they went away for a few minutes?

BILL BURKETT:

04:03:03:08

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:03:04:06

And you did what?

BILL BURKETT:

04:03:05:15

Well, I was standing there. I-- just one foot and another, just kinda looking-- I noticed to my right in the garbage can at the bottom of that can, looked what was a-- what was like a mirrors (PH) ready-to-eat box, cardboard carton.

04:03:18:21

It had been folded up in some wire and a plastic strap or two. And then there was a-- there were a series of piles of paper that were at the top of that-- of that garbage can. Most of the-- looking back, most of those papers at the bottom looked-- like they had been thrown in-- in one at a time.

04:03:33:06

Because they were strewn out. They weren't stacked at all. And then there were a couple of little groups that looked like they were stacked. And toward the top, I-- on the top one, I saw the name Bush, comma, George W. 1LT (PH). And-- well, an alert to me.

04:03:48:29

And-- and I looked down. And-- and-- as I told Chris Matthews on Hardball in February, I-- I did something that my dad would still whip me for that. I--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:01:09

I reached down--

DAN RATHER:

04:04:02:03

--you saw this--

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:02:26

I reached down. And I picked up the top document, which-- was a memorandum. It was narrative format, not on a form. But it looked to me like a continuation sheet or a

narrative sheet that should've been attached to a-- a counseling statement-- either a formal or informal counseling statement.

DAN RATHER:

04:04:21:05

It looked to you like an informal sheet on a counseling statement, somebody counseling with the officer, in this case Lieutenant Bush?

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:28:09

Yes, sir. I read-- I quickly read some of it. The other documents that I had in my hand were basically pay documents-- administrative documents, which none of these I've seen since that time.

DAN RATHER:

04:04:42:19

So, you reached into the garbage can?

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:44:20

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:04:45:05

And you pulled out-- one paper, two papers--

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:48:11

Six to eight, I would say.

DAN RATHER:

04:04:50:14 And one of 'em, the one that you say--

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:52:02 The one that was on top.

DAN RATHER:

04:04:53:28 Looked like to you something counseling--
what did it say?

BILL BURKETT:

04:04:57:23 Well, (SIGH) it explained why Lieutenant
Bush had been grounded from flying. And it
basically said that it was failure to meet--
standards-- and failure to do a physical.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:14:21 Did it use the phrase, "failure to follow an
order," or just failure to use a physical--

BILL BURKETT:

04:05:19:07 No. Failure to complete mandatory physical,
I believe is more correct.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:24:00 Would you say you read a coupla lines, a
coupla paragraphs?

BILL BURKETT:

04:05:29:02 I would say I closely read two paragraphs probably, and skimmed the balance, including the second page.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:35:00 Did this have a name on it?

BILL BURKETT:

04:05:36:09 It was signed by Lieutenant Colonel Killian.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:38:27 It was signed by Colonel Killian?

BILL BURKETT:

04:05:40:12 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:42:12 Are you sure of that?

BILL BURKETT:

04:05:44:05 Well, I'm not-- don't get me into the business of handwriting samples, Mr. Rather. I-- there was a representation of Killian, yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:05:53:16 In this instance, I'm not into handwriting. We may deal with that later. But you picked

this up out of the garbage can, read, you said, a couple of paragraphs, and scanned the rest. And at the bottom was a signature that you thought was Colonel Killian's?

BILL BURKETT:

04:06:07:18

That's correct, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:06:10:17

So then, what'd you do?

BILL BURKETT:

04:06:13:03

I put the files back in-- in the trash.

DAN RATHER:

04:06:15:11

Put 'em back in the trash?

BILL BURKETT:

04:06:16:10

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:06:19:03

And then what'd you do?

BILL BURKETT:

04:06:20:14

Mr. Kahn and-- and General Scrudner came out. They-- conversation was continuing. Mr. Kahn and I walked away. We left. We walked back toward building eight, which is where we both were. And just north of the

chapel building in the parking lot, I remember Mr. Kahn seemed in somewhat of a hurry.

04:06:37:10

So, we weren't going to be saying (LAUGHS)-- but I stopped and we talked about it. And-- and-- the concern now had grown. This is the second or third time that we had talked about the pro-- I said, "Do you realize what we just saw?" And-- I-- I know that Mr. Kahn doesn't wanna talk about this. And I know that Mr. Kahn in fact has-- has had two different stories on this. But-- I-- the-- the truth is that I said, you know, this-- this is serious stuff. Doesn't anybody know who's in charge here?

DAN RATHER:

04:07:06:28

When you say that you said to Mr. Kahn, "This is serious stuff," what was serious stuff?

BILL BURKETT:

04:07:12:00

To me-- and of course-- you know, this is

not going to be understood by a lot of people. But to me, in-- in my ethical balance, when you start massaging a file in any way, shape or form, something's wrong. And that's the way I take it.

04:07:26:20

Now, not everybody's gonna agree with that. And it has been pointed out to me, much like the standards that have been applied that, you know, the Guard used to be this way or the Guard didn't used to be that way, that when general officers or senior officers or lieutenant colonels are presented before a personnel board, they go through. And they-- they review the file to see what is accurate, what is not accurate. And in some cases, they take pieces out of the file. And that has been talked to me since then.

DAN RATHER:

04:07:49:17

Well, let's cut to the quick. What did you think was happening? What did you believe then and believe now was happening?

BILL BURKETT:

04:07:55:11

After hearing two previous directives and conversations, I thought we were building an image file.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:02:20

That the National Guard people, with the help of the Bush people and the Governor's office?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:07:09

I think that the National Guard people were gonna take care of the boss.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:11:16

And build what-- what'd you call it, an image file?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:13:29

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:17:02

That's what you thought was going on?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:18:02

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:18:28

And you discussed this-- with one-- then

Warren (PH) officer Kahn?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:21:25

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:23:05

What'd he say?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:24:20

Well, he didn't wanna discuss it in the parking lot by the chapel. We discussed it at dinner. We discussed it two or three times. Typically we'd go to-- to-- to-- to a coffee shop after we would have dinner on some occasions. We both enjoyed a nice cup of coffee.

04:08:38:00

And-- and we would discuss it-- a little bit. And-- and I-- I was alarmed. I was concerned. Mr. Kahn, I think, was as-- probably as troubled with my reaction as-- as with anything else. And he too said well, you know, "They take care of the boss."

DAN RATHER:

04:08:54:16

They take care of the boss?

BILL BURKETT:

04:08:55:25

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:08:57:19

Wanna go back to when Warren Officer Kahn came and said, "Colonel, get your hat." Do you think he knew where he was taking you and knew what was going on down there?

BILL BURKETT:

04:09:09:05

Mr. Rather, I would do anything in the world, anything in the world to keep George Kahn out of anything. You know, he's-- he has given so many times. He gave up his job in the Texas National Guard on the basis of trying to fight for me to have medical care. He was fired.

04:09:28:21

Others have done some of that, too. And-- and Mr. Kahn did not make the choice of me coming out in February and-- and-- and putting his own job or his wife's job or

anybody else's job or his family at risk.

He-- he didn't make that choice. I put that on him.

DAN RATHER:

04:09:42:27

I want the viewer and the listener to be able to understand here. You talked to this in February this year?

BILL BURKETT:

04:09:48:20

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:09:50:03

Before you got the documents--

BILL BURKETT:

04:09:51:19

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:09:51:27

--that are now at issue?

BILL BURKETT:

04:09:53:00

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:09:53:11

And you talked about it publicly?

BILL BURKETT:

04:09:54:24

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:09:56:24

And what happened between the time you talk about that publicly and the time you got the documents?

BILL BURKETT:

04:10:02:23

(SIGH) The payoff and the retaliation, the-- phone calls-- I mean-- it's not easy. It hasn't been easy these last ten days to have people to-- to say things as if you're a forger or that you had faked documents. I mean, you know, I-- I know that preachers' kids have a tendency to go one way or the other.

04:10:25:13

Well, let me assure you one thing. I'm not a perfect man. And I have bad language habits. And I do other things, too. I had my sins. But-- I would never, never, never degrade my own father as well as my father above with that kind of activity. It's just beyond me.

DAN RATHER:

04:10:47:18 You know it's my job to ask, and I ask it
directly on a four-eyes basis. Have you
forged anything?

BILL BURKETT:

04:10:54:27 No, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:10:56:03 Have you faked anything?

BILL BURKETT:

04:10:57:07 No, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:10:58:14 Have you told the truth here?

BILL BURKETT:

04:10:59:22 Absolutely, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:01:21 The whole truth?

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:02:21 Absolutely, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:03:13 And nothing but the truth?

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:04:17 Absolutely. And this is not the first time.

And I've been under oath six times saying the same thing.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:10:04

Well, make it clear I haven't put you under oath. I don't have-- I don't have the power to do that.

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:14:11

Well, (LAUGHS) Mr. Rather, one of-- Mr. Matthews felt like I could go under oath under Hardball. So, I take your oath as well.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:21:05

Well-- (LAUGHTER) and-- and there's no pain of perjury here.

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:24:21

I understand that.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:24:25

(UNINTEL PHRASE) law. But if I had-- the power of subpoena backed by the power of perjury, we could get to the bottom of this pretty quickly. But I don't have that.

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:36:09 I understand.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:37:16 Let me-- pick up several things here.
You've said you caught a lotta hell for
this.

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:47:28 My life since 1998 has been barely alive.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:51:25 Have you received any death threats?

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:54:07 This week, 17.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:55:27 Seven?

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:56:18 Seventeen, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:11:58:13 Seventeen death threats?

BILL BURKETT:

04:11:59:11 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:12:01:00 How do these come?

BILL BURKETT:

04:12:01:26

By telephone.

DAN RATHER:

04:12:05:25

What else has happened to you?

BILL BURKETT:

04:12:08:16

The e-mail trash traffic-- and, you know-- I of course, you know, I-- I think my reputation as a man is that-- I'm gonna be honest with you. And some people can take the honesty.

04:12:22:04

I don't mean to be critical or-- and I don't mean to be brutal to anybody. But I deal in honesty. And I deal in truth. And I am a stickler for doing things right, even though I'm not perfect either. I'm not a terribly judgmental person. But I believe everybody has a responsibility to put out their best effort. But you still can't take some of the words, some-- people that don't even know you.

04:12:46:03

I-- I mean, my God. And-- and I hate to-- I hate to get on a-- in a pulpit here. But I've got to get in a pulpit here. There's something wrong with America when people can just absolutely guess, that because somebody faxed copies from Kinko's, Bill Burkett was the guy. Well now, let me make this point clear. I didn't fax copies from Kinko's.

DAN RATHER:

04:13:08:01

No, we did.

BILL BURKETT:

04:13:08:25

That's right.

DAN RATHER:

04:13:08:27

CBS used it.

BILL BURKETT:

04:13:09:27

But all of a sudden, that's what outed me, isn't it? Or is it? No. Bill Burkett had already been outed. Bill Burkett had been at the center of the storm for many iterations before. So, he was naturally the fir-- but beyond that, you know, I don't have two horns and a tail. And I'm not in a

straitjacket. But people can make those slanderous comments about me and about my character and about my family and my way of life.

04:13:36:26

And even though my eyes are on a seat (PH) a lot higher than on this earth, they hurt. And they don't have any responsibility at all to tell the truth.

DAN RATHER:

04:13:47:23

How can you convince people that you're telling the truth? I can't guarantee that anybody's gonna buy it. Well, the first problem is, it seems like in this country, we're so polarized. We don't care about the truth. It's just like your competitive interests here, Mr. Rather. You know, there are a lotta people that are shooting the most shots at you and at CBS. And they wanted the documents themselves. Now, that's kinda hypocritical.

04:14:12:27

That's kinda hypocritical. If we're dealing in a-- in a science, and it's not an exact science, you know, I demanded that the effort of your organization were that you authenticate this and that you do it right. And I think you've made every effort to that.

04:14:26:12

I have every reason to believe, and I've been involved in this process, for someone else to be able to go out and buy an expert, or to gain an expert that's going to support their position, I don't think-- now it-- it's just a little hypocritical to me. The whole process has been.

DAN RATHER:

04:14:43:27

Well, this is a whole cards-out time.

BILL BURKETT:

04:14:45:29

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:14:48:01

Who else tried to get these documents from you? Who else asked you for the documents?

BILL BURKETT:

04:14:51:11

New York Times had been very aggressive.
U.S.A. Today has been very aggressive.
They've been--

DAN RATHER:

04:14:57:01

They've got some documents.

BILL BURKETT:

04:14:58:12

Yes, sir. They got same thing you did. I--
I-- you know, as far as I was concerned, you
had the ability-- best ability to-- to vet
(PH) this process. And they had the ability
then to print.

04:15:09:19

Because it-- it has to-- it has to go back
to this. Who-- I did have the decision of
this. Who did I trust would do the best
job?

DAN RATHER:

04:15:20:26

Who else tried to get the documents from
you, tried to get information?

BILL BURKETT:

04:15:23:28

Well, and that's a pretty long list, and I'm

trying to remember. Because this thing has been going on-- even though I didn't have documents before March of this year, excuse me. I-- there were requests back a long time, far beyore-- before February of this year.

04:15:41:18

ABC. There have been-- there have been calls and inquiries from NBC. There have been calls and-- the Associated Press. We've had considerable number of calls from that organization.

DAN RATHER:

04:15:56:28

We have several accounts from people. As you know, we didn't-- for our 60 Minutes reporters (PH), we didn't depend just on the documents.

BILL BURKETT:

04:16:05:09

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:16:07:23

No getting around it. Been no effort to. They were a key for us. It wasn't just the

documents. We have several accounts from people who knew Colonel Killian well, including his personal secretary, as-- Marian Knox, and/or people who worked for them, who say the information in the documents is true. You're aware of that?

BILL BURKETT:

04:16:30:03

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:16:34:26

Before you heard those people in our broadcast, were you convinced that the information in the documents was true?

BILL BURKETT:

04:16:40:11

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:16:41:25

No doubt in your mind?

BILL BURKETT:

04:16:44:18

No.

DAN RATHER:

04:16:45:13

Now, people have speculated that this might be a political sting. What do you think the chances of that?

BILL BURKETT:

04:16:54:21

I would hate to quote (PH) odds on it, because I hate to think in those terms. You know, that's the worst of America. I know that there have been patterns of that in the past, patters in fact, dealing with some of the people with-- that are with this-- this administration.

DAN RATHER:

04:17:08:25

Well, that's a serious charge.

BILL BURKETT:

04:17:09:29

I know that. I know that. But you asked me my opinion. It's coming from the instinct. This is-- you want gut check? It's gut check.

DAN RATHER:

04:17:16:11

I'm--

BILL BURKETT:

04:17:16:22

And I'm not making-- I am not making an allegation. I'm telling you that I don't feel that that is the probable scenario. But if you're gonna say that those three

scenarios, that scenario three is a possibility, that's a dark scenario. What are the chances? I wouldn't put odds on that on a bet, Mr. Rather.

04:17:40:13

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

04:17:53:02

Is there anything that you have said to me so far, and we've gone through what, two, two and a half reels, in which you say to yourself, "Wow, there's something I wanna add to that, or there's something I didn't say quite right?" If so, I wanna give you a chance to say it now.

BILL BURKETT:

04:18:07:03

At this point, I'm on line with you. I'm-- I'm-- I'm in sync with the questions that you're asking. That may come up at a later point. But I can't think of anything.

DAN RATHER:

04:18:14:08

If it does, then you tell me.

BILL BURKETT:

04:18:15:09

I will, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:18:16:12 Now, you say you believe that the documents are real. But you have no proof.

BILL BURKETT:

04:18:24:18 Absolutely.

DAN RATHER:

04:18:26:25 So, let's go over why you think the documents are real.

BILL BURKETT:

04:18:30:06 Well, I think we've hit that two or three times. And-- and-- and I know that-- that with-- maybe we'll pick up in the details along the line. Initially, I thought that the documents were real because they reflected a commander's perspective.

04:18:46:19 I would say that they were within military jargon, somewhat standard format, at least acceptable standard format to me, and as-- as a former commander. And they were logically-- they just seemed logical-- it just seemed right.

DAN RATHER:

04:19:04:25 As consistent with you-- way you-- I believe
you said know that a colonel would--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

04:19:10:28 Absolutely, absolutely.

DAN RATHER:

04:19:13:27 Question. How do you know that you weren't
being set up?

BILL BURKETT:

04:19:18:00 Mr. Rather, I don't know.

DAN RATHER:

04:19:20:09 Do you think--

BILL BURKETT:

04:19:20:07 I told your researchers. Aright, you know,
before I made the decision that your team
was going to receive the documents, and I
didn't seek you out, you sought me.

DAN RATHER:

04:19:30:28 That's true.

BILL BURKETT:

04:19:33:08 Just like I didn't seek the U.S.A. Today

out. They sought me. I wanted to ensure that we did this right. I wanted to ensure that this was not a witch hunt. But there needed to be facts that were there. And if these documents were, in fact, genuine, authentic, then they should become part of the file.

04:19:52:03

They should become part of the discussion. I also insisted when I sat down with your staff in the first face-to-face session, before I gave up any documents, I wanted to know what you were gonna do with them. And I insisted that they be authenticated.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:08:27

We'd done our best. There are a lotta people who think our best is not good enough. But we'd done our best.

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:12:19

I understand that. This is not an exact science, I understand. Neither is my gut instinct an exact science.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:20:22 So, you think it's possible that you were
set up?

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:23:24 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:25:03 But you don't believe that was--

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:26:12 I-- that's exactly correct.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:27:23 --that was the case. Do you think it
possible we were set up, that is, we at CBS
News?

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:33:26 Well, if I was, you were. And I may have
just been the patsy. And that's not a good
feeling.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:41:18 True or untrue (PLANE) that you wanted to
believe these documents were true, these
documents were real?

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:50:10 You know, that's probably-- that's probably
the best question I've ever been asked.
Yeah, I probably did.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:58:16 You probably did?

BILL BURKETT:

04:20:59:14 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:20:59:17 You wanted to believe that they were true?

BILL BURKETT:

04:21:00:27 I probably did.

DAN RATHER:

04:21:03:12 Well, let's talk about that for a moment.

BILL BURKETT:

04:21:04:21 Okay.

DAN RATHER:

04:21:04:23 You've had a lotta time to think about this.
Did that over-influence your judgment to--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

04:21:11:00 Oh, no.

DAN RATHER:

04:21:12:11

--believe that they must be real?

BILL BURKETT:

04:21:15:22

This is not a game. This is serious. All of it, when you deal in somebody else's life, it's serious. I wish somebody would-- would have that same level of respect and consideration for me.

04:21:27:22

But that's fine. We're-- we're-- talking about an action I took and a decision that I made. When you put yourself before the people, whether you be in this case, two candidates, Senator Kerry and President Bush, there are certain responsibilities that you have. You have to understand that my wife, my dear wife, was the West Texas coordinator for Senator John McCain in the 2000 election in the primaries. And-- and we believe very strongly in-- in Senator McCain. We worked very hard. We-- we truly and-- and of course, when I say "we," Nikki

(PH) does the work. I'm just the mouthpiece.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:04:01 Nikki being your wife?

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:05:02 That's exactly right. We didn't like what happened with Senator McCain's military records. I was-- I was really sickened with the way Senator McCain was treated.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:19:13 More specifically, you're talking about what happened in South Carolina in--

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:22:03 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:22:23 --telephone campaign to discredit his military service--

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:25:00 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:26:22 --claimed that his wife had-- (UNINTEL) color?

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:30:09 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:31:01 By inference of-- well, a-- a very unpleasant inference. Is that what you're referring to?

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:37:22 Absolutely, sir. That's the fact plain, that he-- that he had emotional instability after being a prisoner of war.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:44:11 So, you didn't like that.

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:45:10 No, no.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:47:13 But--

BILL BURKETT:

04:22:48:03 But was it a grudge? No.

DAN RATHER:

04:22:50:12 Okay. Now, you take a breath now. 'Cause there are several things here that I wanna clean up and get this straight off. That

when we ask you originally where-- from whom you got the documents, who handed documents to you-- you said that a man now living overseas, and you named him.

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:18:23

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:20:19

To us.

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:21:01

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:21:19

As the person who had-- who'd handed you those. Then within recent hours, you said no, he wasn't the person. And--

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:32:10

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:32:22

--you have told us the story of the woman in Houston who called you.

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:37:00

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:37:26

And-- and the man in Houston who handed you the envelope. Why did you mislead us?

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:45:03

Well, I didn't totally mislead you. I did mislead you on the one individual. You know, your staff pressured me to a point to reveal that source.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:55:11

Well, we were trying to get the chain of possession.

BILL BURKETT:

04:23:58:11

I understand that.

DAN RATHER:

04:23:59:00

And you said you had received them from someone.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:00:23

I understand that.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:01:10

We did pressure you to say well, you received them from someone--

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:04:11 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:04:09 --and this was gonna-- and it's true. We
pressured you. (UNINTEL) it was a very
important point--

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:07:19 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:08:01 --for us.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:08:09 And-- and I simply threw out a name and I
told you this. And your staff and-- and all
of your people this week, I gave you a name
that was-- that was basically-- it was a-- I
guess to get a little pressure off for a
moment.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:22:09 You gave us a name of a real person.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:24:00 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:24:26 And a person you knew well.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:26:05 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:27:06 A person now living overseas.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:28:24 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:29:24 And you told us that the name of that person had to be kept confidential because you had sworn your confidence to him, and that he would suffer-- his life-- and his likelihood would suffer. Is all that true?

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:44:29 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:46:28 I haven't asked you the name of that person. Because you said it was given to you in confidence, and that you gave it to us.

BILL BURKETT:

04:24:53:29 Your staff has asked the name of that

person.

DAN RATHER:

04:24:57:13

Do you want me to tell-- you wanna say now
who that person was?

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:00:01

No.

DAN RATHER:

04:25:00:26

Okay. But you told us. And I wanna go back
over it. When we said to you, you know,
"Mr. Burkett, we-- these documents are
important. But we're trying to establish a--
- a chain of possession," yes, we repeated
to in ask-- we repeatedly asked you, and we--
- we pressured you by a--

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:17:20

Yes, you did.

DAN RATHER:

04:25:18:14

--a reasonable description. And you gave us
the name of that person.

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:22:02

And then with a-- a-- a-- a story that
they're still supporting. But the-- the--

the lie, and I will call it that, you don't have to refer to it that, I misled you about this one individual because you had to have a name and a face. And he was only involved in one area preliminary to February. And it had nothing to do with him. And I told you that totally this week. Did I not?

DAN RATHER:

04:25:47:14

Yes.

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:47:29

Okay.

DAN RATHER:

04:25:48:10

That's true. But you did mislead us.

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:51:07

Yes, I misled (PH).

DAN RATHER:

04:25:51:18

You-- you lie-- you-- you--

BILL BURKETT:

04:25:52:11

Yes, I did.

DAN RATHER:

04:25:52:24

--you lied to us. Now, if you would mislead us about that, which is critical, right, a

nexus of this, why would I or anyone believe that you wouldn't mislead us about something else?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:04:16

I could understand that question. I can't-- that's gonna have to be your judgment and anybody else's.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:12:29

But you're telling the truth now?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:15:09

Yes, I am.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:16:13

It was a woman who called you from Houston?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:17:27

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:21:03

You called her back at her number you were given which was a Holiday Inn?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:24:03

Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:25:00

Room 148 of some Holiday Inn?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:26:21 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:28:20 Arrangements were made for you to get the document at the Houston Stock Show--

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:33:02 Yes, sir

DAN RATHER:

04:26:33:05 --in March of 2004. And a man appeared with an envelope and gave 'em to you?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:38:15 Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:40:03 Now again, this is cut-check (PH) time.

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:43:01 I'm ready.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:44:16 This is the truth.

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:45:22 Yes.

DAN RATHER:

04:26:47:10 And you told us the other story because?

BILL BURKETT:

04:26:56:17

I was trying to protect, as I had told this individual.

DAN RATHER:

04:27:01:24

This woman?

BILL BURKETT:

04:27:02:10

This woman. I gave a commitment. And I was trying to keep a commitment. My lie was to try to keep a commitment.

DAN RATHER:

04:27:12:26

Okay. You know that people-- some people are gonna jump on this story as far-fetched, too far-fetched.

BILL BURKETT:

04:27:21:07

I know that.

DAN RATHER:

04:27:23:04

Why should we or anyone else believe you now?

BILL BURKETT:

04:27:26:01

I have no guarantees that you will. If you think my life is gonna be simplified by this, you're wrong.

DAN RATHER:

04:27:34:26

I have no illusions about that, and I have no judgments about that. But as to the question, take me through, not in detail if you don't care to, but just the basic thing. Why should we or anyone believe you now?

BILL BURKETT:

04:27:48:17

Well, because-- number one, I'm telling the truth. Number two, I've told you that I've told a lie, which took telling the truth. And-- and that's not easy. I have lied a few times in my life. And I'm sure most people have, if they're honest-- with themselves.

04:28:12:21

But the-- needed-- we had become totally clean and to grips with everything that was here. This is important. I did not honestly believe that what I told you was to the level of importance that it probably turned out.

DAN RATHER:

04:28:28:12 At the time, you just thought it was--

BILL BURKETT:

04:28:29:22 That's right.

DAN RATHER:

04:28:29:24 --that you lied to us. Someone this day walked up to me, and not in a hostile manner. Someone this day walked up to me, not in a hostile manner and said, "Well, Dan Rather, you've been duped. How does it feel to be duped?" Have I been duped?

BILL BURKETT:

04:28:50:09 I still don't think so. I'm sorry. But I don't.

DAN RATHER:

04:28:54:05 Well, right to point. And we're head to head here now. Have I been duped by you?

BILL BURKETT:

04:29:00:04 No, sir.

DAN RATHER:

04:29:01:04 You've told me the truth?

BILL BURKETT:

04:29:02:12

I wouldn't be under these lights. I wouldn't have come here. I would not have done this, and just to spread something that's gonna get worse.

DAN RATHER:

04:29:14:06

There are gonna be people who say anew, plenty of them certainly already, "Hey, it's pretty obvious. This guy wants John Kerry to be elected.

04:29:24:22

He saw that the swift boat negative campaign ads about John Kerry's combat record in Vietnam really took traction, hurt the Kerry campaign, and Bill Burkett wants to get even, wants to-- it's a revenge motive."

BILL BURKETT:

04:29:37:27

Uh-huh (AFFIRM).

DAN RATHER:

04:29:39:20

Is that true?

BILL BURKETT:

04:29:41:27

No. Not-- but let me be specific about

something. Yes, I do support John Kerry for President. That shouldn't hurt John Kerry I would hope, just like your talking to me I hope would not hurt you. So, I admit my biases. And I do have a bias there. But it's not a grudge. This is not a grudge.

DAN RATHER:

04:30:01:13

Well, more to point, in the context of this conversation, was that the motive for you giving us the documents?

BILL BURKETT:

04:30:12:18

I don't think so. I think-- certainly don't think so. I have long held that you oughta have two files that are complete. And it shouldn't be some high and mighty set of-- of advertisements that are expensive that come out here and take one line and try to tear up (PH) one candidate against the other.

04:30:34:15

We-- Senator McCain is right about one thing. Even though he's had a dog in this

fight, and he has-- on occasion maybe-- maybe pulled a punch or two, Senator McCain is right. We don't need to re-fight Vietnam.

04:30:46:20

We don't need to re-fight these-- this is not about Vietnam when you have these two files that are sitting out here and you have people shooting at one saying it's an integrity. And you have another that-- a file not complete, and as long as you have a file not complete, this-- you're gonna be the butt of the David Letterman jokes. You're gonna be the butt of everything else and about, you know, about his National Guard.

04:31:07:11

Let's just get it out there. I believe to my heart of hearts, that that's my motivation. Otherwise, Mr. Rather, I don't believe that I was hit-- would've held those files for so long. I think I would've put

'em out there right away. Don't you?

04:31:28:10

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *

CBS NEWS - 60 MINUTES WEEKNIGHT

"BUSH GUARD"

INTERVIEW WITH BILL BURKETT (PH)

CORRESPONDENT: DAN RATHER

PRODUCER: MAPES

TAPE #4

05:00:29:13 Eight

05:00:30:02 29

05:00:30:28 30

05:00:32:18 (OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

DAN RATHER:

05:00:39:27 You were saying that you thought making this
appearance would cost you. Not that we're
on camera, tell me that.

BILL BURKETT:

05:00:49:00 With all of the death threats that I've had,
Mr. Rather, with all the retribution and
retaliation, with all the hate that has come
in my direction and my family's direction,
with the economic terrorist loss (PH), and
it is a terrorism of sorts to try to make

somebody live in fear, with-- as-- as
accounted in the Bush's War for Reelection
book with somebody actually firing into my
home, into my living room and with a bullet
left in my mailbox, I just pray that it
won't cost me my life. But I know it will
cost me almost everything else.

DAN RATHER:

05:01:34:12

This interview, you think?

BILL BURKETT:

05:01:35:15

Yes, sir.

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

05:01:37:11

Now, I didn't want-- I wanted the documents,
if they were true, if they were true, to be
placed into the public domain to allow
people to see them. I didn't come to you.
I didn't go to U.S.A. Today. I didn't go to
anyone that came to me.

05:01:59:10

My role was to find them, secure them, and
transfer them. And yet, it took me a long

time before I would even make that decision.
And I was-- I think, I sincerely believe,
that that was on the basis that I didn't
want this to be a witch hunt.

DAN RATHER:

05:02:23:22

Well, (UNINTEL) the argument is it become a
witch hunt and you are the witch.

BILL BURKETT:

05:02:26:25

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

05:02:28:28

Let's move along. Because it-- you've been
very patient with your time and very
generous with your time, and I do appreciate
that. First of all, I-- I'm keeping in mind
that at the end, I'm gonna have you take a
deep breath and think if there's anything
additional you wanna say. But in the
meantime, let me clean up a couple points.
You do or do not have a grudge against
President Bush?

BILL BURKETT:

05:02:59:16

I don't think it's a grudge. I'm very

disappointed in President Bush, as Governor when I needed him as my Governor, as my commander-in-chief, when the military had obligations to help me with my medical care, when I had earned that entitlement, yes. That still hurts.

05:03:18:11

Because I nearly died and I suffer from that every day, the pain, the intensity that my family suffers also. I disagree with President Bush's approach to policy, international policy. I'm gonna be very candid because it's gonna come back anyway. The truth always comes back to you.

05:03:36:08

I disagree with-- with the approach that we went into with Iraq, I think militarily and from a policy position. And it was wrong. I disagree with the basic concept that we have a super society or an elite society, which seems to go with nearly everything in the Bush policies. All of those things I

feel different. But there's no grudge, I don't believe.

DAN RATHER:

05:03:59:27

But you would understand, or would you, that people would say, "Listen. It was a grudge. That when Bush was Governor and commander-in-chief with the National Guard, he didn't do what this man wanted him to do in terms of getting his pension." And besides that, and correct me if I'm wrong, you've said since that time some pretty harsh things about President Bush.

BILL BURKETT:

05:04:22:13

Well, I think I've said some things that were very true about President Bush, yes.

DAN RATHER:

05:04:26:09

You've called him a king (PH).

BILL BURKETT:

05:04:28:05

Yes, sir. I think that-- I think that his approach in leadership is very top-heavy. I think that it's very centrist an organization. I think it is almost an

approach of trying to have a kingdom and a
fiefdom, yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

05:04:40:27

My point here is that there are gonna be
people who--

BILL BURKETT:

05:04:43:18

Well, I--

(OVERTALK)

DAN RATHER:

05:04:43:26

--through and they say, listen. It was
clearly--

BILL BURKETT:

05:04:45:10

Yes, sir.

DAN RATHER:

05:04:45:26

--grudge, revenge.

BILL BURKETT:

05:04:47:13

Sure. And I wish that they'd look at the
total body of work rather than the-- one
individual or going in with a highlighter
and say, hey.

DAN RATHER:

05:04:58:07

But true or untrue that you had a motivation

to try to hurt President Bush?

BILL BURKETT:

05:05:04:04

No. I don't see it that way. I don't see it that way. I had-- I have had a situation that I was disappointed in his leadership.

DAN RATHER:

05:05:14:04

We're gonna come back to-- question and move on. Sorry. Did you have something to--

(OVERTALK)

BILL BURKETT:

05:05:17:28

Yes. Yes, I do, Mr. Rather. I-- I don't consider that a grudge. I consider that a different self-approach (PH). And in this nation and in this political system, we have two or more parties.

05:05:31:17

We have choices. And I choose to look at it that way. And I think that's a fair assumption. And I think it's a fair (UNINTEL PHRASE).

DAN RATHER:

05:05:39:09

But (UNINTEL) more people are gonna

understand it. This was a case of revenge or not?

BILL BURKETT:

05:05:44:04

No.

DAN RATHER:

05:05:44:29

This was a case of deep-felt grudge or not?

BILL BURKETT:

05:05:47:21

No.

DAN RATHER:

05:05:49:01

This is a case of believing that Senator Kener-- Kerry-- believing that Senator Kerry's campaign-- this is a case of believing that Senator Kerry's campaign was lagging, slugging, maybe going down the drain, and you wanted to help it out?

BILL BURKETT:

05:06:01:19

Oh, no, no, no, no. You know, if-- if-- if any of those were true, then my very core that my father and mother put to me and raised me, my very core is rotten and it is not.

DAN RATHER:

05:06:18:20

Now, give me a second to think, 'cause we're near the end here. And I'm hoping you'll think as well (UNINTEL). You've told us-- you told me-- you've told me here that the person you originally said that you got the documents from is not the person you got the documents from?

BILL BURKETT:

05:06:43:04

That's correct.

DAN RATHER:

05:06:47:22

Could it be or is it that you changed that because that was a person that we might be able to locate, that person overseas, by actual name?

BILL BURKETT:

05:06:59:03

I know you have to do this. No, sir.

DAN RATHER:

05:07:02:27

Not true?

BILL BURKETT:

05:07:03:25

Not true.

DAN RATHER:

05:07:04:11

So, you could help me here. Because this again--

BILL BURKETT:

05:07:06:23

I've helped you.

DAN RATHER:

05:07:08:03

You have. And I appreciate it greatly. I don't expect this to be the last time we'll talk. God willing, it will not be. But this is an important conversation. Is there anything that you came into this interview saying to yourself, "I must get this across to Dan Rather and 60 Minutes or CBS News that you haven't said up to now?"

BILL BURKETT:

05:07:32:13

You know, Mr. Rather-- as far as specifics, no. I came into this interview prepared to answer any question. And I've answered every one of 'em honestly. I-- I don't disrespect you for asking the tough questions.

05:07:47:17

And I hope you won't disrespect me for telling you the truth, and-- even when it hurt me. And I would hope that the American people would understand that to be the case, as well. I don't really want anyone to think that Bill Burkett is the issue. And that's not just me trying to get out-- you know.

05:08:07:27

There are-- there's an old saying that-- "keep the cheese, let me outta the trap." That's not it. Bill Burkett may be a side issue. But the critical and pivotal issue here is still, in a campaign, that we have two choices, that we do this fairly.

05:08:24:14

We do it reasonably, and we not have a witch hunt. Now, whatever is gonna be said about Bill Burkett, Bill Burkett can't control. I can't control that. I found that out. If I didn't find it out in February, I've certainly found it out in the last two

weeks. Bill Burkett is going to suffer. Or he's going to have a reward-- of maybe a little positive or negative attention on this earth. That's never been my goal.

DAN RATHER:

05:08:56:21

When you gave us the documents, before you handed the documents over to us, you and your wife prayed?

BILL BURKETT:

05:09:06:08

Yeah.

DAN RATHER:

05:09:07:00

What did you pray?

BILL BURKETT:

05:09:08:14

We pray individually and-- and we also pray together once in a while. But, you know, Mr. Rather, it wasn't about me. It was about forgiveness of me, but not forgiveness of something that I felt that I'd done wrong.

05:09:22:25

It's forgiveness of a life in which I'd like to make better. Now, I don't-- I don't go

to my God and say, "Please lord, give me this." I go to my God and say, "Please lord, give me this."

DAN RATHER:

05:09:42:05

Is there anything else you wanna say or you need to say?

BILL BURKETT:

05:09:45:16

I would hope that the American people would understand that what we have in this country, if we quit wrapping the flag around it, is something that nowhere else in the world, they'd enjoy, that we can't be terrorized.

05:10:07:19

Now, Mr. Kerry and Mr. Bush have both got it wrong about something. Terrorism is not fought with armies. Terrorism is fear. And when any of us, whether I go to my bible or whether I talk to you in the heart, if we are ever controlled by fear, then we're vulnerable.

05:10:33:07

Both of them have it wrong, and most Americans of position and power have it wrong. Because they have the trinkets of the world and they consider it power. But the power, Mr. Rather, and what I wish that the American people would come back to, I don't care where Osama bin Laden is. We need to send the reporters from the New York Times and find him, because they can find him.

05:10:57:04

The power of our country, all ethnicities of our country, is here in the hearts of this poorest of the poor. Because they have the strongest of the heart.

DAN RATHER:

05:11:10:01

And you've spoken from the heart today.

BILL BURKETT:

05:11:15:08

Yes, I have. Thank you.

DAN RATHER:

05:11:20:22

Thank you.

05:11:23:29

(OFF-MIKE CONVERSATION)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *