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CATES: And the loyalty that people had for the Senator that would spring forth at the time he needed it?

BATES: Right, right.

CATES: And then what you were saying before that, Bill, was that he certainly did not have a preoccupation with his race or pending race with Sanders--that's what you were saying earlier--that if he did, if he thought about it, he kept it to himself, and it was not an overriding thought in his mind?

BATES: No, I'm not quite saying that, Hugh.

CATES: Oh, you're not?

BATES: I think that he was; he did give it an awful lot of thought. I think it did occupy a lot of his thinking but that was not reflected in his day-to-day schedule.

CATES: I see.

BATES: He didn't act on the thought or the knowledge that-- That didn't dominate his activities. He continued pretty much what he had always been doing--being a very active, a very effective, a very busy senator spread over many, many areas. There simply was no time to politick, to do the nitty-gritty of politics, but I guess we would have had to have found some of that time somehow if the race had materialized, but it didn't.

CATES: Bill, we are talking about 1965 now, but let's go back one year and talk about a speech which Senator Russell made in the Senate, and I think he probably made it about 1964, and yet it did not appear in the *Congressional Record* the way that he gave it. Would you like to comment about that--because you had something to do with it? It was a speech that he made, and I understand that he went home that night and said for you and some of the others on the staff to kind of polish it up to send it over to the *Congressional Record*.

BATES: Well, I don't know where you got that information, but it's very erroneous.

CATES: It is erroneous?

BATES: From several standpoints.

CATES: Well, that's--

BATES: In the first place it occurred in 19--the incident you are referring to occurred in 19--well, excuse me, I shouldn't say you're erroneous; it did happen in 1964. The incident--

CATES: I was not sure of the date; I thought it was--

BATES: --it was in the earlier civil rights debate of 1960.

CATES: 1960?

BATES: Right, and it was during the civil rights debate of that year--what had happened--and the same thing happened incidentally in 1964. During the period of prolonged debate, the filibusters, the regular Senate reporters simply could not handle with their regular staff the coverage of the Senate debate within their longhand, shorthand style. They were bringing in from, I guess, anywhere you could get court reporters--would be brought in to augment the regular Senate official reporter;--now we are talking about the public *Congressional Record*, not the press reporters but the official reporters, who were very good and who knew their men and knew their subject matter and just were excellent recorders of the spoken word--but when they bring somebody in new to the Senate, new to the Senate personalities, new to the terminology,

the reporting could be just awful, and this happened on a particular talk that the Senator made one Saturday afternoon--

CATES: Excuse me just a minute. We're just almost out of tape here and I'd like to refer the transcribers to Tape #28 (Side 3, Cassette #96) which would be a continuation of this interview and it would be following the interview with Judge Frank Hooper. (tape stops and starts again)

CATES: This is March 17, 1971. It's a continuation of an interview with Bill Bates from Tape 10, side 2 (Side 3, Cassette 96). Okay, Bill.

BATES: Well, the speech that the Senator made that afternoon which was recorded by, at least in part, by reporters as I remember them--not of the regular reporting staff, but people who had been brought in to help because of the strain on the regular staff. The talk the Senator made was on a rather sensitive subject. It was--I believe it involved crime and relative incidents of crime in Northern cities versus Southern cities and some other social aspects that were--in any circumstance would have been kind of touchy, difficult to handle. The Senator spoke off the cuff--as I had indicated earlier, it was his, particularly in the earlier years, he preferred to do anyhow from notes--and when we saw the--when he and I looked at the transcription of the official report, we were both just horrified. It was just impossible; it couldn't stand the way it was. It had--the speech did indeed have to be rewritten and it had to be rewritten from memory as best as I could put it back together, and the Senator was tired and he left it with me, and I think (William H.) Bill Jordan was another member of the staff--maybe there were several others. We drew everybody we could think of that might have heard it to help try to--I think we did put--get the Senator's thoughts that he had tried to express in that speech fairly well recast or recalled, but we lost a lot of his language--and if I had to go back and look, I could find the speech in the *Congressional Record*--but he thought it was all right, too. He called me at home the next Sunday morning, the following day, and said, well, we had done a pretty good job of trying to recoup from the disaster of the day before. But that was that incident. We did not rewrite a speech; we tried to recall the speech that he had made and soften it in a place or two.

CATES: Actually the person who told me this has put a time seal on this, so this would be part of time seal on this reference, and the transcribers and historians would know about that. The only thing I was trying to do was to mention it to you to get your viewpoint of it and to ask you, I guess, a direct question now: Do you feel like that maybe Senator Russell had lost his temper or was not in complete control of himself when he delivered this speech on the Senate Floor?

BATES: No, no, sir.

CATES: That was not the case? It was just a question of bad transcribing by--

BATES: It was primarily a question of bad transcribing--

CATES: --bad transcribing and--

BATES: .on a very sensitive subject that would be easy to get yourself out--embarrassing words. That's my memory of the thing.

CATES: Let me ask you this--this relates to another matter--does the phrase "Shining White Armor Speech" mean anything to you?

BATES: No. I think again I remember what you're referring to. I believe that was a speech that he had dictated but never delivered at the conclusion of the civil rights debate of 1957, which was before I joined the staff. Is that--

CATES: Generally, it was on civil rights. I forget now right when it was; I thought it was in 1964, but it probably was 1957.

BATES: I think it was.

CATES: But you have no knowledge of that, other than what you just said?

BATES: Yeah, that's all. Seems to me I saw the draft of it; but if I am thinking about what you're referring to, it wrote a speech that he had made, written, dictated to him as a sort of--what's it, postlog? Is there such a thing?

CATES: It's after the fact.

BATES: Yes--some observations over the civil rights debate of 1957, but that's the only reference to "shining armor" that I'm aware of.

CATES: Well, of course, this was under a time seal, too, but--and I guess it would apply here just in my mentioning it to you, but I did want to mention that to you. Do you have any comments or observations about this illness of his in 1965?

BATES: Only that none of staff, family, or us realized how very serious it was until--at first. There was that January a very widespread virus, flu bug, making the rounds of Washington; maybe it was part of a national epidemic that periodically seemed to sweep over us. I believe the President came down with it; several Cabinet officers came down with it; and it was quite common, and all of a sudden the Senator turned up ill--I can't remember what day of the week it was and the circumstances in which he checked himself in with the Senate physicians. Bill Jordan, as I recall, went to Walter Reed with him, and I stayed back in the office because we knew we'd get press inquiries as soon as the word was out that he had gone to Walter Reed; and I got the impression from my initial conversations with Bill, and I decided on how we were going to handle it with the press--that it wasn't anything real serious, and this was the tenor of the announcement that was made, and I made it--that he had been admitted. I think we related it to the virus, the common virus that's going around, and if the President and half the Cabinet can have it, then so can the senior members of the Senate--something like that. We got to--we sort of trapped ourselves with that, though, because we did make--I did anyhow; I'll assume responsibility for it; I think I was operating in consensus with Bill's thinking on it, though--that it wasn't serious. This was the way we handled it with the press initially, and before we knew it, we realized it was quite serious and didn't really know exactly how to handle it. We didn't want to picture him one bit more ill than he really was because we knew no matter what we said about his health, the rumor mill in Georgia, because the Senate race was beginning to emerge, the

rumor mill would have exaggerated it several degrees beyond what we said the situation to be or what we reported the situation to be. So I got accused similarly by some of my friends in the press--(Charles) Charlie Pou for one--of not leveling with the news people on the seriousness of the illness, but this was not the case initially. We just--I simply didn't know; I thought it was much less serious than it turned out to be. Did I get off from your question of...?

CATES: No, no. The question was about his illness and--

BATES: Well, it did--it wasn't very long before staff and family realized it was very serious. This was the most difficult time I personally ever had as a member of the Senator's staff because the Senator was not--you couldn't communicate with the Senator. He was out of it. There's no wife to ask, you know, what do we say? What do we say to the public and the press about the Senator's condition? You really didn't have much--we could talk to--we did talk--and this is how we finally handled it--sort of a family council of those senior members of the family who were present with constant consultation with Judge Bob Russell in Georgia--and someday would like to know what we spent in telephone bills, Bob and I; we probably spent a third of our days there for a while on the telephone with each other passing back and forth developments. We'd get--we would find out from the hospital staff, medical staff, what as best they could describe what the Senator's condition would be, and then we would discuss with the family what should be said. He had a tracheotomy.

CATES: Who decided on that?

BATES: Bob Russell and myself. Some members of the staff--and I don't know about the family--but some members of the staff disagreed that we should--they thought me should not have announced that, but I am fairly certain Bill Jordan concurred in the decision that Bob and I reached unilaterally to announce that the Senator had had a tracheotomy. Nobody wanted to say--that was terribly bad news and nobody really wanted, relished the idea of saying it or announcing it, but it had to be done, and we realized that the longer--and hindsight the only thing we did wrong was not doing it sooner. We waited a few hours, several hours, but most of that was family consultation and trying to decide the best way to handle it.

CATES: Who decided that he should have his trach?

BATES: Now this I don't know.

CATES: You don't know?

BATES: I think--I assume the doctors would have made that decision. I don't know whether they--that was a purely medical decision so far as I know. I don't know whether it was discussed in advance with the family; I don't remember.

CATES: The reason I posed the question--and here again I truthfully don't know who told me this, but Senator Russell agreed to it but that he said that he was out of his head when he agreed to it, and I just didn't know if you knew about that or not.

BATES: I remember some discussion about it and I believe it was discussed with the Senator, but--

CATES: And that he had such a personal fear of it that he would never had agreed to it if he had been completely with all of his faculties.

BATES: Well, the way it was--the way I remember it being explained was it was a matter of life and death. I don't know; this is a--we're in a medical area now. I was concerned primarily with how the--with public announcement of it, not with the decision of whether or not it would have been done. I accepted what, of course, what the doctors did as being their best advice on what had to be done for the Senator's health and his welfare, but I do recall--you triggered my memory--I do recall that one of the--I think the Commanding General of the--who made the operation? Wasn't it the Surgeon General of the United States?

CATES: I'm not really sure.

BATES: I believe he was. I think he was the one who told the Senator he thought it needed to be done and I believe that you are right, or your informant that it was discussed with the Senator, but I'll have to say that I don't think the Senator could have responded responsibly at that time. He was too ill; he was too sick.

CATES: Well, that's what he said. That's what this person said he said, was that if he had had all his faculties he didn't believe that he would have agreed to it because he hid such a fear of it.

BATES: I see. Well, one of the things about the Senator in the illness that I would like to leave for posterity, and you may have gotten some of this from Babs [Barboura G. Raesly]. I became increasingly concerned about what was being said to the press without any--without the Senator authorizing it, but he wasn't able to authorize it or to discuss it and if he had been, he was so sick that I wouldn't want to go in and say, "Senator, should I tell them how sick you are?" or something like that. I became concerned about the record we were leaving--the public record of what was being said about his illness and reasons why we would say what we would on any given day--and quite early in the illness, Babs Raesly and I developed a-- I've never gone back and read those, read her transcriptions. I would dictate to her at the end of each day what was done in the way of a public announcement on the Senator's condition as objectively as I could state it what the reasons behind or for a decision to say this or not to say this. So there is a record and I have it, and Babs may have a copy, too. I have never gone back to look at it, but in the course of time the Senator recovered and just before his discharge from Walter Reed--I was very nervous about this; I figured that he would say, "Oh, my Lord! Did you have to say this, or did you have to do this, or why did you do that?" Maybe I was making my record for him. (laughs) I just thought there ought to be some reason since there was no one person who had the responsibility for these decisions. It was--it devolved among several people, staff and family. I--just before the Senator's release, I went in and I told him, "Senator, I had to say some things about your condition while you were ill--and well, frankly we couldn't talk to you--that you may not like." I explained that in every instance where possible, and that was almost all of them, that Judge Bob Russell had concurred in and had helped shape the policy. The Senator loved Bob and had complete faith in his judgment and his decisions as he should have. The Senator cut me off

before I'd--I had, I believe I had taken with me transcriptions of our daily record of what was said--he just cut me off and says, "Well, Bill, I don't know why you had any problem about this at all. All you had to do was tell the truth and that was all--just state the facts and that was all that was necessary." And that closed the subject. It was never raised again, and I've never looked at the notes since then.

CATES: I don't know if I asked you this question before: Do you think Senator Russell was a hypochondriac?

BATES: I think that's--I don't--I'd rather not respond to the term hypochondriac because I don't guess I really--I know what it generally means. I'll answer you in this way: I think the illness of 1965 thoroughly frightened the Senator and which was one of the--and the doctor said so at the time--that this was one of the best things that--one of the good sides that came out--good things that came out of his illness if there was [sic] any good things--that it did make him concerned with his health. It did cause him to take better care of himself. It did cause him to check in with a doctor or doctors with the slightest evidence that he might be coming down with something, but I don't think that's a hypochondriac. I think the man was exercising the judgment that he had to exercise. No, I--he became very concerned about his health from that point forward, and I don't remember him expressing particular concern about his health prior to that illness. He didn't--I'm sure you've heard about some of his personal habits--how he didn't eat properly half the time; but, you know, there again, the man was a bachelor and when his day was ended he went home to an apartment and there was no wife there to prepare a hot meal, and I guess a man gets awfully tired of eating in a restaurant every night to get a hot meal or a good meal so he didn't--he didn't--many times I'm sure he didn't eat properly. But I think he--I know he did much, much better about that, after his illness. And the family stepped in at that point, family and staff, to try to make sure that he was--that his personal habits were not--weren't detrimental to his health anymore than possible.

CATES: Were you on the staff when his brother Bob Russell died and/or his nephew Bobby Russell, Jr.?

BATES: I was on the staff at the time of Judge Robert, Sr.'s, excuse me, I was on the staff at the time when Bob Russell died because he died--the junior, the son, not the brother, the nephew--does that--?

CATES: His nephew?

BATES: It was the nephew. Yes, I was very much involved in that, not involved in it but aware of it, because Bob and I, as I indicated earlier, were extremely close personal friends. I knew that he was dying at the same time the Senator was undergoing his crisis, health crisis.

CATES: Did the Senator know that?

BATES: No. The Senator knew that Bob had developed a kind of intestinal cancer in, I believe it was 1964, and the first reports were very grim; but then there were some encouraging reports which the Senator--that I think buoyed the Senator's thinking about Bobby's condition, and then

he had his own--he became desperately ill himself the time Bobby's situation began to deteriorate. But I remember one time during the Senator's illness, Bob had come, unknown to Senator Russell--I made arrangements for Bob to go into NIH at Bob's request.

CATES: What is this NIH?

BATES: National Institutes of Health, where Bob died. He had a very--he had a rare cancer, as I recall, some rare form of cancer and the doctors at NIH wanted him as a patient--you know, that's more or less a research tank--and one of the times that Bob came to Washington with his wife for an examination prior to the time he was admitted to NIH, he went out to visit the Senator; and I know that Bob knew in his heart that there was no hope for him, but he told the Senator in order to make the Senator feel good, that they told him they had given him a clean bill of health and everything was going to be all right. Bob did that deliberately to buoy the Senator's spirits, and it did at a time when the Senator needed it, and I don't know how long the Senator was under illusion about Bobby's condition--not very long because Bob died not too long after Senator Russell was, oh, in midsummer as I recall--

CATES: Of 1965?

BATES: --1965, so that the Senator was still in effect recuperating but back at work when Bob died.

CATES: How did his death affect him?

BATES: Oh, terribly bad, it was a blow. The Senator loved him and they were extremely, extremely close. I don't think the other nephews, or brother for that matter, would mind my saying that, in my opinion, the Senator was closest to Bob of all the nephews--Bobby, as he called him.

CATES: And when did Bobby's father die? You don't know?

BATES: Well, it was before my time, but I think it was about 1957. I think it was during the civil rights, that first of the civil rights, prolonged civil rights fights because I relate it to the time that the Senator was diagnosed as having emphysema and when he stopped smoking. I think it was related to his brother's death.

CATES: Do you think that the national news in 1964 had anything to do with his adverse turn for the worse health wise in 1965, January 1965?

BATES: No, no news itself did.

CATES: I meant--I'm thinking now about Vietnam and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

BATES: Well, I don't think--again we're really probably in a medical area, but I'll give it as my opinion as watching the man. No person, I don't care who it was, could have had a--unless it was the President of the United States--could have carried more on his shoulders in a period of a year

than Senator Russell carried in 1964 beginning at the very start of the session because the Senate plunged right into the civil rights debate of 1964, which was the longest and the bitterest and the most demanding of all of them. At the same time President [Lyndon Baines] Johnson just--drafted Senator Russell to serve on the Warren Commission on the assassination of President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy, which was--that alone, in addition to normal Senate duties would have been a load on a man, but he carried that on. He didn't attend as many meetings of the Commission as he wanted to, but he read the record and he studied and he spent many, many, many hours to the work of the Warren Commission. And on top of that, the Vietnamese war started heating up toward the latter part of the year involving him in his official capacity in many ways. So, yes, there was the combination of three major, major-- (tape stops and starts again)

CATES: It's a continuation of my March 17, 1971 interview with Bill Bates, former press secretary of Richard Russell. This is Tape 29.

BEGIN SIDE 4, CASSETTE #96

(For other tapes in connection with this interview, see Tape 28 (Cassette #95) and Tape 10 (Cassette #96))

BATES: The question was, I believe, Hugh, was, did the--you said news events and I changed it to the Senator's activities related to major news events, have an effect on his health, and I think very definitely when you remember that, in 1964, beginning on the opening day of the new session the Senator was involved in three major events. He was a member of the Warren Commission; as he has told it many times, he did not want to serve. Johnson just plain--President Johnson just plain drafted him, so he did accept service on the Warren Commission. Of course, the civil rights debate, the debate on the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 was, I believe, the longest filibuster in the history of the Senate. Senator Russell directed every step of the way the Southern position. As we've indicated before, toward the end, even before the civil rights debate had been concluded, the Vietnamese war really heated up and became a pre-eminent national issue. And then there was still fourth--a fourth element in this--that we were then quite apprehensive that Governor Sanders might decide to run for the Senate in 1966, and we were trying to take steps in that direction, and the Senator started making more speeches in Georgia than he normally did in a normal year beginning that fall, late summer and fall of 1964. So the combination of all those things with a man of his age, mid-sixties then, with emphysema was just bound to have taken their toll.

CATES: Bill, while we were changing tapes, you indicated and I know you don't have her name, but I thought we would get it on tape here, but there was a member of the staff that was added specifically for the purpose of her assisting Senator Russell on the Warren Commission.

BATES: That's correct.

CATES: And after the interview today we will look up her name, and I'll try my best to interview her. You might just state what you know about her. In fact, I think she worked--

BATES: She was the law clerk. She is a--and I'm embarrassed that I can't recall her name because I got to know her quite well--she is a lawyer. She was the legal assistant to Bob Russell, Judge Bob Russell, Court of Appeals, and he thought she was an extremely intelligent and able lawyer. When the Senator realized the enormity of the task and I think he knew it all along--as he recognized the enormity of the task of serving on the Warren Commission while at the same time trying to erect the civil rights--opposition to the civil rights bill, he, I'm sure went through some personal panic--how can one man do all this--and it was Bob's suggestion which he accepted that his legal assistant take leave of absence and join the staff of the Warren Commission. Whether her duties on the Warren Commission were so stated, she was in effect Senator Russell's staff assistant on the Warren Commission. She, whatever that entailed because the Senator--that is one of the--as a matter of fact, that's the only activity, about the only activity Senator Russell was involved in during the years that I knew him that he kept absolutely to himself so far as staff is concerned. He never talked about the work of the Commission, only to indicate it was a tough assignment. The complete staff contact for his work on the Commission was the lady lawyer whose name I'll get for you in a few minutes.

CATES: Bill, can you think of anything else that you might want to note? Well, one thing I want to ask you: How did the staff work as a unit when Russell was in good health and when he was unavailable, as you have so indicated?

BATES: Well, I think--I think very well under the circumstances. It was made up of present company included, of people that not maybe the most compatible with their fellow man as ideally we should be, and we often had differences of opinion on this course or that course; but we rallied behind the common cause, I think, very effectively, and the common cause was Richard Brevard Russell and his work and his re-election. I'd say it was--it was a great staff, as a matter of fact; I was very honored to be a member of it.

CATES: And they worked harmoniously generally speaking, one with the other?

BATES: No, I didn't say that. I said we worked together as a team (laughs) I think, or something like that, for the benefit of the Senator. Oh, no, there were personality clashes as there would be in any staff, but I don't believe we had any more than most would. We were a little leaderless at the top except for the Senator because of Mr. (Leeman) Anderson's own ill health and he was Administrative Assistant but he really did not direct the staff as I'm sure you've been told--and that's no disrespect for him; he was old and not--he was not well himself--and the Senator would not retire him. It was that simple. So, it was a headless horseman, but we managed to ride in the right direction.

CATES: Was the Senator aware of any problems?

BATES: Oh, sure.

CATES: He was? Did he ever--?

BATES: He liked to just ignore them though. That was our problem.

CATES: He did ignore them?

BATES: Pretty much, yes, during those times. He'd ignore them as far as any action, is that what you mean?

CATES: Yes. Bill, can you think of anything else that you would like to comment about prior to your leaving his employ in 1966?

BATES: Well, Hugh, nothing that--no, I don't believe so. There are a lot of things that you could talk about from now on, I suppose, about the Senator, but I think we've covered the areas that I might be able to shed some light on the Senator.

CATES: Under what circumstances did you leave in 1966? I meant why did you leave?

BATES: Oh, to return to Georgia and establish my home in Atlanta before I stayed away so long it would be impossible to come back. I talked to the Senator at great length about it and he recommended--he advised me to, if this is what I wanted, if I wanted to return to Georgia--that in view of the age of my children, and my family, and my situation, my own age that he thought that I would be making a mistake not to do it then because if I waited very much longer he said, "You'll be trapped in Washington and you'll never go back." So he was all for the move, or so he was kind enough to tell me. It was after the primary, of course. I stayed longer than he--he asked me to stay a little longer than I had originally intended to, because of some--I've forgotten what it was now--some things coming up in the Senate that he felt like he might need me a little longer.

CATES: Did you have any contact with him after you left?

BATES: A great deal.

CATES: You did?

BATES: I continued to help on speeches from time to time, conspired with him on some friendly things a few times. Oh, no, I, that was the--the legacy I took away with me was a very close personal friendship with the Senator, and I suppose the door was always open; I visited with him in Washington and in Winder. I reached the point that when I'd come up here he'd usually let me take him to dinner at O'Donnell's (Sea Grill) which was always a treat.

CATES: Can you recall any conversation of significance that you would like to relate at this time covering the five years from 1966 until his death in 1971?

BATES: I was among those urging him to--not to say anything or do anything that would be interpreted to mean he wasn't planning to run again if his situation had permitted in 1972, and we had a couple of newspaper interviews that were arranged that so indicated this; but, of course, his health deteriorated so fast at the end that obviously it didn't work out. That was--that's about all I should say on that. I don't know what his own thinking was; I don't know when or if he ever fully knew that he could not be a candidate again. I don't know. I'd be interested in Proctor Jones's comments on that. He was discouraged about his health situation. In fact, when I talked to him

about leaving, one of the reasons he urged me to go on and take the opportunity here was because he'd say, "Well, I'm probably not going to run again," or "I probably won't run again"; but I urged him not to think in those terms and above all, never to say that to--really don't even say it to staff; don't let that word ever leak out that he was really not planning to run again, and that was the--about all the politics we ever talked about after I left the staff was his politics.

CATES: What do you think motivated him to stay on even in his real bad health situation?

BATES: What else did he have? It was his life.

CATES: Well, do you think it was just that, or do you think he thought that he was really doing a good job for the state of Georgia and that he wanted to stay on for that reason? In other words, was it a personal sacrifice in one respect for him to stay on?

BATES: Well, I don't think so. I've heard it said, and I happen to believe that so long as Senator Russell lived and served in the Senate that his staff could do more for Georgia than most senators from most other states could do.

CATES: Because of his seniority?

BATES: Seniority and his influence. It was there whether it was being exercised on a day-to-day basis or not; it was certainly there. He was a senior member of the Senate and Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and that speaks pretty loudly to the boys downtown.

CATES: What do you think was his most outstanding personality trait?

BATES: Personal honor, courage of his convictions--sense of wanting to contribute to the welfare of his people, his state, and his country--all those things, I think, kind of rolled into one. I don't--I think I could not come up with a single phrase or certainly a single adjective that sums up Dick Russell for me. He was just so many things.

CATES: Bill, I appreciate this interview, and I'm always somewhat hesitant to break off an interview with somebody like yourself who knew him so closely over a span of time, but if you ever do have anything else that you want to add to this, we can certainly arrange it.

BATES: Okay. Thank you, Hugh.