

Interview with
JOE DAVIS
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Mr. Davis' Office
Kerrville, Texas
Tuesday—April 14, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Joe Davis, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



Introduction

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JOE DAVIS
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

NANCY RAY: My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Joe B. Davis, Jr. of Camp Verde, Texas. This is Tuesday, April 14th, 2009. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Davis' career as a Texas Ranger. Ranger Davis, do I have your permission to record this interview?

JOE DAVIS: Yes you do.

NANCY RAY: Ranger Davis, do you understand that this video will belong to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco, Texas?

JOE DAVIS: Yes, I do.

NANCY RAY: And do I have your permission to present copies of this video to various historical organizations such as museums, libraries, schools and once transcribed to place on the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum's website with the restrictions that you've noted?

JOE DAVIS: Yes you do.

NANCY RAY: OK. Let's begin learning about you. Where were you born, when, and tell us about your parents.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: OK, I was born in Houston, June 27th, 1941. Uh my dad, at the time, worked for Hughes Tool Company and my mother was of course a housewife... wasn't employed. And uh so I was raised in Houston. Later I had a brother born in 1945, Danny Davis. And then we went to public school there and I attended the University of Houston for a couple of

years and then went to work for the Texas Highway Department. As a young boy growing up, uh I got real interested when I started studying Texas history about the Texas Rangers. And when I was 14 years old in uh 1955, I wrote Colonel Homer Garrison who was then the Director of the Department of Public Safety inquiring about the Texas Rangers. And I asked him if he would happen to have an extra Texas Ranger badge available (*laughter*). So he uh wrote me back and he sent me a little booklet uh that said the history of the Texas Rangers. And in the letter he wrote back he said we do not have any extra Texas Ranger badges but I can get you one made of the old type... and so if you want one like that. And so I wrote him back and I said I'd like to have one if possible. And so in a month or two, I don't remember how long it took, I got in the mail from the badge company in San Antonio, a box. And I opened it up and sure enough there was this little Texas Ranger badge that I got. Well I guess that started a greater interest in the Rangers so when I went to work for the Highway Department, I was about 19. And ended up going through a survey crew and ended up before I was 21 as a party chief on a survey crew and did a lot of surveying in Houston on Loop 610 that goes around. We was building that loop at the time. This was about 1961, 2, and 3. Well I still, when I turned 21, uh I still had that interest to become a Ranger. And I knew that uh you couldn't just become a Ranger. You had to go through the DPS so I wrote another letter to Colonel Garrison and told him I was interested in becoming a Ranger and would like to uh pursue that goal. And he sent me an application and he told me... he said of course you've gotta become a Highway Patrolman and then when you get so many years in, you can apply for Ranger. And so I filled it out and sent it back in. Now if I'm going too much...

NANCY RAY: No, that's good.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: So uh I sent it back in and then I got a notice to go to the DPS office in Houston and start the process. And so I was in the process and... and eventually was accepted to go to the DPS Academy which was in February of 1963. And uh so I went through the Academy and when I got out, I... Colonel Garrison was Director and of course presented us with our graduation certificates and all. And uh...

NANCY RAY: Did he remember you from your first letter?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: You know I don't know that he did and I didn't think it... there was 28 of us and I didn't really bring it up at the time. He just came down. We had the graduation in the gym and he came down with the uh Assistant Director and somebody else and pretty well swore us in and then he left. So I really didn't, we didn't really even get to talk to him. Uh while I was in the school, we had to give... you know you have a speech class, you've got all kind of classes from... in the Highway Patrol as far as Texas history, you've got speech classes, and you've got how to become a Highway Patrolman and the duties and there on firearms. Just about everything. But uh so in the speech class, I decided I... you picked the subject and of course I picked the Texas Rangers and talked on that... give the history to the class. So I was really involved with thinking that was gonna be my career which turned out uh that I graduated from the DPS in June of '63. Went back to Houston as a Highway Patrolman uh and then moved up to Katy. In 1968, uh I had five years in, just barely, with the Highway Patrol and they decided to add some men in the Intelligence Division of the Department. So I said well you know that's criminal investigation and I thought it would be a good time to get involved in criminal investigations and reach that goal I'd set. So I took the uh test, went before the oral interview board. During the interview board they said... and this is why I don't know why I made Intelligence agent I ended

up making it. They said why do you want to become an Intelligence agent? I said well, I've always wanted to be a Texas Ranger and I thought this would be a good opportunity to get involved in criminal investigations and then eventually apply for Texas Ranger. And I don't know if that set well with the board or not. There was one Texas Ranger there, on the board, and that was Clint Peoples who was a captain then at Waco. He kind of "rared" back and laughed and there was a Narcotic captain sitting off to my left and he said well, just how long to you think you would stay in Intelligence before you took the Ranger test? And I said well, probably at least a year because next year they're supposed to add ten men. He said a year? Do you know how much it cost to train you to stay in? And I said well not really. He said it cost a lot of money and then you'd only stay a year? I said well that was my goal and I ... I don't know that I'd make Ranger but that was what I was wanting to do. So anyway, I... I was notified later I got promoted to Intelligence agent. How I... that happened after what I told them, I don't know.

NANCY RAY: Well were there any other people who became Rangers who went through the Highway Patrol Academy with you?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, uh Jim Gillespie who was up in uh Dumas. And I'm trying to think if there was anybody else. There was only 28 of us graduated. They started with 68 and they was running us off left and right. And you know when you're in a school like that, it's kind of like military if you've been and a little worse than the military. They would... they was making it tough on everybody and they wanted to see if you had the willpower to be there and could handle yourself and make sure you had the attitude to be a trooper or Highway Patrolman is what they were called then. And so... and then after boxing started, of course... then at night somebody'd just pack up and leave. You wouldn't see them no more. They might get whipped in the ring.

NANCY RAY: Was that the hardest part?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: That was the most dreaded part, I'll say that. Because uh I'd look around that classroom and there was only one guy I really didn't want to have to fight. I'd boxed some and I looked at one guy, I remember his name, Eddie Bentley. He was from up uh in the Panhandle, from Shamrock. And uh first day of boxing we went down there to the gym and they had one fight. And the next thing, they said Joe Davis and Eddie Bentley... come in the ring. And I looked over at the guy standing behind and said who did he say? Joe Davis and who? He said you heard him right, Eddie Bentley. I said oh no (*laughter*). So I got in the ring and he's about 6 foot 4... tall slender guy, just looked like solid muscle. And uh I'd boxed some. I said I've really got try to get the first lick in. So I'm trying to get up there where I can at least get close enough to hit him and all I remember is seeing a glove coming at me and it went right between my gloves and hit me right on the forehead. Well, all I could see then was it just got dark. He didn't knock me down but I couldn't see and so I fought him for a while and never did see him. And he knocked me down finally and I jumped back up. And I think the third time he knocked me down I was trying to get up and uh our PT instructor there said just stay there, you've had enough. And put that... he got me. But that was, I was glad that fight was over with. The rest of them I didn't have no trouble with. I thought I was gonna have trouble with the next one but I ended up hitting him first. I never could knock him off his feet. He was a football player that played for Oklahoma State. And I thought they're trying to run me off putting all these big guys on me... getting me whipped. But luckily I held my own with him and uh I survived the boxing.

NANCY RAY: OK. Were there any incidents in Houston when you were a Highway Patrolman that you want to tell us about?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: You know basically when you were on the Highway Patrol the main thing, you was working a lot of wrecks and I worked probably the worst highway out of Houston after I got out, off probation, which was 290 West going from Houston to Hempstead, Waller, that way. And it was... it was a bad highway. I was working so many fatalities that uh I know they give me a call one night. I thought they had another dead person in a car off of 290 and I just almost dreaded going over there. Well when I pulled up, I found the car and he'd run off in a ditch and a guy was laying over the steering wheel there and I just knew he was dead. I opened the door and he was breathing. So I kind of pulled him back and he had this white stuff all around his mouth here. And what had happened, he'd been uh... I guess he was an alcoholic, he was drunker than a skunk. And he was taking this, what do you call that white... helps you settle your stomach from alcohol? Anyway, he had a bottle of that stuff and he'd been drinking it. Here he looked terrible with this white thing around here but I was glad to see he was alive. And the incident I got... one time, I don't know uh... I was out on patrol and got a call from a fellow Highway Patrolman who had just uh... there was a boxer in Houston in those days by the name of Big Cat Williams. He was a heavyweight boxer. And a Highway Patrolman named Dale Whitten (sp?) was stationed over in uh Tomball and he'd picked up Big Cat Williams. He was DWI and drunk and he was taking him to Tomball. And on the way to Tomball, he told Dale that he was going to ruin his career if he put him in jail. And Dale said well you should have thought about that before you got drunk. And so Big Cat said well I might as well just jump out of the car and commit suicide. And he opened the door and Dale pulled off beside the road there to try...

and when he did uh, when he stopped, Dale had taken his pistol out and put it on the opposite side. And Big Cat Williams just come around and swung at him and Dale moved and he just barely caught him and Dale reached for his pistol and Big Cat grabbed it and was turning it back and he fired a shot and hit him and he rolled out of the car and Dale called for some help. And so I was out close and went over. And the incident I remember very well as a Highway Patrolman because when I got over there... Dale was the pistol shooter and he was a small guy. And he loaded his pistol with hot .357s then. And Big Cat Williams was rolling around in the ditch there... big guy. And uh got the ambulance out there and a couple of deputies showed up. So they lifted him up on that stretcher to take him and the ambulance driver said I'm not moving with him until ya'll handcuff him because he may come to and... Well, we tried to put handcuffs on him and we couldn't even get those on. We got leg irons.

NANCY RAY: Because his wrists were so big?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: We put leg irons on his wrists because they were so big. Uh and uh put him on the stretcher and wrapped it around. And then they said now a deputy or somebody is gonna have to ride with him. Well they put him in and they took him on in. And ended up he survived the shot. The doctor said he had such stomach muscles on him, he'd never seen anything like that on a human being before. But he went down to nothing. And he eventually tried to come back as a heavyweight boxer but just couldn't make it. But it was just an incident that I remember real well as if happened just... just seeing the guy. And he was, Dale was real lucky. Matter of fact, Colonel Garrison come down and told him he done a good job and handled it well.

NANCY RAY: Well what we've learned is that some people feel like being a Highway Patrolman is one of the most dangerous jobs there is. What do you think?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: It is no doubt. You're out there... I worked by myself out of Houston. Uh you learn, and you don't ever want to get lax. That's one thing you learn in patrol school, especially out there at night. And you stop a carload of people... I always had a landing light in my... We didn't have overhead lights. We just had a spotlight. And I took that little red lens that we put over it got you in more trouble than anything because they never could see it. So I swapped it out for what you call a landing light like planes use. And when you turn that on, it looks like the sun's coming up. It'll brighten the whole area. And so you use it and you've gotta learn when you... they teach you when you're stopping a car you know to never take your eyes off that vehicle... and look at all the occupants because if one of them moves like this (*made a motion*) or makes a funny move, you don't know what he's doing. And you don't know who you've stopped. They might have just robbed a bank... could have killed somebody... or it might just be your average speeder. You don't know. So you've got to be on your toes at all times. The ones that usually get killed is human error that they made. They got lax and it usually ends up that a way. They let maybe somebody out. You only want the driver to get out. Your business is with him and only him unless you've got a carload of drunks. But you take care of him and then you get him back in and leave. And you'd walk up a certain distance to the car where he has to look back and if he has a pistol, he has to try to get out to... don't give him a good shot. So uh anyway, it is. It's real dangerous. In a Ranger's job, you pretty well know ahead of time what you're going after if you're going after an arrest or something. I've been involved in a riot over

there in TDC in Huntsville when they had that uh big riot over there when Fred Carausco... you probably heard about it.

NANCY RAY: I did. What... do you want to tell us about your involvement now or do you want to come back to it?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: It doesn't matter. We can go down through uh...

NANCY RAY: You can go ahead and tell us now while you're thinking about it.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well at the time I was a Ranger stationed in Austin. And of course Fred Carausco was a known drug dealer from San Antonio. He belonged to what they call the Mexican Mafia. And he was a bad hombre back then. And he'd had some contract killings and had killed some people... had them killed. And they eventually arrested him and sent him to prison. And then uh while he was over there, he was at the Walls because he had had uh... his health was bad so they kept the ones there at the Walls. I don't know what his health issues were but he was, they'd put him there at the Walls.

NANCY RAY: Now what is that word you're saying?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Walls, WALLS. They call... that's the uh Huntsville unit right in downtown, the oldest unit, the Walls Unit. So anyway, uh I was with my partner who was the other Ranger in Austin and we were working on a case down I think down in Luling that day.

NANCY RAY: And who was that?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Wallace Spiller. Wallace is deceased now. And uh we got a call from the Senior Captain, Bill Wilson, and we knew this... this Carausco the day before had got some hostages and he and a couple other convicts were holding them in the library at the Walls Unit. And they'd sent some people over there and we got a call and said they needed to send some

more Rangers over there. They'd sent some from Company A which it was in their area, Houston. And so they'd sent some of them up and they called us to come in and get ready, pack our bags for a week or ten days... they didn't know how long it was gonna last and we just needed to go. So we went home, packed up, and headed out. Ended up we was over there ten days. And it was one of them situations where you didn't know what was gonna happen. He had these hostages up in the library when we got there. And we stayed out at what they call the Diagnostic Unit which was kind of north of Huntsville. And we took... and checked in out there and we had rooms out there. And then I was on the night shift, Wallace and I both. We were working like a 6 PM to 6 AM shift and then it switched over. And we had Rangers, some TDC people were involved, and uh some Intelligence agents. And our job was just to... we were lined up on the back wall which would be the north wall of the unit on the inside. And the library was... there was uh the drycleaners where they did their laundry. And then there was a two-story building right behind it was the library and the cafeteria was on the bottom floor. Uh and so we just went out there during our shift... sat along the wall. They were negotiating with Carausco trying to get him to surrender. And he had some guns smuggled in and he was requesting certain things. And he was threatening some of the hostages' lives if they didn't cooperate. Well, we knew if he killed somebody then we were gonna have to go in. He wouldn't stop at one. And so the plan was to uh... we had to go up the... We had three ladders to go up on the laundry building. And you had to run across and there was a gap between the buildings. And they had built uh like a walkway out of lumber. Had a rail on one side and it was narrower than this desk... it was about as wide as this desk this way (*he made a motion*). If something happened, we'd have to run across it and they'd put explosives... We'd called in an explosives company,

they did... out of Arlington I believe or up in the Dallas area. And they came down and they put explosives against the walls of the library in about three places and then sandbagged them. So when they blew in... if we had to go in, they'd explode them. Everything would go in with the sandbags on the outside of the explosives. And then we were to lay there for about 10 seconds and let any of the debris go by and then charge up these ladders. Go across that walkway, take turns going. And we were only to take our pistols in... and the electricity would be off, it would be dark. And not to shoot until you was fired at because uh you don't know... you couldn't see... and you'd look for the fire from the pistols. *(laughter)* Well fortunately, you can see everybody thinking let's hope that don't have to happen because we all knew if that had to happen then somebody, a lot of people was gonna die. We had on bulletproof vests and we were ready. And we'd sat around there and you know after about a week or six or seven days, I mean you start getting antsy. You really... if it's gonna happen, let's get it over with. And they kept... and he finally demanded an armored car to bring in. And they brought it in and indicated to him that they was gonna let him leave. And he sent one of the prisoners down to check out the armored car and drive it around and make sure it wouldn't be disabled or anything. And then the plan was uh... when he came out... while he was up there, he was building what we refer to as a Trojan horse. He took two blackboards and he... and he made uh... he took library books and he stacked them against this library, these boards... and he connected the two where he could walk between them. And he actually fired into them to make sure they were bulletproof. And so his plan was to get some of the hostages in there with him. And then the other hostages, he tied around that and they was gonna lead them down. There was a ramp that came down off the second floor on the outside, not the stairway... kind of come down like this and down *(he made*

a motion)... right to where the armored car was parked down there. Well, he was doing this and building. He was requesting different things. He wanted a big metal helmet and it was big and heavy. Matter of fact, it was so heavy he couldn't even hold it up. It was useless to him. So it finally come down to when he was gonna come out. And uh they had gotten a fire truck and hooked it up, a hose up to it and run it up to where Company A... this happened on Company A's shift and we were stationed out around on the outside. I was in a stairway away from... kind of facing the library. And Company A Rangers and a couple of others... one FBI agent were inside this room. And when they got to a certain level there, they were gonna hit it with this fire hose, high pressure, and blow it apart. And hopefully they'd capture them... stop them before they could kill anybody. Well as luck would have it, as they were coming down and we're all watching and then they get to that certain point, they hit the Trojan horse with this high-pressure hose, water... and the ones he had tied around that was guiding it down, there were about six, maybe eight people, I don't recall. Had a rope running around and they were handcuffed to the rope leading this down. And then Carausco and two of his, two other inmates were inside with uh a priest and a couple of females... hostages. And as they hit it with the water, uh it started hitting it and then all of a sudden the firing, the shooting started and the water pressure went down to nothing. So it ends up in a lot of shooting. Well when they hit them with the water, the hostages... they were handcuffed there... they just slid down the ramp and was like this holding on (*he made a motion*) because it was wet there and they lost their footing. And probably the bravest thing I've ever witnessed uh... there was a lieutenant with the uh prison system, uniform, ex-Marine. While the shooting's going on, he crawls up there on his belly. Takes out his pocketknife, cuts the rope and gets them out of there, away from it. And then uh before long they

started shooting the hostages inside. And then killed two of the... Carausco was killed. It was indicated later he may have committed suicide. He knew his time was up. And then another inmate was killed and so after it's all over, we're down there and the priest is there wounded. And we're looking at the people that had been shot... One being... I don't remember if it was two women... I believe it was three hostages killed, two or three. Anyway while we're standing there, uh one of them got to moving and the priest is hollering he's moving, get him, get him and... and that ended it. And it was a sad situation but it worked out that you know... we was hoping that no one would get killed and we'd just get them but uh it did uh... we did have some people killed. Matter of fact, one of the ladies that was a hostage at one time and they released her to, to uh talk to... to be the intermediate taking demands from Carausco back to uh the Ranger captain and the head of TDC, Jim Estelle, at that time... making negotiations. And she was of course outside when it all happened. She wasn't in harms way but she now lives here in Kerrville. She later became a warden. But anyway, it was a bad deal. And after that, and we saw what happened is actually what helped us start thinking about we needed SWAT teams. Because it would have been a sad situation if we'd had to run up there, blow that thing in and then just started shooting in the dark.

NANCY RAY: So the Rangers now have SWAT teams?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: They did. They started SWAT teams shortly thereafter. Each... two companies made up one SWAT team. Like uh we were involved, Company F and Dallas... we formed one SWAT team. I became the anti-sniper. And we had two of those. And we carried different caliber rifles and we started training SWAT members. And we had six companies and uh I think it was E and C that joined together and made up a SWAT team. Then A and D made

up a SWAT team. And it went on for several years. We had all the SWAT equipment, trained at various military institutions, practiced and did a lot of things. And then eventually it was turned over to a specialized SWAT team made up of different members of DPS.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well let's back up. Let's talk about your family. I guess at some point along the way you married.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, I married... As I was a Highway Patrolman, Lila, and she uh has been with me ever since. We just celebrated our 42nd anniversary last week.

NANCY RAY: Congratulations.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: And we have three sons, Lamar, Trey, and Justin.

NANCY RAY: Trey would be after Junior, he would be the Third?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, he's the Third. He lives here in Kerrville. And my other son was living here and then he took a job in Houston, Lamar, so he's temporarily in Houston working down there. And his wife's here teaching school. And then Justin is... I never did encourage my sons to go into law enforcement. Of course they were around it from the very beginning and uh Justin is now a Round Rock policeman. He's a sergeant over there, been there about 15 years. Making all kind of money... a lot more than I ever made. And I think they're about the second highest in the state. He's done real well. And his wife's a physical therapist. So they do real well. Lila's been... I couldn't have found a better wife to (*emotional moment*). She really supported me in my career.

NANCY RAY: That seems to be a theme that we're hearing from Rangers.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I couldn't have done it without her. (*emotional moment*)

NANCY RAY: Uh, when you were gone a lot and she was at home...

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, she was at home taking care of the kids. She's had a couple of... I guess that's why I got a little emotional talking about her. She had a couple of health issues here in the last year but she's over that now. Seems like one thing after another but we've got that taken care of. She's always supported anything I've done. I know at home sometimes I'd get a call at home at night and I'd say... I just got home, I gotta go. She said well that's your job, you better get going. So she made it easy on me.

NANCY RAY: Sure, that's good. Well let's talk about when you were in Intelligence. What did you do there?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well Intelligence is mainly... I was in Houston at that time. What we'd normally do is uh keep up and gather information on known subversive organizations and criminals... known criminals. And so when I went into that, that was back in the days of the SDS, Students for Democratic Society. It was kind of raising cane in the colleges and doing all sorts of things. And then they had the Black Panthers and different things like that. And then we'd watch a lot of bookies and gambling and uh... any kind of known criminal. We'd try to locate them and keep track of them. So I, we'd sometimes work undercover... go to the University of Houston. Had to attend a Black Panther... they were in town talking to the students one time. We were out there listening and I think he knew who we were. He pointed at us and said the pigs are here today... there's one over there (*laughter*)... and one over there.

NANCY RAY: You weren't as undercover as you thought.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah... I didn't think we were... Apparently we didn't do a very good job of it. And then we'd go to some of those SDS meetings and then we had to raid a place one time down... well we didn't raid it. They had some slot machines down in Wharton County and

we usually notified the Rangers that they had those. And uh that was... so we got those taken out of the... I think it was some kind of club they had them in down there. But that's basically what we done.

NANCY RAY: OK. And how long did you actually stay?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I actually served a year in there.

NANCY RAY: That's what you said (*laughter*).

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, I'm glad I made that statement because when uh, when it come around to they were gonna add the ten Rangers, I went to my boss who was an Intelligence captain in Houston. There wasn't but 20 something Intelligence agents at that time. They just added on in '68 to that group and made it like I think... 28. So uh I went to them. I knew they were fixing to start talking to the different ones that wanted to apply for Ranger so I went to my captain and uh... I told him that I was still interested in becoming a Ranger and I reminded him of what I said before the interview board. And he remembered and he said uh that's fine. If you still want to do that, you go up there and do it. So I headed for Austin one day and went in to see our agent-in-charge of Intelligence who was Doug Cowan and told him why I was there. And uh he told me the same thing. He said you know Joe, I support you. He said uh... He said one time I was going to Intelligence... when I was a Highway Patrolman, go to Intelligence interview and my supervisor wouldn't let me go. And he said I... I said to myself if I'm ever in that position, I'm not gonna do that. He did later make Intelligence and then became the agent-in-charge. So I went around to see Chief Jim Ray. You've probably heard of Jim Ray. If you talked to Glenn Elliott you know Jim Ray. And so I told Chief Ray what I was there for. And he'd just made Chief. He'd been a Ranger captain out in Lubbock. He'd been a Ranger in Athens before that

and made sergeant. Went to Midland and then made captain and went to Lubbock. And then he got promoted to the Chief of Criminal Law Enforcement. And he was in over the Rangers, Intelligence and Narcotics. So I went to see him and I'd been up there once to try and see him I think before that. And uh he wasn't there. So when I went in I told him and he said well Joe, we've cut it off, you're a little late now. And we're not taking anymore names. I said well Chief, I tried to get a hold of you a while back but you were in Lubbock I think trying to move. And he said yeah... He said well we just cut it off. And I said well OK, but I want to show you something. And that badge I said I had, I had taken the badge with me. For what reason, I don't know but I thought this is the reason I brought it. So I took it out and I said you see that badge? I got then when I was 14. Colonel Garrison sent it to me. And I just want to let you know, I'm working to get a real one and I'm gonna keep trying. So I left out. I went back to see Doug Cowan. I said Doug, he told me I was a little late so I'm gonna go back to Houston. I'm gonna continue working for you and trying to do you a good job. So I took off. And found out later... well in about two months, Chief Ray called me. They were gonna make... this was in June and the Rangers was going to go to work in September and October. And I'm in the Houston office there one day and get a call from Chief Ray. And uh he said Joe, do you still want to be a Ranger? I said yes sir, I sure do. He said well I'll tell you what. Will you go to Amarillo? I said yes sir I'll go to Amarillo... wherever you want to send me. He said well you're gonna go to Amarillo. And uh Pete Rogers who was down there in Houston... he was in Lubbock at that time as captain. He said he'll be your new captain and he'll be calling you. So I thanked him and this and that. And Captain Rogers called me later and he said Joe, I've made that move from Houston to Lubbock and said I know it's a long way. He said I look forward to having you up here and

you'll be in Amarillo and you just catch the mail plane when it's coming up this way and I'll meet you in Amarillo and we'll look for you a house. So I said OK, that's fine. So before he could call me, he called back and said there's a guy in Kerrville named Ed Gooding who's a Ranger there and he's decided he wants to go to Amarillo. And what's gonna happen is that will leave an opening in Austin because Henry Ligon is a Ranger in Austin and wants to move back to Kerrville. And he said will that work for you? And I said well... I said Captain, it's not that I don't want to work for you but Austin's a lot closer to home than Amarillo. So that's how I ended up in uh Austin. And when I got into Austin of course I'd seen Jim Ray a lot and we'd become real close. And uh he told me... he said I'm gonna tell you. He didn't tell me everything... his secretary told me part of it. He said uh when we got ready to pick the Rangers in the commission room, Joe... he said everybody was picking who they wanted... Commissioners wanted this guy and that guy and that guy... He said it got down to the last two and he said he told them he said now it's my time to pick them. And he said I picked Jim Ray who's my nephew and then I picked you and he said you was the last one to get picked. And I said Chief, I don't care if I was first one or last as long as I made it. And he said well that's where you were and so he said I wanted you to be a Ranger.

NANCY RAY: So was this like the interview board? Did you have to go before one?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: No, I didn't. My interview was then when I showed him that badge. I was at the right... I guess it just worked out for me, most of them did. And he told everybody that story that would listen to him about me coming down and showing him that badge. And his secretary told me later said uh when I left out of there that day, he said you hit... you hit something with Chief Ray because when you left, wasn't long and he got up and he went over

there and he asked Doug Cowan what kind of guy you are... checking on you. Anyway, Doug supported me and I made it. So it's kind of like uh I guess you know how many people go through life getting to do what they want to do. But this had been a dream of mine I guess since I was 14. Why, I don't know because I didn't really have anybody in law enforcement. But it was just... back in those days, you read... you got a lot more Texas history and you learned it there and then they had a... I remember a show called *Tales of the Texas Rangers*, Joel McCrea played in it, it was on TV and I watched it a lot. And I don't know what influenced me to think that I needed to be a Ranger but something did and so that's how it all got started.

NANCY RAY: So how old were you?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I was 28. I was the youngest Ranger to be appointed I guess in the modern time. Then after that, they moved it up to 30.

NANCY RAY: OK, I show it was October 1st of 1969, is that right?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah. And I was born in '41 and I'd just turned 28 in June.

NANCY RAY: OK, so Austin was your first duty station.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, I went to Austin. And uh...

NANCY RAY: What was the first case that you remember?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well I remember a lot of them but the first murder case is probably the one you remember most. And uh I... you was always dreading and when you get a murder case you've gotta try to prove yourself. You know putting on the Ranger badge doesn't necessarily make you a Ranger. There's a lot of tradition that comes with it and everybody thinks the Ranger can solve and do everything. So it gives you an incentive... you've got to do everything in your... you possibly can to get this case solved. If not, you're gonna be frowned upon. Why isn't

the Ranger solving this thing (*laughter*)? So I made up my mind I can't let the Rangers down. Uh and I'm 28, I'm pretty young and I'm lucky to be there. And I... I've gotta be able to do this job. So uh everything was kind of going you know routine criminal cases. I didn't have no real major case... burglaries and maybe an armed robbery or something. And then all of a sudden, I was working the San Marcos area and the sheriff called me and they'd found a college girl uh under I-35 there where it runs across the Blanco River as you're coming into San Marcos from Austin. So I immediately went down there and there she was... Had been in the water and had a bunch of stab wounds in her neck. And uh so we... that was my first really major investigation. And I guess every day when I got up, I wouldn't even go by the office I'd just head for San Marcos. And me and the sheriff worked together for several months. And finally developed a suspect and uh this college girl was uh going to be a school teacher and she was doing some student teaching out at the high school. We found out during the investigation she'd gone out that morning. She'd gotten a ride out to the high school and she was supposed to student teach but something happened and they didn't need her that day. So her ride had already left so she is walking back to... she lived in an apartment in town. And a Hispanic guy who we found out later... we didn't know at the time, apparently a drop out. And he'd always come by the high school in the mornings and visit... saw her walking as he was headed back in and he picked her up. She got in the car. It was kind of a rainy, misty day. And I guess that's why she got in the car. And he immediately took her up to the interstate and instead of going to her apartment, drove her down under that bridge and she put up one heck of a fight. He finally picked up a rock and hit her in the head and then stabbed her and raped her down there. And uh... I know I was down there that first night. I always dreaded having to go to an autopsy, its something you don't really want to

view. And we didn't have a medical examiner. Austin was a big country town and we had to call a guy that did autopsies at the state hospital. Well that night, me and the sheriff... the first night I was down there, we had to go by the funeral home and to view the autopsy and gather any evidence that we might have... to take to the lab. And as I'm walking up you could hear the saw buzzing in there and you know what they're doing. I hated that... that was my first one. And I said gosh I hated to step in that door and see that but that's your job. I went in there and anyway, we found out and got the suspect and picked him up right there. We saw him drive up. We were in the sheriff's office and he pulled up across the street near the drug store. And we walked down... we had enough information to get a warrant and we arrested him. And interviewed him and he denied it and then so we took him to Austin to run on a polygraph... took him straight there. And he agreed to take it and of course he flunked it. And when he flunked it he went ahead and admitted what he had done. So we took a statement at that time. And one thing happened there, I'll tell you, is kind of funny. Uh I took the statement and then later of course we booked him in jail and he'd come up for a pre-trial hearing before the justice of the peace. And he'd been appointed an attorney out of San Antonio. And this was gonna be my first testimony as a Ranger. So I go down there and they call me to the stand and go over a lot of questions you know... the DA and that's pretty simple and then here comes the defense attorney. And he starts running through the statement and he gets down to where he signed it and he said uh... I noticed Joe that you uh... there's a time under his signature, 5:30 PM. Did you uh tell him what time it was or was he wearing a watch or how do you know it was 5:30 PM? And I said well I was wearing a watch as I remember it and I told him it was 5:30 PM and that's what we put down there. End of statement... started at a certain time and ended at 5:30 PM. So his next question was OK, what

does PM stand for? And I said well, you know AM is in the morning and PM is in the evening. He said that's not what I asked you. I said what does PM stand for... you put 5:30 PM, what does PM stand for? So I'm sitting there thinking and I'm looking over at the district attorney and he's sitting there with a grin on his face and I'm thinking why ain't you objecting to this? What does that have to do with it? And finally... he's not gonna say anything. And I looked back... I said well it's uh past midnight. (*laughter*) And I said no, that's not right. And uh so anyway, that kind of cracked up the courtroom when I said that. And so anyway, he finally got off of it. I said well, I just went back to the deal and he finally got off that. Well when I finally got off the stand and we're standing up there after the pre-trial, this lawyer and his partner walked up and the DA there... and we're talking and he looks over at his partner and he says do you know what PM stands for? His partner said no, I don't know what it stands for. He said I don't know either. So from that moment on, I said you know I'm fixing to go find out and I'm gonna be prepared the next time for that. So I went and looked it up, what PM stood for and AM both. And I never got asked... I've testified a lot but nobody ever asked me again what PM stands for. I was hoping I could tell them one day but I never did.

NANCY RAY: Why did he ask you that?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Just to... I don't know. And I don't think he knows. It's just something to throw in there. And I never did ask him why he asked me and then he didn't know either... it was just to make something look like it wasn't right or something. I don't know. He was a really a... he was really a friend of law enforcement. He has been a deputy sheriff one time himself and ended up... We had a transfer, the trial transferred down to Houston to go to trial and he ended up pleading him guilty for life. Never did go to trial. But that was my first murder case and uh...

NANCY RAY: How did you... how did you decide that that suspect was the person?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well we had some information developed through an informant that he had talked to and said... it had been blown up in the papers a lot. And we'd been investigating for several months. Well it finally got to bothering this guy and he went to a guy that owned a restaurant in San Marcos. And he said I've been carrying this burden... this guy told me that he's the one that killed the girl. Matter of fact, he was gonna drive him down and show him the body before it was discovered. And he said no... he didn't believe him at first and when he said he'd take him down and show him the body, he told him no I don't want to see that. Said take me back. And then of course later it was found and he knew apparently there was something. So it was like two or three months... we had run out of all kind of leads and we were not getting nowhere. We... so when we got that information, we took a statement from him what he had told him and then of course that's... you can put that in court as evidence. Uh and because we could... the rest of it was always what he said.

NANCY RAY: Well there in Austin, what other kind of cases did you have?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Worked on a couple of bank robberies there. One bank robbery in particular was there in Austin. There was a good friend of mine that I got to know after I became Ranger there was president of a bank named Marvin Stettler. Matter of fact, he's retired now. He loved the Texas Rangers. He's collected badges and he told me one day to come by his bank. It was right there on I-35 right there close to 290. I forget what that shopping center... they call it. Uh he said come by one day Joe and I'll give you a Cinco Peso so you can have your personalized badge made. And I said all right Marvin I'll be by one day. Well I was going by the bank one day and as I pulled in there to get the, to go by and get that coin he said come by and

get. I looked at my watch and it was almost Noon. So I didn't live far from there so I went home and Lila was at home and we ate lunch. And I'm sitting there eating lunch the DPS called and said Community National Bank just got robbed. And that's the bank I was going to. Fortunately, I went on home... I wasn't in the bank when it got robbed. No telling what would have happened... well I headed out and went over there. When I drove up, Marvin Stettler had the front door open. He said come on in Joe, I'll give you a Cinco Peso. I said Marvin I ain't here to get your cinco peso (*laughter*)... I said your bank got robbed. He said yeah it just got robbed, he said come on in. Well I went in there and then uh the FBI agent showed up and some of the Austin PD were interviewing witnesses and it was like two or three black guys, I forget how many now. But they come in and they were threatening them pretty bad with guns. And I imagine if I'd been in his office, no telling what would have happened you know. And luckily, no one got hurt. They jumped in their car and headed out. Well while I was in the bank, got a call there from DPS and said Highway Patrolmen and the sheriff at Georgetown had got them stopped, we had a description of the car... up near Round Rock. So me and the FBI agent jumped in my car and headed up there and sure enough, they caught them. They were trying to change the numbers because one of them got in the trunk of the car. Of course there was three robbers and two girls that stayed in the car. And when the sheriff opened the trunk, there was that robber there and he just jumped backwards and he spoke with an accent. It was kind of funny but that black guy threw up his hands and come on out or he'd probably got shot. The sheriff was pretty jumpy. He saw him and there was all the money in the trunk. So we recovered the money and that one worked out real quick like. Marvin wanted me to get my cinco peso badge and I said I ain't there for that. But he give to me while I was there at the bank. So anyway, and then I

worked another bad robbery down in Lockhart where two blacks came in and robbed the bank one morning and uh before it opened. And they forced all the people on the floor and then they wanted the... the main safe was on a time lock and the tellers were getting ready to open the tellers and they were counting just the cash that was already out... getting ready to open the teller cages. And when these guys slipped in through the back door, they had captured the janitor as he was coming in and forced him in and walked in the back of the bank. And as soon as they stepped in, there was a camera there and that guy had a shotgun and he just fired a round. He missed the camera but uh he got everybody on the floor. And while they're in there, the Brinks Armored Car guy drives up to the drive-in window and there's usually a teller out there. Well these guys got everybody on the floor and they're trying to find out who has the combination to the main vault telling them if they don't stand up they're gonna start shooting them. Well uh when the armored car drove up, two girls had stood up and was taking this one back and was trying to get the safe open. And this one was guarding them and the Brinks Armored Car drove up to the window and one guy that was guarding them had his back to them. And the armored car driver didn't know what was going on so he toots his horn because there's usually a teller there. And so the black guy turns around and sees him and he just kind of hides his pistol and starts walking toward him and when he gets up to the deal he just pulls it out... pulled the trigger two or three times and it didn't go off. Well the Brinks's guard, he jumps out of the truck... well he'd already been out of the truck, he was looking. And he just took off running. Left his truck and everything there... he knew where the police department was. Well he knew that something was fixing to happen so he got the other guy... they'd already got the safe open. He was filling that up and he told them what happened... told the other guys in the safe that the Brinks guy had

taken off running. So they headed out with the money. Put all the people in the safe and shut the door. They headed out the way they'd come. While they were in there, a lady had walked in after they got in and they captured her. But she saw the back door open and she had locked it when she come in... they captured her. Well when they headed back out and they hit the door, it was locked and they couldn't get out. So they stepped back and it's a big glass door with a lock on it. And they shoot the lock with a pistol and the lead just sticks against it... it was a .38 lead bullet and didn't do no damage. So he backed off with that shotgun and blew out the glass and headed out. Ended up they... I got down there and we got all the description and everything. They got over a hundred thousand dollars. And ended up they headed to New Orleans. And the only way we caught them... later they were driving a red '69 Chevrolet with green wheels. And it stood out like a sore thumb and nobody saw it... they got all the way to New Orleans.

NANCY RAY: *(pause to change discs)* OK we're back and you were gonna finish the story about...

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, they left the bank robbery in a red car and it had green wheels, no hubcaps on it. And it... we knew it headed south because it left out of there at a high speed and I found a service station guy at the corner of Highway 183 which heads south from Lockhart to Luling that saw it turn the corner real fast. And he described the car and it had two black males in it. And that's the last time it was seen. So we put out a message all the way down from 10 *(Interstate 10)* toward Houston and back the other way to look out for them. And never did get them stopped. So we were working on that bank robbery trying to develop suspects. And one night I was in Waco, I'd been to some kind of meeting over there and Chief Jim Ray was with me. And we were headed back to Austin. And we got in the car headed back and I heard DPS put

out a message that some black males had robbed a bank in uh Mississippi and described the car as being a red car and it fit the description. They all fit the description of what we were looking for. And they had shot and killed a police officer and they were wanted. So I told Chief Ray as we were going back. I said in the morning I'll call down there and see what I can find out and because it could possibly be the ones that robbed our bank. And so the next morning I did and they had uh been on a manhunt and got behind them and they'd captured one of them. And they told me that these, they had come into the bank and robbed it and one of the bank employees had set off the alarm and uh... to the police department and a uniformed sergeant took the call and said well it's probably a false alarm again. They'd been having problems over there and he just drove up in front like it wasn't a bank robbery. Got out of his car and that's where you make that mistake see. And he started walking up to the bank and they saw him coming and they run right out and shot him right there on the street and kept going. And uh so we found out they had taken the one they captured and put him in federal custody in Jackson, Mississippi. So uh I found out... I notified the FBI agent that was helping me on the bank robbery and a deputy sheriff down in Lockhart, we were all working together on it. And we decided... we made arrangements to go interview him. So we got on the DPS plane. The agent couldn't go so me and the two deputies went over there and uh interviewed him in jail. And of course he knew he was in bad shape in Mississippi, they'd killed a police officer. And he was wanting to see... he was wanting to clear up anything he could and could we take him back to Texas and get him out of Mississippi (*laughter*). And we said not right now we can't but if you get your business straight we might can. Anyway, he said what do I need to do? So I said you need to tell us what happened, who the other guy was. So he told us, give us a statement. And told us who the other

suspect was and uh... and he later surrendered to the FBI, the other suspect, in New Orleans into federal custody. And come to find out, they had run through that money so fast, they were spending it on dope and women. And they had over a hundred thousand dollars. He had taken some money he said to his aunts that lived out in the bayou country. And they got it in a pipe... he knew they needed to save some and they put it down in a pipe and capped it and dropped it down into a cistern. And he knew that should still be there. And he said when they got into New Orleans from our bank robbery, they checked in a hotel and was gonna divide the money and he said the other guy was kind of the boss guy, the head guy. He said I'm sitting there on the bed and he's throwing me fives and he's taking tens, bundles of tens. He'd throw me twenties and he's taking fifties (*laughter*). He said it wasn't... he said he kind of got to me. So anyway, we ended up bringing them later to uh Lockhart and trying them. And they both got 99 years to do but then they went right back to Mississippi and that's where... we never got them over here.

NANCY RAY: Well when you left Austin, what did you do? What was your next station?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: When I left Austin in 1980, I came to Kerrville. And as I told you earlier, I think... Henry Ligon had told me when he was here he... he kept everything under control which is not the complete truth. (*laughter*) He did work a lot of cases. But when I got here, it seemed like the bottom fell out and uh the... I guess one of the cases that was later made into a TV movie and a book called Death Shift. There was a nurse that came here in 1983 with a new doctor from San Antonio... named **Genene** Jones. Genene Jones was uh an LVN and she was down at the UT Medical Center in San Antonio. And she worked on midnights. And while she's down there, they started having uh some babies dying. And the doctors got real suspicious... something's wrong, we're having too many babies die in the hospital. And uh so they decided they better start looking into it... never called in law enforcement, never done an autopsy on any of them. But all through the investigation, they figured out all these things are happening

on Genene Jones' shift. Well you have to know Genene Jones. And what had happened was she uh... she was kind of demanding and she would tell the doctors... lots of times you know you're not feeding that baby right. You need to give it so-and-so. And the doctor says look, I'm the doctor, you're the nurse. And I know how to treat the baby and you just keep doing as I say. Well that didn't set well with Genene. So Genene started making... giving these babies different stuff to make them go down to make the doctor look bad... some of them would get to bleeding and bleeding out the nose, mouth and everything. All kind of different things to make them... and some of them died. When they realized what was happening, these doctors of course... and you know how doctors... they didn't want anything to hurt their reputation. So they way they were thinking is we need to get rid of her. Get her out of here. So this new doctor named Dr. Holland was starting her practice... had gone to a doctor and said she was a pediatrician and said she was gonna start, open an office in Kerrville and she was gonna need a nurse to go there. Would they recommend one? Well guess who they recommended... Genene Jones. So I'm sitting in my office one day and it's probably 4:30 or so and I get a call from an investigator out of Austin with the Board of Nursing. And he said Joe, he said I think you've got a baby killer in Kerrville. I said what're you taking about, a baby killer. Said we haven't had... said you might get a hold of the doctors over there or the hospital superintendent uh and check with them. I said OK, I'll do it and I hung up. And I said well, we don't even have that many babies born here in Kerrville. It was a retirement town you know. We only had one pediatrician here before that and he wasn't real busy. But anyway, I said well I'll just call in the morning because I'm sure that's not right. But anyway, I called over there and talked to the superintendent. At that time, he told me well yeah, they'd been doing an investigation and could I come over. And said the nurse is over here now. She had taken some overdose of pills and we've got her but we'll release her before long. And can you come on over and I said sure, I'll be right over. So I sat down and they briefed me of what they had found out. And what had occurred was uh when Dr. Holland started her practice, all of a sudden they started having all these babies being rushed from her office uh EMS to

the emergency room. And they were going into respiratory arrest. And it was just weekly, maybe two times a week. And said they got real suspicious... said they'd never had trouble like that. And so they started doing some background checks. One of the local doctors called down to check on this nurse and found out what had been occurring down there. And so uh he... one day an anesthesiologist was walking through there in one of these emergencies and that uh one of the babies was coming out of it and said it was moving its arms like this (*made a motion*). Being an anesthesiologist, he just... he recognized that uh it could be coming out under a drug that he used by the name of succinylcholine chloride or a drug name anectine. They use it to inject you so they can intubate you with a tube. It relaxes you and you can slip that tube and you can breathe during surgery or whatever. And uh so I went over there and they told me all this. And so I went to interview the nurse. They said she's fixing to leave, said I don't think she was trying to commit suicide it was just one of those deals... because they had talked to her about this see before... just checking. And so I went down where she was and interviewed her and asked her if she... she denied everything. And I said would you take a polygraph? Oh yeah, I'll take a polygraph. So that's when I started the investigation. And I went and talked to Dr. Holland and uh she told me... what was taking place was when these young mothers would bring in these infants, maybe have a cold or something... minor deal. Genevieve would come in and say "here, let me take the baby and... ya'll can't talk and I'll go back here and take care of her until ya'll get finished with what you need to be doing." She took her back in the back room. Found out later she's injecting them with this drug and she's... hollers out "oh the baby's... can't breathe... call the ambulance... get somebody." And uh here went the emergency. So we got started and while I was over there at the doctor's office, I asked her if she had that drug in her office. She said yeah but it's never been used. Said during these emergencies or different things... Genevieve suggested that we have it on hand but I've never had to use it. And she went and got it. Well when she went and got it, it was a full... there were two bottles of it. One is capped, you know the rubber on top and the seal was still sealed. The other one had several puncture holes in it but the bottle

was full. So I asked her if I... I needed to take that as evidence to just check it out to see what's in the bottle and make sure that's what it is. And so I got it, took it down to the lab in Austin, submitted it and told them what it was supposed to be and let them check the liquid and tell me what it is. I left it there. Come back and uh run Gene Jones on the polygraph. And of course she failed it but she... she's a tough old gal, I'll tell you. You're not gonna break her... she's not gonna admit to anything. You've gotta know her. She's... she's got a big ego and her whole deal was that she was telling everybody at first... when the emergencies were occurring, she took charge in the emergency room and they not knowing Dr. Holland, they thought she was the doctor the way she was issuing orders in the emergency room... and Holland standing back and watching. Well one of these babies that they took uh you know couldn't tell you... they brought in started going down and they decided they better rush it to San Antonio. So they loaded in the ambulance and Gene Jones got in there with the baby and Dr. Holland's following them. They reach Comfort down here and the baby went into arrest and they went over to the little hospital in Comfort and it died. So uh we had one death there and all these other kids coming in. Well ends up the drug I submitted was uh a saline solution is all that was in the bottle... was no anectine at all. And we found out that drug disperses in your body in about five to ten seconds and there's no evidence of it. And so to prove the case, you've got to nearly prove that that drug... that she used it to cause the death. We found out, checking in San Antonio, that she'd attended a class on this drug and what it does and all about it. And uh we found out that they had done an autopsy, a private firm in San Antonio. We checked with them and sure enough they had saved some of the organs. So we told them what was happening and to keep them, we may need them later. And then I got a call from a guy that came to our Ranger school, he was a medical examiner from Philadelphia. And he come down and taught some classes. And he had learned that I was investigating this and he said there's a guy in Philadelphia that might be able to help you with this... he has his own crime lab. And he said it might be worthwhile coming up and talking to him. So the DA and I took off. We flew up to Philadelphia and got with him and told him what was

happening. And he said well I can't detect the drug but he said there's a Dr. Bo Holmsted in Sweden has developed a technique and I advise you to... I'll contact him for you. I know him and we'll see what he suggests doing. So he contacted him and Bo Holmsted was a Nobel Prize winner. And he said he was gonna be at a doctors' conference in San Diego and could we meet him there, he was flying over. So we loaded up and we headed to San Diego. When he arrived we was there and we met with him in a break there. He told us said what I need... have you got any organs? He said certain ones and I told him what we had in a prior autopsy. And he said well what we need to do is probably do a... exhume the body and uh get a medical examiner over there. And he told me I'll tell them what to look for. We need to get those over to Sweden and I'll run the tests. So we come back and we got the medical examiner out of San Antonio and uh... I was trying to think of the guy's name that we went to in Philadelphia... this was in... 25 or 26 years ago. But anyway, we made arrangements and got a court order to exhume the body. Uh and she'd been in the ground six or eight weeks. We didn't know what to expect so we got the medical examiner up and the guy from Philadelphia flew in. He agreed he would take the tissues that was gotten. Get on a plane in San Anatone and head for Sweden. So we go out there that day and exhume the body. I don't know what to expect. And so we uh... or what kind of condition. We opened the casket and I want to tell you... looked like a little doll (*emotional moment*). And anyway...

NANCY RAY: That had to be hard.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah it was. So anyway, we uh... they did the autopsy and got what tissues they needed and iced it down. And the medical examiner took him to San Antonio and put him on the plane. And sometime later, I don't know how long, we got word from Bo Holmsted, he called and he said well, it come back positive. And that's all we needed. So we went to the Grand Jury and we'd been meeting with the Grand Jury to keep them updated on everything. We had to have all the mothers come in and what they experienced you know with their child when they brought the baby in and went into arrest. And uh got her indicted for injury of a child... seven or eight counts. And I found out she was out at Midland-

Odessa area. She had left here. And got a warrant for her and got her arrested out there and brought her back. And then tried her... she's still in the pen. She's coming up for parole occasionally every few years and it's been denied. I talked to some of the female wardens over there and they say she's just cold as she can be you know. She never did admit to anything. Her whole deal was to... when she was telling everybody that Kerrville needed a pediatric care unit in the hospital and that she was gonna be the one that was gonna be in charge of it. So she's out there trying to show everybody how she's saving kids and how much she knows and just a big ego gal. And we don't know how many she ended up killing in San Antonio. It could go as high as 60.

NANCY RAY: Oh my, what a horrible crime.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah... and it ended up the doctors and everybody resigned out there. It all come back... there's a book called Death Shift that was written about it. Two books actually, one's Death Shift. Matter of fact, there's a show called "Arrest and Trial." They were here several years ago. Uh they did that on Gene Jones and then another case I had called the slave ranch out here. And periodically I'll run into somebody in town who will say I saw you on TV the other night. I'll say which one was it – Gene Jones or the slave ranch? *(laughter)*

NANCY RAY: Well tell us about the other one. Is that a good case to talk about?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well it got publicity all over the United States as far as... because they were calling it a slave ranch. And even... they even said it was in the paper in Russia... somebody saw it over there about slavery in the United States. And yeah it got a lot of publicity and uh it's kind of a weird case. It was some ranchers out here son who I think their ancestry was kind of goes like that telephone pole over there... a tree you know. They weren't the smartest people in the world but they owned a lot of land out here west of town. They had inherited it. And they were just not too sharp people by the name of Ellebracht. And it started with a phone call one day that I got from the chief of police at Lampasas. He called me and he said Joe, there's a guy that come into my office over here. Said he escaped from a ranch

over there and he said he'd been tortured. And uh he was afraid to stop in Kerrville. These ranchers, father and son, had him so scared to death he was even afraid to report it. And he ran and got out of there and uh... first stop was here. He got far enough away that he thought he'd be safe to tell what happened. And I asked the chief if he'd take a statement from the guy and he said he would. Turns out that he'd been hitchhiking and this rancher and his son picked him up and they took him up there to their ranch. They wanted to know if he wanted some work and he said yeah. So they said well they'd put him to work. Well when he got up there, there's a bunch of other these hitchhikers they'd picked up. And they was having them cut wood and do different things. And they put a hitchhiker in charge of the hitchhikers. And when you do that... this guy'd never been in charge of nobody but he was gonna let them know he was the boss. And if they weren't working the way they were supposed to, they'd get a couple of others and they'd get you over there and either tie you down... kick you, whip you, do other... not holding up your end. And they're staying out at an old dilapidated barn getting fed bologna sandwiches and... and every once in a while they'd just tell them uh... They won't let them leave and they say every once in a while they'll shoot a round of .22s and they got about two or three of the hitchhikers are in charge of the rest of them... like a chain gang nearly... put them out to work and capture them and make sure they don't leave and forced labor more or less. And so when I got the call and uh he told me what he did, I got a deputy and we rode out there and just drove in on the ranch. When we drove in there was a bunch of them standing there and the uh rancher and his son... and he walks out and wanted to know what we wanted. And I said well, we got some information some people are being abused out here and we need to talk to you about it. He said ain't nobody being abused out here. And I said OK, you don't mind if I talk to these guys? He said no. Well, I want to tell you, these guys are scared to death of him and they wouldn't... they said no, nothing's wrong. And they're just... you gotta know what kind of individuals they are. They're just like whipped dogs they're just... so they're afraid to say anything. They didn't know who we were and whether we were tied in... or something happened to them... because they'd been preaching to them

that we know the sheriff. If ya'll say anything you know you're not gonna get nowhere and it'll be the end of you. So they had them scared. So we didn't have nothing to uh bring them in for so we left. And when we got that statement in, we decided one day to go back out there and talk to them again and we went back out there and we caught them out on the highway because we knew something was wrong. They were working on a fence out there. And I had an FBI agent with me and uh a deputy. I said why don't we just take one at a time... get them away from them and start interviewing them. So I had this one in my car and I asked him about this. And I said I want to know the truth. I said you don't have nothing to fear. He's an FBI agent from downtown and we need to know what's taking place. And we've already interviewed one that admitted what was going on that escaped from here. And so this one said what do you want me to tell you about – the one they killed and burn up or what? I said they did what? He said yeah, they killed one and they burn him up... put him on a bunch of logs and burn him all night long. I said you're kidding. He said no. So I said well you just stay right here. I went and got the FBI agent and the deputy and I said you know he's telling me about a murder now. I said and he said he'll take me over there where they burned the guy. So I said let's load them up and head over there. So he takes me over to the ranch and we drive in and he takes me out in a pasture there. And there's a burn area about... it would fit inside this room here. And he said that's where they... said they tortured him for a long time with a cattle prod in the barn and they tape recorded and uh... because he wasn't working. And they kept torturing him nearly every day and he got down to where he couldn't hardly even talk. And so uh then he died he said and they took him out there and started throwing tires and wood on him... firewood and everything on him and just burn him all night long. So I'm looking through there and started finding some little chips of bone. And we get a plastic bag and just start filling it up and take that with us and bring him back into town... and the rest of them into town and started talking to them. Well we get them in here and they start telling us what happened. And uh we sent the bones off. And so the next day after we got all these statements, we got a search warrant to go back and search. And they had told us about... that Junior,

the younger guy, had during all this torture session had tape recorded this thing. So we go back out there and we run a search and we don't find the tape recorder. We found some chains and some different things they used to chain them up and do different things. What we found we keep but there's no tape. And I go back out there again the next morning and as I'm driving in, one of the guys that wouldn't go with us is sitting out there at the gate. And so I started talking to him and I said we're looking for a tape. Do you know where it's at? He said well you're a little late. He said the lawyers come back in. They knew where the tape was and they took it. So I said OK. We need to take you in. Will you give us a statement? He'd actually gone in with the lawyers uh with the rancher and his son and was sitting there in the lawyers' office when they were interviewing them about what took place out there. And they told them about the tape and they got this kid to go with them to get the tape and take it back to their office. And luckily he tells us about it. And of course based on that information, we can go to the lawyers because he's sitting there... he's not representing them so it's not privileged information. He's representing the other two, the father and the son. So whatever he tells us he can tell us because he's just listening to all the conversation between them and the lawyers. So the next day after we get a statement from him, I call the FBI agent and he brings his supervisor and the DA and I... we just call the lawyers' office and tell them we need to come over there... talk to them. And of course the FBI supervisor, he'll get them at a table there and he tells them uh... we know you got the tape in this crime and he said it falls under obstruction of justice. And I'm telling you right now, if you don't get the tape back to us, you're fixing to be tried (*laughter*). And so one of the lawyers jumped up and he's... and the other says "sit down, sit down." So to make a long story short, they said well we need to get us a lawyer. I said yeah, you probably do. They said let us talk to a lawyer and then we'll get back with you. So we say OK. So they call a lawyer they knew and that lawyer told them you better get the tape... give it back. So they called and I went over and got it. And they ended up uh trying them. Racehorse Haynes came up out of Houston. He represented the father because of this ranch they had... worth lots of money. It had the biggest spring in Kerr County on it. They

didn't have any money they were just ranch land rich and no money. And uh of course he saw money there. He didn't want the ranch... they ended up selling it for I don't know... million, two million bucks... paid his lawyer fee. And uh we tried them here in Kerrville and uh ended up they was all found guilty. The guy that they murdered was a hitchhiker. Had actually at one time been a dope addict and either tried to shoot himself or got shot. He'd cut himself on a chainsaw they had told us and had taken him over here to the VA Hospital. And we went over there checking. That's how we found out who they'd killed. We got a... found where he had been treated over there for a chainsaw cut and had given their name. And he was from Alabama and so checking through Alabama with that name, he had an arrest record. And they sent us a photograph which we showed and they identified him as the one they killed. And uh he didn't have the best reputation either. So the sentences... the biggest sentence was 15 years that the boy got. But uh it was blown up all over about how this happened and they got... the press started calling it the slave ranch.

NANCY RAY: Well were all of your cases this bad?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well there's some of them like that. One case that I'll tell you about that I was really glad to do while I was in Austin. I do think I ought to tell that is... While I was there, Homer Garrison's house got broke into. Homer Garrison was deceased. And they called me and uh all his guns, badges and everything had been taken out of his house. And so I went out there and met his wife who just recently died a couple of years ago, Mary Nell Garrison. Met with her, Trey Garrison the son, and he's still in Austin in real estate. He sits on our board. And found out... got a list and started the investigation and ended up working with Austin Police Department. They were going to houses and using some grips and twisting the door and going inside the door knob and forcing the locks off... open. And they had a guy in jail one day that I went and interviewed and of course he admitted to doing it. And told me that they had sold most of the guns and the badges and some of the jewelry... they got scared when they found out it was a police officer's house. They didn't know Colonel Garrison. And they'd put the badges in a

sack with some gravel and they drove across Interstate 35 at Town Lake going out of Austin south. And when they got over Town Lake, they threw it out there in the lake. And so when they told us that, uh Colonel Gossett's sons were uh... had been doing some diving. So we got them out there one day and we had a boat. And I got the suspect in my car and give him a sack and put some gravel in it. And I said I'm gonna drive you across. When you get to the point where it's at, throw it over and we'll see what happens. So they're down in the water waiting and they throw it over and they see where it lands. They start diving and we start getting some badges and... Matter of fact, we found his... it's a horseshoe that he had, spur clip. No it's a spur clip. It's a spur with his Quarter Century pin with his initials on top of it that he wore for many years. And they found it. So we was lucky to find that. And we found most of the guns. I ended up in uh... I asked Trey Garrison... I said of all the things that's missing, Trey, what do you want back most? Well he was a good friend... Colonel Garrison was, of Charlie Miller, the old Ranger. I don't know if he's come up in any of your interviews.

NANCY RAY: He has.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well Charlie Miller was like a second dad to Trey Garrison. And Trey told me... said of all things I really want is that pocket watch that Charlie give my Dad that he carried in the Ranger service. And I said OK. So I found out that some of the guns were stolen over... had been sold to a guy that owned a Mexican restaurant south of town. I went and talked to him and he had a bunch of the guns at his ranch in Lockhart and we recovered those. And he told me that his brother had bought some of the stuff and I said where's he at? He said well he moved to Colorado Springs working construction. I said well... we're gonna have to go talk to him. I said all I want is the stuff back. And I said don't you call him or you'll be going to jail with the others but we're gonna have to talk to him. So Colonel Speir was the director then and told him what was going on. He said let's fly you up to Colorado Springs and so I took off up there. And called the Colorado State Bureau of Investigation and they met me. And we went to this residence. When we got there where the brother lived, the wife was there and we told her why we were

there. We were looking for some stolen items... and guns mainly. She said we don't have a gun in the house. And we said well, where's your husband? Well he's still at work. We said well do you mind if we search? No, come on in. So we're going through looking for some guns and I happen to open up a hall closet and there's some clothes and I feel the barrel of a shotgun. I pull it out and her eyes... she said I didn't even know that was in there. So I moved the clothes and there's a cardboard box and it's got cameras and all kind of stuff in it. And then the husband comes in later and he admits, yeah, he bought all that stuff. In the bottom of that cardboard box was a pocket watch. I didn't even think of it at the time *(laughter)*... I'm tracking all this stuff. So we load it up, take it over... and box it up and I fly it back to Austin. And I bring it out to the Ranger office and I knew a lot of it didn't come from Colonel Garrison's burglary because there was stuff that he didn't... So I called Trey Garrison and I put it all in a closet. I said I got a lot of things here, Trey, but most of it is stuff that didn't belong to your dad but come out and look. He come out and he opened the door and there's that pocket watch and he said that's Charlie Miller's pocket watch. I said you're kidding! He said no, you got a magnifying glass? I said yeah. So I went and got it and we looked and you could barely see his initials in there... CEM. He said Charlie Miller's dad give it to Charlie and that's how he got it. And of course Charlie was born way back in the horseback days. And uh I was glad to get it back for him. Matter of fact I asked Trey if he still had it and he said oh yeah, I gave it to my son. Now he's got it. And uh... so what... the reason I bring that up is that you know Colonel Garrison was the one that I guess was instrumental in me applying for Rangers and then of course of all the cases I wanted to solve... more than any, was his. And it worked out. Got the pocket watch and we got most of the guns back except one of his that he carried that was... I wish we could have got back but it never did turn up.

NANCY RAY: Well I was gonna ask what was your most satisfying case to solve and that sounds like...

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, that was probably the most satisfying because of who it was. A lot of them are satisfying... anytime you solve one you're glad you do it. And you forget about a lot of them you

solve. It's the ones you don't solve that you remember and think about every once in a while. Because you've got the ones like Gene Jones... she's serving her time. The Ellebracht, they've served their time. And most of them have. I've had two or three unsolved cases here that I know... have been worked on since I retired and hopefully will be solved one day.

NANCY RAY: Is there one case that sticks with you that you think I just really wish I could solve that one?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well uh... there's two cases here, both of them... not one in particular. I hope both of them are solved. One was just... he was a truck driver... coming down Interstate 10, pulled into the rest stop just east of town and went in to use the restroom and somebody just come in and shot him down right there in the restroom. We never could find out for what reason or why. Left the truck parked... out there running. And then uh we did a lot of checking on that and couldn't turn up anything. He lived in El Paso and was headed home. And there was no robbery, nothing was missing. So something there... he'd apparently made somebody mad. I don't think it was just a random killing. They were mad at him for some reason and we couldn't find out why. But uh... anybody that knew him that we talked to didn't know why somebody would do that. But we feel like somebody followed him until he pulled over. And then a young woman was found out here on the side of the road strangled. And uh we worked a lot on it. Matter of fact some information has come up here within the last year on her. We didn't have DNA back there and they'd come up with a suspect and they're still working. I don't know. They called me about it but they haven't made any arrests yet.

NANCY RAY: Well do you have a case where you have a dumb criminal story?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: You mean just plain stupid what he did?

NANCY RAY: Yeah, probably.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Gosh, I'm trying to think.

NANCY RAY: That's fine. What about kidnappings or hostages? Did you ever have anything, a case with those?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah. We had a kidnapping here of a bank employee's wife but that all worked out. He'd kidnapped her and had taken her and was demanding ransom. He actually left her parked right off Interstate 10 on top of that hill tract over there and was calling in. And we eventually found her with a helicopter. But you know it was... and eventually caught him. But it was just kidnapping for ransom, it wasn't...

NANCY RAY: Well what about uh any white collar crimes? Did you ever have those in Kerrville... or Austin I guess?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I wouldn't say any real white collar crime... like your Mafia or something?

NANCY RAY: We had one involved A&M. Well tell me, if you were gonna tell us about another case, what's one that stands out in your mind that you would want us to know about?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well, I had a case... I was called one day. A lady here... her husband was killed up at Junction. And uh I hadn't been... didn't even know about it... his name was Parker. There were a lot of Parkers lived up there. They were all related from Cynthia Ann Parker from Fort Parker. And they own a lot of country or did out west. And one of them was found on a county road... had been shot and was laying beside his truck. And there was a .22 pistol of his laying inside on the passenger's seat that had one fired round under the... under the uh hammer. And he's been shot right here (*made a motion*). Well the sheriff's office went out there along with the JP. And they'd been reported by some people how they found him. And so we went out there and looked at the scene and all. And determined he'd shot himself as a suicide... no doubt... the way it looked with him laying there... shot with the pistol laying there inside the truck. And his wife called me. And she'd called Colonel Milner saying you know... you need to call somebody because she didn't think it was a suicide... might have been an accident or somebody killed him. So Colonel Milner said you need to call Joe Davis, he'll look into it. So she called

me and she met me at my office and told me uh... said I'll tell you this Joe, said it's not a suicide. We were getting along fine. He was preparing the ground up here for deer season, building a cabin for his hunters. And the next thing I know, he's shot. Said now he carried a pistol with him but I guarantee you it's either gonna be accidental or murder and they're calling it suicide. So I said well I'll look into it. So I went up to Junction and I talked to the sheriff and I told him I'd been contacted... I just wanted to look at the evidence and see what... And they both said well there's no doubt, its suicide. I said well do you have the pistol? They said yeah and they got it out. It's a little cheap .22, single-action pistol. And I looked at it and looked down the barrel. Because usually if you shoot yourself, there's gonna be blood and I couldn't see any in the barrel. So I told him I'd like to take it and have it checked for blood. So instead of taking it to Austin, I took it to the San Antonio lab and left it. I said while I'm up here, let's go look... where's his truck? He said it's down the road impounded down there. I went down there and he had pictures of where the pistol was in the truck... and on the passenger seat and we looked at it. I looked in there and he found out with the door open... he's laying on the driver's side just laying there and his hat's upside down on the hood. And I was looking in the truck to just see if there was any evidence of any blood because I said... you know if the pistols is over in the seat over here how come... and he's bleeding and he bled quite a bit on the ground. There's not a drop of blood that we could find in the truck. So I said what I'm gonna do... and his name was Pat Davis. I said Pat I'm gonna go start interviewing people out there and see where we can place him and what he's doing. I said you can either go with me or I'll do it... whatever you want to do. He said I'll go with you. So we found out that uh by interviewing some of the people out there, different ranchers... uh two women in particular. I found... that just driving down the road and pulling in their driveway that they had been in a cemetery over there and Bruce Parker, the one that was found dead, had driven up there and he said I just heard a shot over here. Did ya'll here it? I'm thinking there's somebody hunting on this property I've got leased and maybe he's trying to kill a deer out of season. And they said no, they didn't hear the shot. He said well I'm gonna go around and try to look for

it and drive around this road that circles the ranch... makes a loop. And that's the last they saw him until they found he was dead. Well unbeknown to me at the time, one of the ladies was married to Walter Parker who was Bruce's uncle. And they'd had a big falling out and when they left the cemetery, they were driving back to Walter, her house. And they saw Bruce coming off their ranch. And she said... told this lady, she said Bruce ain't supposed to be on our land. Said Walter'd be fired up if he knows it and... so I'm gonna go tell Walter. She tried to talk her out of it. Anyway, she... they went and told Walter. Well Walter went and got... she saw him go and get a pistol out of his pickup. He told them ya'll go this way and I'm gonna circle around here and see if I can find him. Well they went around... they went back to this other lady's ranch and was sitting there. Of course I didn't know all this at the time. When I interviewed them, they didn't tell me this... this lady didn't tell me. But uh... so I'm still investigating it and uh Walter Parker is the one, the uncle is the one that calls in and goes down to this lady's ranch later and says... tells her said I shot Bruce. And this lady that lives here said we better call the ambulance. He said no, I want you to see him and he took her up there and showed them. But anyway, I find that out later. But while I'm interviewing Walter's mother, she tells me that Walter is the one that calls... told her that he had found the body. And I said well how did... how did he know the body was up there? He didn't say he'd found it. He had gone to the scene. And she said I don't know who told him who found the body. So I said well I'll go talk to Walter. I said Walter, how'd you know Bruce was shot out there? And he said well you know I don't remember who told me... somebody told me. I said you mean you can't tell me who shot your nephew? That don't happen every day. He said well I'll try to remember... I just can't remember. And that's all I could get out of him. Well one night while I'm here in Kerrville, I get a call from that lady over there and she says I haven't told you the complete truth, Joe. I need to tell you. Can you meet me at your office in Kerrville? I said yeah so I met her here. She said what happened was Walter come in, told me and his wife who was at my house at the time after we were circling around looking for him... that they got in an argument and he just shot Bruce on the side of the road and come to

my house and told us. He wanted to call everybody to go up there and see him laying dead in the road. So uh we had a Grand Jury. She give me a statement and uh of course then it ruled out... otherwise it would've been ruled a suicide I guess. Ended up we got him indicted and uh... he was like 70-something years old. And probably what happened... and he probably wouldn't even have been convicted if... He was sitting in his truck. He had a gun and he drove up on Bruce. And Linda Parker, his wife, told me every time Bruce got mad, he would uh take off his hat and he was ready to fight. And he probably was ready to jerk the old man out of his truck. And the old man just pulled his pistol and shot him and he fell over. He carried that little .22 with him but it was one of those kinds that you didn't want to carry a live round under that hammer because if it... it would go off. And that's the way he normally carried it like that. So he never did fire a shot and he just had it in the truck with him... it was always with him Linda said. But...

NANCY RAY: What a difference your persistence made though.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yeah, well it's just you know... probably if his wife... knew that it couldn't be a suicide and they ruled it turned out to be murder.

NANCY RAY: Well you had a long career as a Ranger... 24 years, is that right?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: 24 years.

NANCY RAY: And I show you retired September 30th of '93.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: That's right.

NANCY RAY: You achieved your goal which you started at 14.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I achieved my goal.

NANCY RAY: So we can't capture everything, every part of your career. But I'd like to hear from you uh what it meant when you finally got that Ranger badge. You had a long career as a Ranger... what did that badge mean to you?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: It was you know... it was an honor and it meant a whole lot to me because I achieved a goal. Not many people know what they want to do in life and I... every day I was working, I never regretted getting up in the morning and going to work and trying to do your part. What you want to do as a Ranger is to keep up the tradition of the guys ahead of you so when you retire its in good shape for the next one to take over. And so uh I felt, you know, if I had to do it over again, I'd do it again. Uh it was just something and I can't tell you why... it was just something as a young kid that I wanted to do and it all worked out as what I'd thought it'd be. It's you... it's truly an honor because very few get to serve in that... and it's such a historical group that's known from before there was a Texas and known around the world. We've got people now that belong to our foundation, a group in England. They call themselves the Frontier Battalion Texas Rangers, UK. They dress up like the old Rangers once a month and play Rangers in England.

NANCY RAY: Like re-enactment?

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Yes. And everywhere you went, people somehow recognize you as a Ranger. You can tell a difference. I don't know what it is but they said you're a Texas Ranger. I said yeah... how'd you know? Well I could tell.

NANCY RAY: A little bit of pride there.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: I guess so.

NANCY RAY: Well I want to thank you for your time today for this interview. And we also want to say thank you for your service to the state of Texas.

JOE B. DAVIS, JR.: Well thank you, Nancy. It's great to have ya'll here and I was glad to be able to relate some of it to you.

NANCY RAY: Thanks for sharing your story.