

Interview with

LUCILE GARRETT PLANE  
Texas Prison Warden

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Interview Conducted at Mrs. Plane's Home  
Gatesville, Texas  
Tuesday—April 07, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray  
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Lucile G. Plane, Becky Adams and Nancy Ray



## Introduction

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**LUCILE PLANE**  
**Texas Department of Corrections, Retired**

**NANCY RAY:** My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Lucile Plane of Gatesville, Texas. Uh Mrs. Plane was the first female warden in the state of Texas. Is that correct?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Uh huh.

**NANCY RAY:** Ok today is Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and present with Mrs. Plane and myself is Becky Adams, also a former prison warden.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Both of us are retired but she just has recently retired.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, a new retiree. And the purpose of this interview is to discuss Mrs. Plane's career as a female... a warden of a female prison. And Mrs. Plane, do I have your permission to record this interview?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes.

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

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** And Mrs. Plane, 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?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Let's start by learning a little bit about you as a person, when you were born, where...

**LUCILE PLANE:** A thousand years ago (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** You look very good for a thousand.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I was born August 12, 1914, in Beaumont, Texas... at 10:30 AM.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, what about your parents? What are their names?

**LUCILE PLANE:** My mother and father were... my mother was... would you like her maiden name?

**NANCY RAY:** Surely, that would be fine.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Her maiden name was Lucie Antoinette Bedeau and she married my father whose name was O. P. Garrett, Oscar Pendleton Garrett.

**NANCY RAY:** You better spell your mother's name.

**LUCILE PLANE:** LUCIE, Antoinette ANTOINETTE and BEDEOU. She married my, she and Daddy were married in 1913 and I was born in 1914.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. What about brothers and sisters?

**LUCILE PLANE:** None.

**NANCY RAY:** You're an only child.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes, my mother almost died when I was born so that's the reason I'm an only child.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. So where did you go to school?

**LUCILE PLANE:** In Beaumont, Texas.

**NANCY RAY:** And you graduated there?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes. I was... do you want to know I was Salutatorian in my graduating class?

**NANCY RAY:** Oh yes, I would. I would love know anything you'll tell me.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well I was Salutatorian uh my graduating class and I took an interesting story as I came home to tell my Dad to look me over. He said what for and I said... Let me go

back. He used to get angry with me because I didn't bring books home. But we, we went to school from 8 in the morning until 4 in the evening and we had two study periods. So I always got my lessons, my homework done in, at the study periods so I didn't bring any books home. And he used to fuss at me. Anyway, he said... I said look me over and he said what for? And I said I'm Salutatorian of my graduating class. And he said, in a minute he said that's second best isn't it? ...Took the wind of my sails (*laughter*). Later we discussed this and I said you know Dad, that was a lot of yours and Mother's fault. When I didn't bring books home, you should have gone to the teacher and told her that I wasn't doing... I was making As so it was pretty obvious for me and they could have given me more work and taught me how to study. Because when I went to college, it was difficult. Because at college they don't care whether... at school they care whether make it but not college.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what were your favorite subjects?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Everything. I guess I took... In those years, we had college prep work at school and commercial and I studied, I took both. So I had more points when I graduated than I needed to have.

**NANCY RAY:** All right. Well what did you do after you graduated?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well I went to college and I worked in a bank and uh Daddy didn't think I needed to... They felt as I was going to college that I needed to contribute to it too to appreciate what I was doing. I was taught the work ethic from the time I was able to walk I suppose. I used to get angry when people would say I was a spoiled only child because I wasn't. It was a three-way deal in our house. And they shared their problems with me; they shared their good things with me. I don't think any person has ever had a better set of parents or a better upbringing than I did.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh, what a nice thing.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And I think it sort of helped me working in the prison because so many of those people that are in prison don't know what it's like to have a, as I call it, a sane family... a caring family. So many people I meet these days don't either. We have too much... There are too many broken families so it was wonderful to have the kind of parents I had.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what college, where did you go to college?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I went to Lamar and I went to... then I moved to California and I took some courses at UCLA and I finally decided when I was in Arizona to go back and get my undergrad and then later my graduate degree and I went to Arizona State University. And my graduate degree is a 60-semester hour degree in counseling, psychology and at that time Arizona State was one of five universities in the United States that taught that particular deal. It's kind of like an MSW and it was supposed to be a professional degree. But it lacked about 30 hours of a doctorate so I called it... I called it a bastard degree because it was better than a masters and not good enough for a doctorate.

**NANCY RAY:** And you called it a what degree?

**LUCILE PLANE:** A bastard degree (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** I thought that's what you said (*laughter*). I wanted to be sure before I typed that.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well it was in a sense because it was legitimate... it was better than a masters but not good enough for a doctorate.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh goodness. What was your field of study for your degree?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Business. Uh I was in the, started out as an executive secretary and ended up going into management. Worked for some wonderful companies, particularly out in California during World War II. Bechtel Corporation I think was the best corporation I ever worked for.

**NANCY RAY:** Is that BECHTEL?

**LUCILE PLANE:** BECHTEL, Bechtel. It was at first Bechtel-McCone-Parsons then it became Bechtel-Bechtel-*McCone*... we used to (*laughter*) I won't tell you what we used to call it.

**NANCY RAY:** I thought you were cutting yourself off on that one. (*laughter*)

**LUCILE PLANE:** It was worse than what I called the degree. Where does this stay? This just stays with the Museum?

**NANCY RAY:** Well I don't know for sure. They might show it somewhere so...

**LUCILE PLANE:** You don't edit it?

**NANCY RAY:** I do not edit.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Then you're gonna lose some of my wit.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh no.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Anyway, it became Bechtel Corporation but they were wonderful people to work for. I've worked for US Steel. I've worked for large personnel agencies, large printing companies, uh... bank, five years in a bank. That was my first job out of college.

**NANCY RAY:** Well at some point you married. When was that?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I don't like to discuss that.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. We don't have to. Did you ever have any children?

**LUCILE PLANE:** No. I was not fortunate enough to have children. But I was married the first time for 9 years and my husband within the first year became a mental case. I was reared Catholic and didn't believe in divorce. It's just not a very interesting story.

**NANCY RAY:** A hard time... we'll go on to something else.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And then I was... go for a some years... I married again and that ended up in divorce. So I... wasn't good material.

**NANCY RAY:** Well you had plenty to keep yourself going though. Well how did you become interested uh in the Corrections or law enforcement?

**LUCILE PLANE:** That again is an interesting story. My father died and I was living in Arizona, Phoenix, at that time. *(short pause)*

**NANCY RAY:** Now we're back.

**LUCILE PLANE:** When Daddy died, uh Mother wouldn't move out to Phoenix where I was living. I was actually living in Tempe, Arizona, which is adjacent to Phoenix. So I had to look for something to come back home. And uh she sent me a, one of the local papers and there was a job listed for probation officer. And uh so I answered that deal and ended up eventually coming back to... she was living in Woodville and going to Woodville... interviewing for the job. I was offered the job and I had to go back to Phoenix and I had to make my arrangements. I was uh doing some group counseling work at Arizona State at that time. And uh so I moved back, came back and took a job in the headquarters. It was called the Deep East Texas Regional Probation Department. And it had five counties at that time one of which is Tyler where Woodville is. And the main office was based in Livingston, Texas. And I went to work the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, '71... yeah because Daddy died in '70. The man who was the project director and chief probation officer decided to leave about May of the following year and I was made, I took his place. And I was then the first female project director and chief probation officer of a multi-county juvenile and adult probation outfit in Texas. It was in the beginning when they were trying to get probation projects in all the counties. And uh then Walker County joined in and made it six



counties. And we used to uh have to go to Huntsville to have meetings and Austin. And we were funded through the state. Well, actually through the US via the state LEAA law enforcement group that was trying to get... again as I said, get probation department was all over the state. And Mr. Estelle who was the director of the Criminal Justice... they call it what?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Texas Department...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Department of Corrections by that time... (*Mr. Estelle*) was on the advisory committee of getting the funding for these various projects that people had. And I noticed that I went with others to get their funding that he asked for logistics. So when it came time to get my grant renewed, I was prepared which he said he found interesting. Anyway, I actually had almost 4 years of funding and 3 years was all they gave because of my management skills that we were able to eek it out more. Anyway, one day I came... I'd been out to one of the other counties. And my secretary said do you know a Mr. Estelle, W. J. Estelle? I said yes I do and you'd better know him because he gave you your last raise. And she said well he wants you to call him and she told me the number so I called. And uh another great friend of mine is Dorothy Coleman, and of Becky's. And she was Mr. Estelle's administrative assistant as they... or technician I think they called her, executive secretary. Anyway, she answered the phone and I said I want to speak to Mr. Estelle and she wanted to know who was calling and I told her. She said oh, just a moment. And he answered and said where are you? And I almost said well you called me you should know I'm in Livingston (*laughter*). But I didn't. I realized that Dorothy had put the call through and so I told him in Livingston. He said I need to talk to you. And so I went, I was gonna go to Huntsville to make an office call anyway on Monday so we made a date for me to go and see him at 1:30 that day. And uh I remember walking in... bouncing in and I was 60.

**NANCY RAY:** I was just about to ask if you didn't start this career late?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I was 60 years of age. This was in January before my 61<sup>st</sup> birthday in August. And uh I went bouncing in and her eyes went big. And I told her who I was and then I went in to see him and we talked some generalities. And I was thinking it might have something to do with the funding for my project you know. And I said is there any problem with the project? He laughed and he said no. No, I want to talk about something else. He said you've heard that we're getting one of the youth council facilities in Gatesville, Texas, to open another female prison. We had one at that time... that was Goree in Huntsville. And I said no, I hadn't heard and he looked at me like I was kind of stupid. And I hadn't. Anyway, he told me that they were and he wanted to know if I'd like to be considered to be the warden of this new prison. And I remember saying I don't know anything about prisons (*laughter*). Not realizing that some of the people in my groups in Arizona State were ex-prisoners and were former probation people and that I had been dealing with a lot of correctional people and not realizing it. They were just people in the group that I was trying to help them get conversational skills, communication skills. Anyway, we had a long talk and he said well, think about it and I'm gonna be thinking about it. But now don't go sell the ranch because I'm not sure yet. And I said well I'm not sure either. Uh this was on a Monday. I think it was the 19<sup>th</sup> of January if I'm not mistaken. Anyway, on the following uh Thursday, I was teaching personnel development and juvenile probation laws to the East Texas Police Academy at Kilgore College. And they came at 11 o'clock to get me and said I had a telephone call. And it kind of concerned me because I thought it might be my mother because she wasn't too well. But they said no, it's from Austin. It was Mr. Estelle and he said I just appointed you warden of the new Mountain View Prison at Gatesville, Texas. And I said wait a minute, wait a minute (*laughter*). No, no, no, no... we've gotta talk about this. And

he said uh where are you? Where will you be tomorrow? I said I'll be in Austin tomorrow. He said I'm in Austin now. Meet me at Bob Flowers'... he was the general counsel for the governor at that time... office at 4 o'clock. So I went to... I was a member of the governor's task force committee on communications and it was a 1 o'clock meeting and I went to it. And there were a couple of them there from TDC and the both of them... I came in and they introduced me and they looked at me like you know... they were checking out a cow for sale or something (*laughter*). And uh got through that and I went and met him at the... at Bob Flowers' office. Well they were... the Personnel Director and the Training Director from TDC were there. They'd heard about me and they were all, all the people in TDC were concerned that he was going outside to get somebody... and a female... and an educated female. Anyway, we had an hour's talk and I finally said well, I suppose if somebody else has done it I can do it too. And he said something to me about it's a lot more money than you're making now. And I said it's only money which blew his mind. Because at a meeting, oh maybe a year ago, we had... I was asking for my budget and he noticed that I'd asked for raises for my juvenile probation officers and my adult probation officers and the secretaries but I hadn't asked for a raise for myself. And he commented on you haven't asked for a raise for you but... I said they make me look good and it's only money. And that's the way it always was, it was only money, it wasn't that important to me. Becky gets a kick out of me saying I'm broke you know. We have laughs about that.

**NANCY RAY:** Well you said if somebody else has done it I can do it too. But actually you were the first woman to do this, right?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** To be the warden.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, in Texas. But you know Alderson which is the United States women's prison in Virginia... they have a female warden there for many years. I can't remember her name... Virginia was one of her names. But she'd been there for years. But in Texas, Texas was definitely male chauvinistic. It's kind of interesting the first three years.

**NANCY RAY:** I'll bet. Tell us a little bit about it.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well it took me three years to lick some of them to my size (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Well how did you... what were some of the things you faced when you became...

**LUCILE PLANE:** What were some of the things I what?

**NANCY RAY:** What were some of the issues or challenges you faced in that first three years?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Uh, one of the things is the rigidity of the system there was then. And yet on the other hand, since Mr. Estelle left, this thing has done like our country's gone, it's gone downhill. I don't think they, TDC, is nearly as effective as it was. He was a terrific director. He had a, he had a lot to do with furthering education and furthering kindness and getting rid of the inmate controls and stuff. And trying to get officers to do what they're supposed to do. He was uh... what am I trying to say... Very progressive.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. He was a forward thinking person?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Forward thinking person and he liked to look at both sides of the story. But... I thought he was a fantastic prison director. He's a member of this major deal too and he's someone I think you might talk to Byron about interviewing because as a director, he comes to all the reunions in June. He is a very staunch...

**NANCY RAY:** He supports the Rangers?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh my goodness yes. Oh yes. Bob Mitchell, over there (*she pointed to a picture*), is one of his greatest friends. Anyway...

**NANCY RAY:** Well, you walked into the prison as a brand new warden. Were you welcomed as the warden?

**LUCILE PLANE:** In some instances... some instances not because I came from the outside. No, and I was there a couple of weeks and he had me going out to Goree to learn from them. And after two weeks, I went in to see him and asked him... they had a place behind the Ad building there in Huntsville that they had used as a rodeo shack. They used to have a rodeo once a year. And they had all the stuff for the rodeo in there and I noticed that nobody was using it. This was in March and uh so I went and asked him if I could use that as my Mountain View office there in Huntsville. Because I said some of the things I'm seeing I don't think I want to do...

**NANCY RAY:** Uh oh...

**LUCILE PLANE:** and he thought a minute and he said yeah, that's OK. He allowed me to use my ingenuity which I appreciated. Because there, they had a big deal at that time of home economics... you know sewing and cooking and all that kind of stuff and I wanted to get some uh marketable skills in there for them to learn. Because when they went outside, they needed to be able to get something in order to get money to support themselves without going into theft which they were doing, and all that other stuff. I was naïve in some respects but on the other hand I got... well we had printing... we had uh heavy equipment operation.

**NANCY RAY:** Really!

**LUCILE PLANE:** The girls learned to use the maintainer, a backhoe, bulldozer... I always wanted to learn that on.

**NANCY RAY:** Me too.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I think we had five or six heavy equipment things that they learned. As a matter of fact, some of the girls finished those courses. And they were sponsored by A&M and went back to their hometowns and went to work. I had one of the worst... well inmate in for so many crimes went to work for Dallas, the city of Dallas when she got out. She was uh... she did a lot of stuff for the person who was the man... the instructor and teaching others how to... She could use that maintainer and cut a blade down to 1/8 inch of dirt she was that good.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh wow.

**LUCILE PLANE:** So we had some different things in there other than horticulture and normal things that they had at that time for females. Uh... made them clean up the fences and I remember two of the most well-thought of male wardens who accepted me... the only two who accepted me right away... came down to visit one time. And they told the pickets who they were and they made a round around the fences. And they came in and talked to me and they said something about I'm glad to see that you have the grass off, not growing up on the fences. And I looked at them and said whatever made you think that because I'm a woman they'd have grass growing on the fences? *(laughter)* You have clean shirts... do you think you did them or did your wife do them? Sassy... *(laughter)*

**NANCY RAY:** A little.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Anyway, they were great people. I fussed at them about going around the perimeter without checking with me. And I said that's because you're a male chauvinist. You thought you could. And everybody respected them. One of them just died last week... I believe two weeks ago.

**BECKY ADAMS:** You need to tell about the story about going down to the chow hall the first time.

**LUCILE PLANE:** The what?

**BECKY ADAMS:** The story about going down, going to the male unit to eat. That's indicative of the times. It's a good one.

**LUCILE PLANE:** What is that unit?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Eastham?

**LUCILE PLANE:** No, Coff...

**BECKY ADAMS:** Is it Coffield?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Coffield Unit. They were gonna... it was when I was first there and oh... Mr. Estelle appointed his administrative assistant, Ron Taylor, to be a liaison between me and him and the assistant directors and the others because I was new and kind of gave me some sea legs. And Ron would play some games and one day I just said to him, Ron I'm gonna tell you something – what you see is what you get. And if you don't like what I say I'm sorry but that's the way I am. I don't like the subterfuge. I don't like this play stuff. You tell me what you think I need to do and don't play around about it. Let's just say it face to face. And he looked at me and he said you are kind of unusual you know (*laughter*). But anyway, we became wonderful friends. He was just a great person and helped... then he really helped me from that point on because I could say what I thought. Well I was kind of worried about the security and could I keep them in and all that kind of stuff. They had me scared because there are always tales of escapes and all that. So he took me over to Palestine to see the... they had a railroad that they'd built and they were doing a park over there. And he wanted me to see how little fencing they had and how little... they didn't have double fences like I had and all that sort of stuff. And so we stopped at

noon to go by the Coffield Unit. Don what's his name... Costelow... he was the warden. He wasn't there but his assistant was there. And we spent the morning in his office and talked a little bit... shot the bull as the saying goes. And finally the assistant says I suppose you all came by to have lunch. And Ron says well yeah, that's the main reason that we did. He said well we'll have a tray sent in for Mrs. Plane and you and I will go to the dining room. And Ron said Warden Plane will not eat off a tray nor will I. Where is Don... at home? Yes. Call him. So he got on the line and he said who was here and all that and Costelow was there with him five or ten minutes. And he sat down and went through this same deal of shooting the breeze. And finally he said well, I guess you all want to eat, don't you? And Ron said well I thought that was one of the reasons. He said well, let's go. So we go down the hall and I'm walking with Ron on one side and the warden on this side, the assistant warden behind us, the major with him and a lieutenant or something and a captain and a couple of others and we walked to the dining room.

**NANCY RAY:** All males (*she nodded*).

**LUCILE PLANE:** With all that armory... and a couple of the inmates who worked the halls. They had stripes... they had to walk inside the stripes. And uh we went in the dining room and of course everybody's looking and we ... most of the people had gone out that ate there between 12 and 1. And we sat there and were talking after we'd eaten. And a bunch of people started coming in to the... at the officers' dining room to the bar watching things. And one... they all looked over with big eyes and one little youngster came over and he said to me are you that new woman that's a female warden? I said I suppose so. He said that's what I thought. He went back to tell them all. And I looked at Costelow and I said if that man worked for me, I'd fire him. That was uncalled for. Costelow said well, you know... they... it just surprised... they're not used to seeing... it's the first time a female has ever been in our dining room. And interestingly, years



later, Janie Cockrell was made the warden of that unit. And the assistant warden when she went to the unit for the first time said to her, well Ms. Cockrell, I'll show you through this. She said no, I will show you through the unit. God bless her. And she did. And they'd been having problems with that unit and within three months, she had them straightened out. She was really fantastic. Women have come a long way.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh, right. Well tell me about the prison that you became warden. How large was it? How many inmates?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, it was supposed to take up to 500 and something. They ended up with over 600. As part of the youth council here, they sent me young people at first... small sentences... since I was new and didn't know how to handle them (*she gave me a look*). And uh oh I had... I think I had 62 percent Black, 35 percent White, some 12 percent Hispanic, and the rest of them were mix-match. And uh then they began sending me some very interesting ones. And I ended up when they closed Goree and sent them all up here and that's where she (*Becky*) was warden. What was formerly the Gatesville Unit is now called the Crane Unit.

**NANCY RAY:** Now what was the name? How did you spell that?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Goree GOREE unit. It's now a male unit in Huntsville but it was all female at that time. But they were just flowing out of the windows almost and so they took over this whole youth council facility up here. How many could Gatesville and the Crane Unit handle?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Oh, almost 2000.

**LUCILE PLANE:** and that included the little satellites, right?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Yes.

**LUCILE PLANE:** That did not include Hilltop.

**BECKY ADAMS:** That's correct.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And they built Murray Unit up here and then the Woodman State Jail. Linda Woodman was assistant warden at Goree at the time I became warden at Mountain View. And then she came up here for a year and a half and then went back down as warden of the Goree Unit. They moved them all up and she was the first warden of the Gatesville and now the Crane Unit. And so they named a state jail after her and it was dedicated in what... '97?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Yes.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And Becky was with parole at that time and she was made the first warden of the Woodman Unit in '97.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of crimes had these inmates committed?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, at that time when I was telling you... when they moved Goree up here then they sent death row to me and all of the inmates that were in segregation and criminal activity. Most of them when I first got them were check writers, drug abuse, small crimes you know... three to five years and all that. Then I got the lifers and the death row and uh that was an interesting, very interesting... They were all very nice and I had... they've had some bad ones since I retired. But I only had two at first. One was Linda Barnett and Pam Parillo.

**NANCY RAY:** What was that last name? Pam...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Parillo.

**NANCY RAY:** PARILLO.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Uh huh. What was the name of that first female that was executed?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Carla Tucker.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Carla Tucker. She was a delightful inmate. She found the Lord when she was in the Houston jail or the San Antonio jail. But she, and she was one of the few that I could say really and truly changed her life around... completely and completely. She was a very

devoted to the Lord inmate. She had officers as well as inmates. There was a lot of sadness when they executed her. But the press was determined that a woman was gonna be executed and she went. And she never... she didn't try not to be executed. She said she had, that was poor judgment she had used. She had been the victim of a homosexual mother and uh the mother made her watch her acts with her lover and a few other things... had her on drugs when she was 5 and had her on heroin and the likes when she was 12. And she had committed a heinous crime, a real heinous crime. But she was off of drugs, completely drugged out. And would never had been in prison if she had not dried out on the East Coast and was on her way back to the West Coast and stopped in Denver and turned herself in to the sheriff's department... a very interesting case. And we had a Black inmate, Williams. I knew her and I liked her. She never talked about her crime. She had a heinous crime too but she never talked about it. She was executed. Did Erica get executed?

**BECKY ADAMS:** No, she's still there.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And then I had people who were... oh the most interesting one I had had been a stripper and she was in for 99 years for killing someone. And she decided she was gonna beat the system and she was going to pretend to be crazy. And she did such an excellent job she did become crazy. And she became a fan of the Cowboys and wrote them letters and they all sent her pictures, autographed pictures (*laughter*). And when the Carausco trial was going on... not Carausco... Ruiz stuff was going to change the prison system around completely. When they had the little inspectors and stuff for the plaintiff's attorneys, the young man that was doing the security deal came by and I was taking him through segregation where the death row inmates were at that time and all the others. And they stopped by this inmate's cell and another inmate called me and I went back to see what she wanted. When I came back, the uh plaintiff's inspector

said to me... does she have leukemia? And I said no. Is she pregnant? I said no. When we got back to my office, I found out that she told him she was 88 percent pregnant and had 92 percent leukemia (*laughter*). And he asked me these questions when she said 88 percent pregnant. Now no one is ever a little pregnant as you well know (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Oh goodness. You must...

**LUCILE PLANE:** I think it is one of the most interesting experiences we had. And it was a very interesting...

**NANCY RAY:** It sounds like it.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And they had some that were bad. An inmate whose mother had been in prison many years before her had a number of prison sentences. This one was there on drugs... her mother had put her on them. And her mother had come to visit her and she was really, the mother wasn't taking care of her children like this inmate thought she should be. And she really climbed all over her mother on that visit. And two weeks later I had to tell the inmate that the mother had died. And she went absolutely berserk, absolutely berserk. Killing herself, you know, for what she had said to her mother and the mean things she had said and what had happened on the last visit. That was a very... the chaplain and I had a lot of work on our hands to help her through that.

**NANCY RAY:** Tell me about the responsibilities of a warden. What were your job responsibilities? Sounds like counseling was part of it.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh yeah. You know inmates know the pecking order. They want to all talk to the warden. And if the warden is gone, they will take the assistant warden for she's the top. And if the assistant warden is gone they'll take the major. But they know what that pecking order is. But your deal is to make sure that the inmates get their clothing, all the things they need to

get... that medical was working like it should... education is going like it should... the security. What are the three Cs—Care, custody and control. You care... you have a care. You have custody of them and make sure your custody is right. And you try to control their actions. And they have fights in the dorm. You have to take care of those situations. You have a uh... you've normally... it's a captain, a disciplinary captain who when an inmate gets a write-up, gets a case. They have cases where they have to go through court-type proceedings. And when they hurt each other, they have to pay for it. Sometimes they lose time. They get... usually... I don't whether they still have good time or not. They did at one time. They could get so many good-time days which would shorten the time when they would be coming up for parole or discharge. Uh there were different ways that they would punish them. There was a... and if there was gonna be an altercation, I'll grant you it's gonna always be in the dining room. That's where they get the most attention. And I'd not been there... well actually I didn't realize it but I was the first female to have male inmates. Because when we got the Mountain View Unit, it had been a boys' facility and we had to make it, change it over to be a women's facility. And at one time, the *Dallas Morning News* had a picture of my laundry porch and there were 50 urinals on that porch. And it said "changing the plumbing facilities which are not conducive to female usage." (*laughter*). And uh see that's what happens to old people, you sort of ramble then you lose your point. I was going down a road and I switched over to a side road.

**NANCY RAY:** Well you'll think of that road in a minute. Let me ask you about your pin while you're thinking.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, I must tell you. That when I first came up here, Mr. Estelle said there are two people that you need to get to know and they will help you... you need to know your sheriff who was Windy Cummins because he's your landlord. And of course that's the common

law of England, you know. The sheriff is the landlord of the county or the shire. And you need to know your Ranger captain because he'll save your rear. And so I got to know Bob Mitchell who was the Ranger captain of Company F. And we became very, very good friends. And he was really a bold saint and a wonderful friend. Mr. Coffield, who was the chairman of the board... Criminal Justice Board, had died. And Bob called me and asked me if I was going to go to Mr. Coffield's funeral. And since I didn't, I'm not a funeral goer. I said no I'm not. And he said oh yes you are. And you're gonna meet me in Waco and you're going down with me. And I said oh... OK. So I met him in Waco and we went down to... oh it's a little town... anyway when we got there, there were all these assistant directors, and the male wardens and all that. And when I came walking up with my Ranger captain, they all went (*she made a face and gesture*). And from that point on, I never had another problem with any of the male wardens.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh really.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Bob enriched my reputation considerably by taking me down there. It was a wonderful time.

**NANCY RAY:** So is that how your relationship with the Rangers started?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes. And then I got interested and I became one of the charter members of the retired Rangers' deal and go to all their deals. And of course after I retired, I made them one of my people that I supported. I support them. And went to all their functions and you know the meetings in June. And then I became a member of the advisory board on the remodeling of the Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. And I resigned. I had to resign three years ago I think it was because of my eyesight. I couldn't read all the minutes and stuff and I couldn't contribute like I had been doing. Yes, they are wonderful people. I'll tell you what, Texas has the most unique, to me, very unique law enforcement deal. And the Rangers there, they're a group of people

different from any. And every one of them... are wonderful people... men of great character, courage.

**NANCY RAY:** Can you tell me about a time when you called on the Rangers to help you?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes, again that involves Bob and Windy. I had a problem... I can't even remember what the problem was but I thought it might end up being a problem. And so I called Windy's office to see if Bob Mitchell had been over here. And he said he happens to be here right now. And I said I'd like to talk maybe to both of you. I might need to. So they came out and I talked to them about the problem I thought I might have. Well we called the people in that we thought might give the problem and Windy was supposed to take over the problem. Bob was to help him. And Windy said uh, Captain Mitchell, why don't you just do this deal and if you need any help, I'll help you. *(laughter)*

**NANCY RAY:** He delegated *(laughter)*.

**LUCILE PLANE:** That's how smart he was. He knew to delegate. And uh whatever it was, the questions were asked. The people were interviewed and all that. It turned out to be nothing. That was one of the times that I thought was very interesting.

**NANCY RAY:** Well tell me about your pin now, the badge.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I just got this because I... we get these when we go to the meetings. And I wear it as a badge of honor because I think that the Rangers, again like I told you, are a wonderful group of people. And uh I just think they're very unique. And everyone I've known has been unique and different and a real fine person.

**NANCY RAY:** Well other than Captain Mitchell, is there another... are there other Rangers who you've been...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh yes. An interesting thing with Bob Mitchell, Captain Robert K. Mitchell, is I think he became a Ranger captain in '74. And I became a warden in '75. And he retired I think after 16 or 18 years as a captain. At one time, James Wright who retired as Ranger captain in Dallas, had been a sergeant under Bob. Jack Dean who retired as a Ranger captain in San Antonio Company D, had been a sergeant. Wilie had been a sergeant. Bob Prince had been... At one time, they only had six Ranger captain, captain assignments. And five... one, including Bob, and four... were all captains that had worked for Bob which I thought was a very interesting deal. Jack Dean has sort of risen now where Bob was kind of the deal going for this revamping the Museum and the Hall of Fame. Now Jack Dean is sort of senior, one of the captains. Captain *Dendy* is currently the captain of Company F and uh James Wright retired from Dallas. His wife, Laura, was an artist. And at one... one time the Rangers had prominent artists, oh it was in October or November... they have these art shows and people would go and buy and the artists would give the Rangers 10 percent or 20 percent or whatever it was there. And one time they had an art showing for Laura Wright... her paintings. I was very interested in their art shows and that's one I bought there (*she pointed to a painting on her wall*). That's an original. I sold my other... there was one... Windberg did a showing there. What was the one I liked so well... *Evening Radiance*. And uh I was living in Livingston before I joined the prison. Anyway, I think it sold for \$6,000 and I would love to have had the money, would have loved to have made myself poor by buying it. And I should have because later it was sold to somebody who lived in Livingston. That's right, I wasn't in Livingston. Somebody who lived in Livingston paid \$60,000 for it. Wouldn't have that been a good investment?

**NANCY RAY:** Good appreciation.



**LUCILE PLANE:** But they've done so many great things. They've had various and wonderful speakers at their June... they always have the Ranger retirement party in June. At one time it was always the first weekend in June. I think it's now the first complete weekend with both Saturday and Sunday. I haven't gotten the papers on that yet, I usually get them about this time. They're ready to sign up for them.

**NANCY RAY:** I'll bet they come soon. They won't forget you I'm sure.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh no, I get them all the time. I get both. I used to get from the advisory committee and the retired Rangers deal.

**NANCY RAY:** Well tell me. Let's go back to your life as a warden. Can you think of something that you felt really good about that... maybe an improvement that you made for your inmates or something that made you think I was successful because of this...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh you have good-level successes and you have failures too you know. You can't say that... I just went blank on the successes and it's something I usually brag about. I can't think of one now. Oh...

**NANCY RAY:** You thought of one.

**LUCILE PLANE:** They used to... you know used to inmates who were in punishment, segregation as we call it, would only get fed a full meal every third day but they'd get bread and water and stuff as part of the punishment. Well, I had a lieutenant that came to me one afternoon and she said Warden, I forgot. Today was the full meal day for the inmates... they didn't get it. And I said oops! What did they have for lunch today and she told me it was something very horrible. I said what are we having for supper tonight? She said we're having hamburgers and of course the inmates loved hamburgers. And I said OK go to the kitchen... how many do we have down there? Six. All right, go to the kitchen and get six hamburgers. Get the buns, the da-da, the

works and let's go down to segregation. So we went down and I got to the door. And we unlock the door to go in.... the bars. I said you had a lousy lunch today and you're supposed to have a full lunch. You thought I forgot you, didn't you? They said yes ma'am, you did! And I said well would you rather have had da-da or would you rather have what I have for you now – hamburgers? Oh, our warden's always thinking of us and the hands were going out for the hamburgers (*laughter*). When we got out, I was telling the lieutenant... I said that's how you make lemonade out of a lemon.

**NANCY RAY:** That's true.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Thank God we were having a good supper. I was gonna have to do something. But you know people forget. Then of course the Ruiz thing came along and there was no longer a starvation or anything. It wasn't starvation...

**NANCY RAY:** Now you said, the what thing came along?

**LUCILE PLANE:** The Ruiz, RUIZ case. The warden at the Wynne Unit had Ruiz in there and his attorney who was a female wanted to see him. And that warden thought he was a toughie and wouldn't let her see him. And they sued and won their case and then that's how they started this whole deal of going through and cleaning up the bad parts of what was happening in the prison.

**NANCY RAY:** Were there politics... did you have to play the politics game as a warden?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I refused to.

**NANCY RAY:** How did you get around it?

**LUCILE PLANE:** What you see is what you got. I stayed as clear of that as I possibly could. Now, I would get a call that some senator, state senator or some state representative, some of the inmate's family had called and da-da-da. And wanted to see... to make a special visit. Well, I didn't object to that, you know a special visit. But it sure could get old if I'd had a lot of it. Mr.

Estelle was pretty good about that. He did not let them badger us too much at that point. And they were not able to badger us too much at that point. However, they do badger them now... it's my understanding that they do. I don't think I could... well I couldn't work for the prison system now like I did because I can only work for one boss. And before she, Becky, retired, she had three or four levels she had to go through. I wouldn't do it.

**NANCY RAY:** So you think, was that the biggest change in the prison system?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, lots of changes... there's a lot of politics from where I stand... where it looks to me. I don't know... I haven't been there. I've been retired for so long. But yeah, I think there were a lot of politics. I think that there are people put into jobs because of their race. I think there are people put into their jobs because they know how to brown-nose. Just like all the rest of the politics... just like it is in our national government, the whole works. (*short break*)

**NANCY RAY:** OK, we're back from our break and you were gonna tell us about an incident in the kitchen I think.

**LUCILE PLANE:** In the dining room, we got these people from Goree and they'd had several men prisons and they were transferring men from one of them to the other. But they never had done that for the females. Well we got to be sort of like a rivalry and they would be sent up to Mountain View and then they'd come in crying they didn't want to go to this horrible, horrible place... da da da... left all their friends. And the first group I got was the first of December 1975. No, the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. And I got like 50 something. And then got two more busloads before Christmas and ended up with about a hundred and... well ended up under 200. And they were miserably unhappy. They left their friends at Goree and all that sort of stuff. Well then they were getting more changes... every change that came in they'd be crying about having to come to this horrible place up here... this horrible place new warden and all that kind of stuff. And then,

things began to go... do I have to go to Goree because you had to go to Goree if you went to Galveston to the medical... yeah, you had to go that way. I don't want to go, I don't want to go... this is da da da... See they're able to go outside here and do a lot of things that they were not able to do at... Goree was a cell-block type prison. And I kept going... keep your mouth shut about Mountain View when you go there. Don't talk about because this rivalry was going back and forth and it got to a point where even the officers were getting kind of riled up at each other which is ridiculous you know. But they'd never had it with the female prisoners. They always had it with the male prisoners and the uh the male wardens would send some of their worst of their so-called friends and that kind of stuff. But nothing like this from this happened. Well anyway, I knew I was gonna have a comeuppance soon and I didn't know how I was going to do it. I think it was in like May, April or May of '76. I'd been there about four months. And I had a tall inmate from Dallas. She was almost 6 feet tall. Very belligerent and she... I was in the dining room, had walked over to a table and had a line coming through. And uh she walked up to me and said something very ugly. Now I was 5'2" and she was almost 6 feet. And I stood toe-to-toe with her and it's hard to look dignified when you're having to look up (*laughter*) but I did. And I said what did you say? And she looked at me and she backed off a foot and she repeated but it wasn't what she said. It was acceptable what she said. And I said it's OK if you talk like that but don't you ever try to talk to me like that again. And I walked away to go into the staff dining room. I didn't know whether she was gonna knock the living tar out of me or what she was going to do when I into her toe-to-toe. And by the time I got to the staff dining room door, my knees were knocking together (*laughter*). I went and sat down but I never had another problem like that, ever.

**NANCY RAY:** Is that the most frightened you ever were as a warden?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I think so.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of training did you have to be a warden... or just bam! You're a warden!

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well, you deal with people. You deal with people whether they're prisoners or not prisoners. I've always dealt with people and I've managed people. People who manage people sometimes is worse than being a prison warden, believe me. Uh people are just people. They get mad... they get mistaken ideas... they get presumptuous sometimes... they assume things they don't need to assume. They find a new leader. And of course I had... I was always taking courses in colleges too. I've had a lot of post graduate work and I had a lot of work for my undergraduate degree. And I'll tell you the same thing the Director of Human Services here... I'm talking about David Myers. You have sensitiveness about people. You sense things. And I'm an analytical person. I analyze people. I can't see your face but I can analyze the way you walk. I can analyze something about you as you tell me about yourself. Or from dealing people... I deal with them enough and I'll know a little bit about them.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what were your biggest tools for being a warden? Being able to deal with people... were you armed or... did you...

**LUCILE PLANE:** I never wore a gun in my life. As a matter of fact, we had a local fellow here who was quite a pianist; as a matter of fact, quite talented. And one time I hadn't seen him for a number of years. I'd retired by that time. And I saw him and I said you don't know me and I told him. And yeah, he said, you were out of uniform that's why I couldn't recognize you. And I didn't say I have never worn a uniform in my life. I didn't tell him that because I didn't want to embarrass him. I'd already embarrassed him enough I guess.

**NANCY RAY:** Well did you ever have any riots or escapes that you had to handle?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I have a thing that I brag about and I shouldn't really.

**NANCY RAY:** No, this is about you.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I worked as a warden for ten years and I never had a homicide, a riot, or an escape. Two weeks after I retired, they had a riot.

**NANCY RAY:** And what caused it?

**LUCILE PLANE:** People are stupid sometimes. They don't know how to handle people. You know I used to have the hardest time with my officers and I would say, particularly the kitchen. We had an inmate in the kitchen that just was yakking all the time and fussing all the time. And this officer that was... she would fuss back at her. And I walked in one time and said what is all this about? Well she had told the girl to mop up and the girl didn't want to mop a certain place. I said don't argue with her. Tell her what to do and expect it and get out. I said to the inmate, do what she said and she started doing what she said you know. People are human. And I think the problem a lot of the officers have is because they put themselves on the same plane and they're not in prison. They didn't come to prison. You don't have to talk back to them. That's the way... the moment you talk back to them... I say when I start cussing it's because I'm frustrated and my frustration shows. And that's what happens when people lose their temper or they do things that are not in character because they are frustrated. And you can't let your frustrations show because they are frustrated enough being in the prison. All you have to do is remember is that you walk out that door and they can't. You have to remember that and try to understand their feelings of frustration.

**NANCY RAY:** So that was what you tried to do was treat them as people?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Do what?

**NANCY RAY:** You treated your inmates as people.

**LUCILE PLANE:** That's exactly right. They are people. They hurt. You stick you with a pin and you'll yell. You stick an inmate with a pin and she'll yell too. And a lot of them have never had anyone... I would trust them and once they violated that trust, they had that problem. But they'd never had anyone that ever trusted them. They didn't know... the only kind of love they knew was actually physical sexual love because most of them had been raped by their fathers, their brothers, their uncles. Their mothers were alcoholics. It's an amazing... it's amazing how some of them ever got there. On the other hand, we do have people in the prisons who are nuts. For example, we have... Where is she Becky? Mills.

**BECKY ADAMS:** Mills or... oh Mills. I don't know where she is.

**LUCILE PLANE:** You don't know. A very prominent Waco woman that uh embezzled funds, that was a leader in the city and all that... got sent to prison for six years I think... very big society lady. I had a girl who was in prison, a woman. She was a very prominent social person in Dallas from a very good family, a very moneyed family, for killing her husband... her third husband. And uh her young son used to come see her. And once in a while I'd be visiting friends in San Antonio and we went to the Needle one time and I ran into this boy. And he had written his mother and told her about it. And uh he got to be 21 and she was gonna let him have the money that he would have inherited from his real father. And I said don't give it to him, Juliet, don't give it to him. Put it in the trust and let him have so much. Well she felt... whatever. But I always felt like that she was serving the prison term but the boy had killed his stepfather and that she had accepted that guilt from him. I always felt that way and I still do. She went to Dallas. Things were not too good so she ended up I think going to Hawaii and I think she bought a house there and the last I knew she was still there. But I really think... and the boy treated her like... awful, awful.

**NANCY RAY:** How sad.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And I think she took the... and I told her that one time and she had the most, I mean, stunned look on her face. And she said sometimes Warden you can be too smart.

**NANCY RAY:** She knew you knew.

**LUCILE PLANE:** But I really felt that she'd... and it was a miserable feeling for her. And we had (*chuckle*) the Black inmate, Margaretta, she was so cute. She was from Dallas and she was... Everybody thought she was crazy... crazy like a fox. She did that to keep people off of her and away from her. And she took it on herself to be the guardian of all the unsuspecting White girls that were taken advantage of by the other people. And Juliet was one of them... she was one of them that she tried to help. And when she got out, she... No, no, it was the other one. It wasn't Juliet it was the other one. But anyway, Suzanne, she sent money to Margaretta's trust fund but she'd never had money before. She remembered to take care of her. But Margaretta was... (*chuckle*) She used to call some of them in. You uh brown bagging money mother f'ing bitches working in the ditches to earn your living (*laughter*). Anyway, she finally... they put her in the garden working in between the dining room and the infirmary and she... and that was... had a beautiful little garden, that little rock garden and stuff. She did... it was hers all by herself. Nobody could touch it. And she really finished her sentence really happy there. And she went home, went to Dallas, and somebody had written and told them, the Dallas Parks Department, that she was really good. I think she went to work for them and they gave her a little segment to work, not with other people. The last I heard she was doing real well which was you know really good.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I would think as a warden having someone leave your facility and do well would be a compliment to you.



**LUCILE PLANE:** Well it'd be a compliment to them too because they have to want to. It's all a matter of choice and you know we were not taught to be evil, we were taught to be good. We do bad things because that comes naturally for us. The being good takes a lot of training, a lot of teaching. And they never had that opportunity.

**NANCY RAY:** So how did you... I know you've mentioned classes and training. So how did you provide that environment for your inmates that they would learn and...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well they had to go to school. See, there was a Texas law at one time all inmates under a certain age and not having a diploma, a high school diploma, go to school. And I remember I had a woman who was in her 30s going to school and she wrote me a form, wanted to talk to me. And she didn't want to school. And I said why not? Don't you want to read? Don't you want to do better than that? And I said... I really shamed her into it so she went to school. And I think later she was grateful that she did. She learned to write her name and be able to write halfway decently when she wanted something. But a lot of them have no inspiration. Uh I think that's happening in our schools now. When I first came to Gatesville in '75, we had a wonderful school system. I don't think we have a good school system now. As a matter of... no, no  
*(laughter)*

**NANCY RAY:** You're about to get on a soapbox aren't you?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well, we had a superintendent here and I... once in a while do a scholarship and I asked for a name. And he'd given me a name and I'd forgotten it so I called him to find out what the name was. And he said "I've got it wrote down here somewhere." *(laughter)*

**NANCY RAY:** Oh no...

**LUCILE PLANE:** He's not the superintendent anymore but... We uh... our education in the United States is pathetic. Our colleges are teaching the wrong things. They're teaching uh take

away from the rich and give to the poor. As my father once said, the poor will always be with us and he said one time if you took everybody in the United States and gave each one an equal amount of money, by the time evening came, 85 percent would be poor and 15 percent would have all the money. That's about right.

**NANCY RAY:** I agree with that.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And I think that's true in that world that they live in. And a lot of them are, are uh scared. A lot of them are scared into things they shouldn't do. But they've been raped at an early age. They've been on drugs... they haven't had an opportunity. I asked one woman. I was doing a talk with Mr. Estelle at this university and it was on "What Are Prisons?" And so I asked an inmate, what does prison mean to you? I thought maybe that would be the thing to talk about and tell them how they felt. And one woman was in her late 50s and I said to her... I explained what I was doing. And I said what does prison mean to you? And she said it's the, and she was an alcoholic and wrote hot checks. "It's the only time in my life that I've had clean clothes, a clean bed, three meals a day, and a roof over my head." It almost broke my heart when I heard that. She'd get out of prison and be back in prison within six months. She had the uh... at one time there was a law that if you had more than three prison terms, you could put the life in prison deal on them. What do they call it?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Habitual law.

**LUCILE PLANE:** The habitual law. They don't have it anymore but I had a lot of people, a lot of inmates who had the life sentence because they were alcoholics... they had robbed... they'd steal... they'd write hot checks to get money for booze and they went from booze to drugs. There's an awful lot of that out there. And, I personally feel that some of our medical people create that problem because they put that... See I've got this terrific pain all the time and thank

God I'm allergic to pain medicine because it makes me sick. So I don't take it. And everybody says I'm nuts because I don't take it. I'd much rather stand the pain than to be sick. So the Lord saved me in that respect you know (*laughter*). But they... I hear people say oh I've got a headache I've got to get a Tylenol. Well a headache can't stay with me very long because I don't like them. I don't know. I just think how... I'm thinking of a book I read once, Desiree. Her sister was always hanging on her for something. She was, Desiree was in love with Napoleon but he married Josephine and her sister married Napoleon's brother. And finally when he was sent to the isle of no return, Joseph, the sister's husband, was made Count of something in Italy. And the sister decided to go with him and she, Desiree's husband had become King of Sweden and she had not gone over to be with him to be the queen because she was so busy taking care of her sister. Well the sister said well now that Joseph is there, I'm gonna go there and everything will be fine—bye. And the sister thought how strong are the weak. That sister had held her there for so long until she didn't go to Jean Baptiste Bonaparte. No, Jean Baptiste... I don't know. Anyway, he became, he took over from the King of Sweden because they were all nuts by that time. It was a very good book and I fairly true biography although it was written as a novel. But how strong are the weak and I've thought of that many times. How many people are imprisoned mentally, emotionally, because of weak people taking advantage of the strong people. And that happens a lot.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, what I'm hearing you say is you cared about the ladies, the women who were in the...

**LUCILE PLANE:** I did.

**NANCY RAY:** And it shows... Just listening to you talk. So I'm gonna ask you again. What is the thing that made you proud? Something that you accomplished that made you feel really good.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I got through ten years (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** I would imagine you impacted some lives, positively.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I don't know that I did anything. I sometimes... sometimes I get calls. I still get some calls.

**NANCY RAY:** Does someone stand out in your mind?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Most of them think I'm dead now though (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Well you're definitely not.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I said some people know when to die and people don't and I'm one of those.

**NANCY RAY:** Well is there one person who stands out in your mind that maybe you helped and you feel good about that?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I just told you about some of them.

**NANCY RAY:** OK.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Some I couldn't help and I felt bad about that but they... I just had to say you can't help them.

**NANCY RAY:** There has to be a desire on their part too though to improve.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I don't know. Sometimes... do you ever meet people you don't like the first time you meet them?

**NANCY RAY:** Occasionally, not very often.

**LUCILE PLANE:** But usually you do, you can. Then there are people the first time you met them you felt you had known them all your life. I think that happens to all of us. There's really not much, really no original thought. I remember uh what was I... I kept bibliography cards that I used to like to write. And uh one day I said something and I thought, gee that's kind of smart. Thought I was real smart. And I'm going through some bib cards several weeks later and there

was the same thing I'd thought on the card from somebody else and I thought... you know what, there's nothing new under the sun.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I want to ask you if there are... You had some male inmates for a while.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well I had male inmates at the first because of having to redo. We had to make cubicles out in the dorms to keep them from being open. And change the plumbing and a lot of other things and they came July 1<sup>st</sup> and were there. And the day of the 15<sup>th</sup> of December when the females were coming in, the male inmates were going out, out of the visiting room while the females were coming in and the sally port. And then we were redoing our dorm we had not done to put the cubicles in and we had male inmates for a while -- while we still had females. I used to get so angry with the females because they had cigarettes and they'd throw them down and I'd tell them they couldn't do it. We had bread boxes posted every so often for them to put their... Well after the men came, everybody was putting their cigarettes out. And I thought that's very... really nice of them. They were dropping notes to each other in these boxes (*laughter*). They'll beat you... they can beat you every time. I always said if you could stay a half step behind them you were ahead of the game.

**NANCY RAY:** Half a step behind.

**LUCILE PLANE:** See they've got 24 hours to think of you and you have...

**NANCY RAY:** Well what were the differences the male inmates...

**LUCILE PLANE:** The males were easier for me. Males were easier... they were always very respectful. They respected the warden but of course they were the better ones too that they picked out for the construction deal because they didn't have the strong security with them that they normally had in the cell-block types of prisons. The women are sneaky. They yak all the time, they curse. We had 62 women in the first training class that... the first TDC training class

that was held away from Huntsville and was all female... up here on December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup>. And these 62 women came in wide eyed and just you know... good sterling people from around this area, most of them, some of them were from other areas that came in. And uh they learned from the females when they got here more four-letter combinations of words than they ever heard in all their life. They never heard such language. The female inmates could put together more four-letter words than you'll ever hope to see... horrible. (*chuckle*)

**NANCY RAY:** Well were there any differences between... you had a female prison within the prison system... the female prisons versus the male prisons. Did you get the same resources?

**LUCILE PLANE:** No, we had different. When we were first up here, we were the tail-end of all the grocery trucks and we got the worst of everything. We got more leg bones for meat and had ground meat. We had more recipes for ground meat than anything you ever saw because the male wardens would rip off the steaks from the others, before they ever got to me. That changed after that. But anyway, they had a different... they could strip search the men before they'd go into their dorms. Well I thought women would rather be on the inside to be strip searched than the out. One time when we were doing some construction work, I was walking with this construction super and they had the men from the kitchen. That's when I just had the men before the women came up. And there was one little guy, there was a little Black guy. He was short, he was a midget... dwarf. More dwarf because almost a full male body but little bitty short legs. Anyway, they were going into the dorm and he and I, the super and I, came around the corner on the walk there. And they saw me and it was Tommy Winters who was the real tall guy, the long-legged guy that was strip searching him. And when the little Black guy looked around he said there's the warden and he ducked right through Tommy's legs (*laughter*). Tommy said he almost turned him upside down. And they all got into the dorm in a hurry because they didn't want the

warden to see them undressed. Uh they wouldn't have cared at a male unit at all but they were... they were very respectful to me. But as I say, they were the better inmates too that came up to do construction.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, some of the... I saw in one of your articles that you were teaching a class in graphoanalysis.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, that was one of the things I did before I went back to college. Oh no, I went back to college to get my masters for that reason. I was doing a lot of marriage counseling through writing analysis and I needed to get myself better educated to understand what I was doing. Because when you're doing counseling, you better be well equipped for it. Well I found out that I was better equipped before I went back to school than when I came back from school. I remember we had one woman in the group counseling class—a wonderful class learning how to counsel groups. She wanted to be a counselor in her school and we were doing a deal on help rejecter/complainer. You know the person who says... *Oh I need help...da-da-da... No I can't do that, no I can't do that. Nobody wants to help me.* You know, help rejecter/complainer. Well, her principal wouldn't let her be a counselor and she complained about him and we'd suggest certain things for her to do. And no she couldn't really do that and then she'd start beefing again about the principal. So we had a deal with our leader. He was a professor of group work, group therapy.

**NANCY RAY:** And what was the name?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Cal Dany. It doesn't matter, he's long since gone. But uh he decided to have a trial group and so you'd volunteer. Well she volunteered to be the person that needed counseling. Somebody else volunteered to be the counselor. And she played the part of the help rejecter complainer and she was serious in what she was doing because she wanted to act out

what was really bothering her. And we all saw it and I looked at him and he looked at me and I rolled my eyes. And he finally had to break it up because it was really ridiculous and she still didn't realize that she was doing the help rejecting complaining which was really what we were talking about. But she thought she was someone who helped somebody. And I learned... One time I was a counselor for somebody who was complaining about something and I said (*laughter*)... what you need... you're problem is you really need counseling. You need to get out of this class. And I thought Doug, who was chairman of my graduating committee, almost fell off the chair. But what you see is what you get. Uh inmates are no different than we are I don't think. They just had a worse time, life... not have some of the opportunities that we had. And there are some people who make poor choices.

**NANCY RAY:** Think back over while you were a warden. What is your fondest memory? Do you have a memory that you know is just really pleasant?

**LUCILE PLANE:** One that is funny as all get out.

**NANCY RAY:** OK!

**LUCILE PLANE:** Mr. Estelle came by one Sunday to see me. And that was when the Gatesville Unit was being redone. All the urinals were being taken out and the regular plumbing for females being done. And so she had a construction crew over there too and she had a couple of little Hispanics, cute fellows, and they were wonderful bricklayers. Hispanics were exceptional as bricklayers, they really were. And there was a girl, really a homosexual but she was making eyes at one of these guys. And she got taken to committee for committing something wrong. And I was holding Linda's inmates in my segregation because I had two separate deals. And so this girl was sent over to serve her segregation time for losing time and having to go into solitary. And this guy wanted to see her so he got his friend to have a fight with him so they'd



both go to committee and they'd be sent over to this deal thinking he'd get to see her. Well Linda called me and told me they were coming over and what had happened. So I put them the other one across the hall and they never got to see this girl and she didn't want to see them anyway. But anyway, it was Sunday and I wanted to go down to seg and our warden had to go down to segregation and sign uh once every 24 hours just to make sure they were being treated right. The warden or the assistant warden and sometimes the major I think that they have three. Whoever was on duty on the weekend. And Mr. Estelle was assisting me and I didn't have a male officer available and I wanted to go down to seg. So I told him I have these guys in seg and would he go down with me. He said oh sure. So he sat at the gates... what you open... they weren't solid. But anyway, I went down and they were saying Warden, they'd like to get back to work. They realized it was so stupid. And they liked each other... it was just a play deal they did (*laughter*). So I got in the mother role and I started saying you know I'm gonna have to talk to your warden about this. Now do you promise that if you go back you're not gonna do this again... I'm not sure what all I said but just sounding like a mother. And I just happened to turn to look at Mr. Estelle and he was grinning so broadly and he straightened his face real quickly. But anyway, I said I'll talk to your warden and see what we can do and we left. And I cut my eyes... he was still trying to keep from grinning. But I thought to myself, he's never seen a warden talk to any inmates like that (*laughter*). I thought it was funny.

**NANCY RAY:** Well how did he decide he wanted you to be the warden? What kind of an impression did you make on him?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I don't know. I was uh I was a chief probation officer and project director and he was on the committee and I went to the committee to get my funds replaced and I'd go with other people to... I was on the Criminal Justice Advisory Board of the Deep East Texas

Council of Governments along with being in the probation project. So when they'd have other people going for LEAA grants like, oh just different things that they did, I always went them. And we'd go out in the evening and run into a bunch of people and when he was visiting with Bob Flowers and other people. He was there so I got to know him through that committee and through his being on the committee. And as I've told you, I knew he asked for logistics so I had myself prepared when I went for my funds.

**NANCY RAY:** You evidently made a good impression on him.

**LUCILE PLANE:** They didn't have very many women to look for at that time.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh well, I'm sure you stood out.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And they still don't. They still don't.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh no. Well uh if there was something you could go back and do differently...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** What would it be?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I would have really stood toe to toe with the construction superintendents when they were doing those things before the girls got there. And told him to get the hell off my unit and never come back. I didn't. I took a lot of trash from him until one time I said I don't have to work here and I'm not gonna put up with this. And man he apologized all over the place. And then I realized in my trying to get along, I made it look like I was weak. Well then the next time he knew I wasn't. That was for the first six months I was there.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, complex world... you kind of broke some new ground there.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well, I didn't want to go in like a harridan and screaming and hollering and all that. But I would have done some things different. I'd have done my old what you see is what you get deal instead of trying to... I was new I thought to the deal and they didn't think I knew

much about it. I knew more than most of them number one and then I was clinically trained to observe. I saw men walk over welding wire... I picked it up. I saw changes of expression on inmates' faces and knew there was something there. I'd call them in and talk to them to find out because that's what created problems. An inmate who was always very quiet and suddenly got boisterous, you knew there was something wrong. Inmate that was very boisterous and suddenly got quiet, again you knew there was something wrong. Observing differences in behavior... observing behavior... and I think behavior has always been one of my great interests. What's the behavior that I like so much... I can't think of it.

**NANCY RAY:** A specific type of behavior?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yeah, you know one I didn't like was the guy that... Carl Rogers, I didn't like him because I accept you as you are. No, I don't accept you as you are, you can change. The one I liked was the one that said you can change and you had better change or else.

**NANCY RAY:** What year did you retire?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I went from 1975 to 1985, ten years. I've been retired 33... ooh, '85, '95, '05, twenty something years.

**NANCY RAY:** And so what have you been doing since you retired?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well, when I did retire I uh had a call from... well number one... I taught... it was in American Technological University, it's now the Central Texas University or something. I taught prison administration for five years until it got boring then I... they wouldn't give me something else to teach so I quit that. And then I had a call from the mayor of town at that time and one of the councilmen was resigning because he was moving to Dallas and they asked me if I'd like to serve out his term. And I said I don't think you'd want me because you

won't like, because I say what I think. That's why we do want you. So I again thought, why not? I took it and loved it and stayed seven years. And said pretty much what I thought.

**NANCY RAY:** You had to be in the politics then.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I wouldn't.

**NANCY RAY:** Still wouldn't do it.

**LUCILE PLANE:** No, I remember a woman was talking. They had 10 to 20 minute to talk and she kept going on wanting to get the law in because she couldn't control her daughter and she wanted us to do it for her. And I finally said listen, we've listened to you for almost an hour and we've got business to do. Do you mind sitting down (*laughter*)? All the other councilmen were going (*she made a motion*). And then I got to where I couldn't see. That's the reason I quit. I loved it though. I really liked... I really enjoyed that job very much.

**NANCY RAY:** So what are your hobbies right now?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well I love to read and of course the Lord took care of that but I've got an iPod that I listen to books on.

**NANCY RAY:** So you enjoy audio books then.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Very much...audible... audible presents... I have John Adams, that was a wonderful book. Uh I like Mark Levin in his Men in Black. He's got a new one Becky's gonna get for us uh and I like suspense stories.

**NANCY RAY:** Who is your favorite suspense author?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Flynn, Vince Flynn.

**NANCY RAY:** I also see a picture of former President (*George W.*) Bush. Would you like to talk about how you knew him or met him?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Well I met him when he came here when he was running for governor for the first time in '94 I think it was. He was governor for four years, '94 to '98 and then he won again in '98 but he quit in 2000 to become president. And uh I met him in '93 when he was running, starting to run for governor. He came here and he was a cutie. And uh then I oh... I contributed to the George Herbert Walker Bush Library down at A&M and I used to go to some of the special events they had. And he had one on the afternoon of... I can't remember what it was about. But Brandon Emmons, who was a city manager here, drove my car and drove me down to it. And uh it was on the east side of the Bush Library and it was a hot day. You know how the sun can be. And so I was standing under kind of an overhang of the thing in front of me and all the huge crowd. And oh... he was gonna present his... I've got a picture of him and George W. and they had the two presidents... I had a picture of the both father-and-son presidents, like the John Adams deal. And uh Barbara, I heard someone say she was walking the dog along the walkway and the entrance of the Library was there. Here she comes with her Spaniel, Millie. And about the time she got even with me, my sunglasses dropped off my walker and she stooped down and picked them and then she looked at me and she said you can't see from here. And I said if I were out there do you think I could see any better? And she said no, you couldn't, I'll fix that. So she finished walking Millie around and came back and pretty soon a girl in a pink coat, one of the ushers... Mrs. Bush wants you to come up front with me please. So I walked up and was sitting up front. And I did like this to her (*she made a motion*) and she winked.

**NANCY RAY:** My goodness... you just never know, do you.

**LUCILE PLANE:** She was very gracious, one of the most gracious people. And then I met Laura Bush when she was here. She was in the Library here and I was... the Library or

Museum... Anyway, just briefly. But Barbara was so gracious. And of course I'm a staunch conservative.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, do you have an opinion you want to share about anything?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I just hope this country's not going down the drain like I fear it is.

**NANCY RAY:** I hope you're right.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Boy I'm telling you what. He's giving away the nuke deal. I can't understand it. And playing footsie with Iran... I don't understand it. And blaming everything on the past president... no, no, no... blame this Democrat congress for that.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, let me ask you this. What would you like for your legacy to be? If somebody said Lucile Plane... she was...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Lucile **G.** Plane (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Lucile **Garrett** Plane.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yes! (*laughter*) Yes ma'am, I love that.

**NANCY RAY:** She said... she was...

**LUCILE PLANE:** I would say I wish that every child that is born would have the same wonderful country to live in that I have. And have the same great parents that I had. And the same great few... very, very great friends that I had. That I think would be a wonderful legacy to leave to every child that was born in the future.

**NANCY RAY:** Wouldn't it though. I think that's a good legacy. I'm gonna go back. I thought of one other question I wanted to ask about prison. What did people do to get put into solitary or segregation?

**LUCILE PLANE:** They would fight each other in the dorm. They would attack an officer. Uh they would steal from each other. You know they had commissary where they, when parents or

friends sent money to them, they could go at that time... once every two weeks. I don't know what they can do now. Uh and they'd get their Cokes and their stuff to take home to their cubicles. I had one inmate that called them cuticles (*laughter*). And some of them would steal something from them or attack them to get their commissary away from them. Try to smuggle in something uh. Try to have a girlfriend... that was looking for a friend. Mostly to get commissary I think. What are some of the other reasons?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Attempted escape.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Huh?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Attempted escape.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh yeah. Don't think we ever had that at my unit did we?

**BECKY ADAMS:** I don't know. I figured you probably had some letters saying they were going to.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh, yeah some of the stuff in the mail. But then that mail suit when we had to let them get any kind of mail they wanted. Oh they had just horrible, horrible pornographic things in. They curtailed that a bit now thank God.

**NANCY RAY:** So was that a big problem when you...

**LUCILE PLANE:** Oh the mail was just horrible. And they'd write in all kinds of vile things and send vile pictures and when that... What was...

**BECKY ADAMS:** Guardo.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Yeah, the Guardo.

**NANCY RAY:** How do you spell that?

**LUCILE PLANE:** GUARDO I guess. Uh he sued because they wouldn't let him keep some pictures that were sent in and so they decided they could send anything they wanted. That's a

gross misinterpretation of it but it'll take it. But they have modified that now I think. They have to be a little bit more careful. But we were having some pretty gross things written in and horrible, horrible pictures. Very pornographic.

**NANCY RAY:** What was your favorite decade and why?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Decade? The ten years of my life?

**NANCY RAY:** Um hmm.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I would have to say the prison and the time I was at Bechtel but it wasn't a decade, it was four or five years. Some of the best times of my life I think.

**NANCY RAY:** Just pick the best time... a time you remember that was just really good.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I enjoyed being in the prison. I enjoyed that work and wished I could have come sooner and probably lasted longer. But maybe I lasted... maybe it was just exactly what it should have been. As a matter of fact, I think the Lord guided whatever I did and each thing I had prepped me for the next thing.

**NANCY RAY:** Well is there a person uh who inspired you or that you really admired? Who would that be? Some time in your life...

**LUCILE PLANE:** I had several... several of them. My boss at Bechtel, William C. Ryan, Pat Ryan. He used to come in saying "life is just a bowl of cherries." He was one of the most delightful people you could ever know. I don't think I've ever seen him angry or ugly with anybody. Uh and when he, he never said a cross word to me. He always treated me as though he thought I was the greatest in the world. And I thought he was. But if he had to call someone down, he did it very, very well, extremely well. I learned a lot from Pat. Mr. Estelle I admired greatly but you probably figured that out.

**NANCY RAY:** I figured you would say him.



**LUCILE PLANE:** Of course I never worked for Bob Mitchell but I admired Bob. He was one of the greatest people I've ever known. Uh... oh John Gray who was subsequently he was the coach at uh my high school and he later became president of Lamar University. And he was a great man, a really great man... a wonderful person. He had the most... all of his football players adored him. And my senior year in high school, I acted as his secretary as part of my commercial deal. Oh he was so good. Every so often he'd bring me a box of uh Preference Candies.

**NANCY RAY:** What kind of candies?

**LUCILE PLANE:** Preference. They don't have them any more but they were wonderful. Tall, 6 foot 4 or something, married to Mary Hahn. She was a darling person but at that time I was in love with him and I thought maybe he couldn't see her for me (*laughter*). It didn't quite work that way. But he was a wonderful guy and he was a model person for the football players and for anybody. Yes, that was the first man that I really... besides my dad. My dad was... I can't ever remember Daddy not seating Mother at the table. He'd be sitting there then she'd get ready to come, sit down and have the food on the table and he would seat her—always. So I think my two marriages that were failures I picked out weak men and mistook weakness for gentleness. Dad was a gentle gentleman. John Gray and then the bank... Pat at Bechtol Corporation.

**NANCY RAY:** Well let me ask you this. We are about to wrap up. Is there anything else you would like to tell... anything about your career or you as a person or uh anything else you'd like to share?

**LUCILE PLANE:** I think I've enjoyed most of the things I've done. Uh sometimes I thought I was going through torture but there was always a reason for it. And afterwards, it wasn't as bad as it seemed. Uh I have a strong, strong believe in education and I wish I had done what I wanted to do when I retired was to go back and get my doctorate. I only had about 30 hours of

dissertation to do but I didn't. I thought what do I want it for anyway... take it to the grave you know? But it's the learning I guess... learning something new that was important to me.

**NANCY RAY:** Becky, do you have anything you want to add?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Well the only thing that I would add that she's not added and she should is that again, given the time that she did what she did and the way that she did it, is what made it easier for the rest of us coming up in the system. It, you know, someone had to do it first and someone had to bear the brunt of uh I don't know...

**NANCY RAY:** Breaking new ground?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Breaking new ground and making it easier for us. There's always somebody before you. Although we always had... again having retired two years ago, we always complained about how hard we had it in certain ways. But had it not been for people like her, we wouldn't have had it at all. It still would have gone to men who wouldn't know how to work with women... who wouldn't realize the differences in male and female inmates. The men all thought women inmates and male inmates were the same. Well, it was Warden Plane that showed there are some differences in men and women. And you don't, although they're inmates, there's different ways to handle things. And again they got that for us at least started... we still had some arguing and fighting to do with some of the men on things but they really... broke the ground.

**NANCY RAY:** That is huge.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I know when Mr. Estelle... when that second Ellis Unit was named for Mr. Estelle, Wayne Scott was the Executive Director at that time. And he'd just been a captain when Mr. Estelle was there. And Mr. Estelle (*chuckle*)... I can see him looking at him thinking I can't believe this.

**NANCY RAY:** Well Warden Plane, I would like to thank you for your time today, for doing this interview.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I'm glad I got to meet you because I think you're very charming person too.

**NANCY RAY:** Well thank you.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Isn't she an easy person to be with?

**BECKY ADAMS:** She is.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And what makes you a father confessor... (*laughter*) or mother confessor? Mother Superior.

**NANCY RAY:** Also, thank you for what you did for the Department of Corrections and for paving the way for people like Becky and others.

**LUCILE PLANE:** But she's kind of a smart person herself.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I'm sure she is.

**LUCILE PLANE:** She likes, she really enjoys the inmates that are lesser endowed. The Valley Unit, the Valley satellite at the Gatesville or the Crane Unit had all the little uh... what do you call them?

**BECKY ADAMS:** They're mentally challenged or mentally retarded.

**LUCILE PLANE:** Mentally challenged... and she always like them and they always loved her and wanted to do things for her and do special at Christmas... and I guess your birthday too?

**BECKY ADAMS:** Um hmm.

**LUCILE PLANE:** And you know... but people are ruled by their choices. And uh she chose to be a warden. She chose to do what she did. Becky came from Galveston and she wanted to leave Galveston and she was determined to get her degree and she got it come "H" or high water. And uh she was a music major until she found out you didn't get much money in symphony orchestra

so she had to change to criminal justice. And she found they didn't make that much money either.

**NANCY RAY:** Well again, thank you very much for your time and I've enjoyed it.

**LUCILE PLANE:** I thank you for coming and I appreciate it. And I just know that video is gonna be horrible.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh no, it is not. Thank you.

*Note: After the interview, I learned about the Plane State Jail located in Dayton, Texas. This jail is a female unit named for Lucile Garrett Plane. The jail was dedicated in 1995 and was accredited in 1999.*