

Interview with  
ELLIS GOODWIN  
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Mr. Goodwin's Home  
Montgomery, Texas  
Thursday, March 12, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray  
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Ellis Goodwin, Dorothy Goodwin, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



## Introduction

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**ELLIS GOODWIN  
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED**

**NANCY RAY:** My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Ellis Goodwin of Montgomery, Texas. We are in the Goodwin's home. This is uh Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. With us is Dorothy... and Eddie Ray... Dorothy Goodwin and Eddie Ray. Ranger Goodwin, the purpose of this interview is to discuss your life as a Texas Ranger... career as a Ranger. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

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

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes ma'am.

**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?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes ma'am.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Let's start with learning a little about you and your family... when were you born, where... and tell us about your parents.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well I was born March the 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

**NANCY RAY:** You just had a birthday.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. And I was born in Houston. My first... when I was a baby, I lived on Hardy Street.

**NANCY RAY:** What was that street?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Hardy. And my mother and dad... their names were... my dad is Ellis Goodwin and my mother's name is Dorothy Mae Goodwin.

**NANCY RAY:** Well how coincidental (*laughter -- both mother and wife are named Dorothy*). You continued with that trait. All right, well is that where you went to school?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes, I went to uh elementary, Peter Ginosky Elementary.

**NANCY RAY:** Peter Ginosky? Oh my, can you spell that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. And I went to Berwick Junior High and then to Sam Houston.

**NANCY RAY:** Sam Houston High...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** High school.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, what year did you graduate?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** 1963.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. And what uh about brothers and sisters?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I have two brothers and two sisters.

**NANCY RAY:** OK and what are their names and are they... where are you in the order?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I'm the highest.

**NANCY RAY:** You're the oldest... all right, you're the role model.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. Phillip Goodwin who is my brother... who was a DPS Narcotics lieutenant when he retired. And Robert Goodwin is the youngest of the five. Then Sue Goodwin and Peggy Goodwin.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, when you were in school, is there anything that stands out in your mind about something that happened? Were you in sports... uh you just made it through... or? (*laughter*)

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That's right. I made it through. I imagine in school I had a C average.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. You had other things on your mind evidently (*laughter*). What did you do after you graduated?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh, I went straight into carpenter work because I was doing that on the...

**NANCY RAY:** There in Houston you were doing carpentry work?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well I was, yes, but I was doing it in the summertime as I was finishing school. And I went ahead and stayed with that for several years and then when I was 22, I finally... one winter... it was outside and it was *cold*. I know it was freezing. I went up to my boss then, his name was Gerald Goodman.

**NANCY RAY:** Goodman, OK.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** And I told him then I was going to leave and I was going straight to the DPS to apply for it because I had wanted to be a DPS officer ever since I was 15.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what, what made you want to be a DPS officer?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Because I guess the... I always thought it would be fun to be a DPS officer. I don't know why but that was it.

**NANCY RAY:** That was it... but you had not had any family that had been in DPS?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, never.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Were you ever in the military?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** You missed that. All right... so what... so you went... you were accepted to the DPS School. And what year was that, do you remember?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** 1967. February.

**NANCY RAY:** All right. Tell us a little bit about the school.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, it was uh pretty straightforward. They didn't allow any... like drinking or anything like that. They told us we were going to be in the DPS training school for about six months. So in the, when I went to apply, the major sat me down and told me that if I could, he was gonna rush it through and get me in the first school for 1967, which was "A" school. And uh so within a week, I was in Austin.

**NANCY RAY:** That's pretty fast.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, how big was your class?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It started at 125.

**NANCY RAY:** And how many finished?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I believe it was 86.

**NANCY RAY:** Some of them had like a 50 percent drop.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, I know.

**NANCY RAY:** Tell us a little bit about what you learned.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh...

**NANCY RAY:** Now remember, most people don't go through this school so... *(laughter)*

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Basic things you know except for traffic laws, driving is a big part of it.

**NANCY RAY:** You learned... you had driving lessons?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Tell us about that.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** *(laughter)* Well, the sergeant, my sergeant was uh Sergeant Goodwin... same name.

**NANCY RAY:** You can't get away from the "Good" names can you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Anyway, he sets out in a car, a DPS car. And we had to learn the five steps to driving. Now don't ask me to repeat any of them (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** I was just about to do that.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I know one or two now but it's been 30 years now... well 25 years since I retired.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** 40 is more like it (*laughter*).

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** But we drove around Austin. We had a DPS driving school there at the Academy in Austin that we had to drive through fast lanes and make sharp turns and things like that.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Well before I forget to ask, were you married at the time you went to the school?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, tell us about your wife and her name.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** My wife's name is Dorothy. Her maiden name is Turner. And I guess uh we were married in '63... '67, I'm sorry.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** No, '64.... June 26<sup>th</sup>...1964

**NANCY RAY:** OK. June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1964. That's why she's here... to keep you straight (*laughter*). Now you don't need to forget it... June 26<sup>th</sup>... it's getting closer, in a few months, OK? (*laughter*)

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, this stroke is the reason I forget.

**NANCY RAY:** No, you're not the only one. A lot of people say don't ask me questions like that (*laughter*). What about children?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I have two boys. Jeffery was the oldest, he's 41 years old. And Jason was the second, he's 34 years old. Jeffery is a computer... that's what he went through school...

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** Computer programmer.

**NANCY RAY:** That's what my degree is in, Computer Science.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches. And uh Jason is a geologist. He works for an oil company over here in Tomball.

**NANCY RAY:** What about grandkids?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** We've got four beautiful granddaughters.

**NANCY RAY:** You had two boys and you got granddaughters.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** All granddaughters.

**NANCY RAY:** How fun. Well that's good. Sounds like you have a good family then.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, I do.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, let's go back to the DPS School then. When you were there, what was the hardest part of it?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** The hardest part... uh coming back on Sundays.

**NANCY RAY:** Really... after you'd been off... you got off at noon on Saturdays?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. We were off at 5 o'clock Friday and we came home and we had to be back at 6 o'clock on Sunday.

**NANCY RAY:** But you lived close enough to go home?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah. I believe I was at home every weekend but two weekends.

**NANCY RAY:** All right, what about the physical training? I've heard that was very hard?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah... well it wasn't real hard to me because I had been a carpenter before that. And I was pretty well off as far as physical condition.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, did you do boxing in your class?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. (*laughter*)

**NANCY RAY:** Do you have any stories?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. We had three boxing matches and I won two and lost one.

**NANCY RAY:** That's a good record though. Who was your PT instructor, do you remember that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** My PT instructor was...

**NANCY RAY:** Was it Floyd Hacker?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** His name has come up a lot, yeah. Did you do vee-ups?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. We did all that stuff. It was... the first two months, we were in Austin. The school was cold outside but unless it was freezing, we were outside doing you know physical things like push-ups, pull-ups, and things like that.

**NANCY RAY:** Did you run a lot, was that part of it?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. We ran about two miles in the morning and in the evening... about four miles... four miles a day.

**NANCY RAY:** Well probably being cold was better than being in the summer in Austin.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I didn't like it (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Well tell us about what you learned. Was it... I know you studied penal code and what else?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Traffic laws, first aid, spelling... things like that. You know everything...

**NANCY RAY:** What about getting up in the middle of the night? Did they do that to you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Only... every person they had, had a thing where we stayed up at night...  
One person...

**NANCY RAY:** Like on guard duty or something?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah... every night, strictly around the DPS Academy. Now the DPS headquarters was next door. We didn't really go there but we, we were around the Academy.

**NANCY RAY:** I haven't heard that before that people had to do guard duty while they were there.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yep.

**NANCY RAY:** That was new. Well I have heard that sometimes they would get you up during the night and give you a spelling test.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah (*laughter*). That, you know... I was 22 back then and nothing seemed hard to me back then.

**NANCY RAY:** You know I've noticed now the Highway Patrolman look so young these days.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah!

**NANCY RAY:** You probably looked that way when you were going through. Were there any in your class who became Rangers later? Do you remember any?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** One was a Narcotics agent who quit... came to Montgomery County and became a commissioner at which time I had already retired and went over there and talked to him.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I was gonna ask you. You entered the DPS in February, do you remember the date... it was '67, right?

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** I think it was the 14<sup>th</sup>. Because I remember Valentine's Day and I think that's when it was. I was actually pregnant when he went to school with our first child.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, she was.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** With our first child.

**NANCY RAY:** Well was the baby born after you finished?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Nope. In the middle of school and he was born on Tuesday...

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** Wednesday... well yeah... I remember Wednesday morning... I think 3 something in the morning. They let him come home from Austin.

**NANCY RAY:** Good. That's something you don't want to miss. *(laughter)* OK, well is there anything else about the school that you want to tell us about?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh...

**NANCY RAY:** What about uh marksmanship training?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh, we had firearms training... two weeks.

**NANCY RAY:** And what did you shoot? What kind of guns?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** .22s. They were small caliber.

**NANCY RAY:** And they were all handguns?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, handguns.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what was your first duty station then?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Houston Drivers License.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of stories can you tell us about...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Nothing.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** He didn't like it.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I hated it.

**NANCY RAY:** Were you giving tests or what were you doing?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** You give tests and sometimes you worked the front window and hand out the tests to different people. And sometimes you were out on the driving line giving the test, driving test. And basically it was... now I really didn't... I said something that I wish I hadn't said but I really didn't care for it.

**NANCY RAY:** That wasn't what you wanted, was it? Well when you were giving those tests, did you ever have any people take the test that you want to tell us about... something funny might have happened or crashed a car?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, I don't know.

**NANCY RAY:** Well how long did you have to do this?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** One year. And then I transferred to Highway Patrol in Humble.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I'm sure you must have been busy there.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** So tell us about that.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That was the most rewarding experience that I have ever had besides the Rangers.

**NANCY RAY:** Really... now why is that? What made it so rewarding?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Because of the people you meet. Whether they violate the law or whether people coming in to meet you or people that... you're out on the road and... you know you meet people.

**NANCY RAY:** But you never knew who you were gonna stop whether they were nice or whether they were not.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes, that's true.

**NANCY RAY:** So did you ever... were you ever concerned for your safety?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, yes... one or two times.

**NANCY RAY:** Well tell us about something.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well uh in... I can't remember the exact date and I don't want to go into a person's name or...

**NANCY RAY:** That's fine. Just tell us about the incident, that's good.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** OK. I was working one night and uh I saw a truck up ahead. I was on Harm Street. So a truck pulled off with his headlights on and he was pulled off half into the ditch and half on the road. So I was working by myself and it was about 10 o'clock at night. So I got out. Turned my lights on and got out and... my long-range lights, not my headlights. But anyway, I got out and approached him. He was asleep. Of course then you know when they're asleep, they're more than likely drunk. So I tried to wake him up... that didn't help. So I opened the door. That was my first mistake. I opened the door and I shook him real... pretty heavy. And the first thing he did when he opened his eyes, he jumped out on me. We went down on the pavement and we wrestled around there for it seemed like a minute but I'm sure it wasn't but 10 or 15 seconds. And then I held my flashlight in my left hand and there was a car coming down the road and I was in the middle of the road. So I started doing that (*made a motion*) halfway to the car and halfway paying attention to what he was doing. And uh that car... he missed both of us about... oh two feet.

**NANCY RAY:** He didn't see you there?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, until the last second and he whipped that off and he ran off in the ditch back up on the road. But then he came back and helped me subdue him and get him under arrest. And you know what happens...

**NANCY RAY:** You hauled him in, didn't you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, are there other incidences like that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, yeah. One night me and... I can't think of my partner's name.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. I was gonna ask but that's fine. If you think of it later, just throw it in.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** When I was... still Highway Patrolman, we got a call to go to a beer joint on 45... on the Harris County line which it was on 45 at the Spring Creek... Anyway we went there and the owner came out and he said that he knew his name so I got his name. And he said he came in to get some more beer so I refused to sell it to him because he was falling-down drunk. He said the guy left out, went out the door and... to his car I guess. And he said he pulled out a rifle and fired six rounds all through the building you know. And there were people inside the building. But he never hit anybody. So from them we went to the judge's office and got a warrant for him for failure... for serious threat to take life. He lived in Montgomery County so we went across the county line... met a deputy sheriff from Montgomery County and a constable from Harris County. So we told them we were going down there to arrest him and the Montgomery County sheriff told me.... He asked me, is he drunk? I said yes. And he said a little bit or a bunch? (*laughter*) I said a bunch. He said well I'll tell you right now, before we get started, he said I know this guy. No names but I know this guy and uh if he is anywhere about drunk, he's gonna give you problems. So we went out down that... way back in the woods off (*unknown name*) Road. And we found his house. So the four of us got out and uh I got on the intercom and told him that I was Highway Patrol and that I was there because of the incident he caused down on 45 at so-and-so beer joint. So the lights went out. He turned the lights off. In about five seconds, he come running out the door, turned, and fired a shot with the same rifle that he did down there at the joint. And uh I fired back. But, the reason I fired back is because I

thought I was shot because it was a .357 rifle. He hit a tree right beside me and it splattered me all over with uh bark. And I thought... you know we were there at night, and it was about Midnight and I thought I was shot! So immediately, I fired at the... right where the muzzle flash came out. And I don't know whether I hit him but he turned and went about 30 yards to a tree and raised up to fire again and I laid it on him that time. And uh I was carrying a shotgun. And uh he fell and then he crawled down to a creek ravine where nobody... this place was totally the first time I'd ever been there and I said I'm not going down there after him (*laughter*) because... So the sergeant come out to his place and we called the dogs out of Huntsville down there. And as soon as they got there, they got a smell of his house... they went straight to the creek ravine then. That's about what happened.

**NANCY RAY:** What happened to him?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** He was in a wheelchair for... I put 16 rounds right through here (*he pointed*) and uh he was in a wheelchair for about a year. And on his crutches for about six months to a year. And then after that, they lowered the deal from attempted murder of a police officer down to aggravated assault because of him being in for a year.

**NANCY RAY:** So he did have to serve some time?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Did it stop his drinking?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I don't know. I've never heard him again. (*laughter*)

**NANCY RAY:** That was the end of that one, huh?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I've heard that being a Highway Patrolman was one of the most dangerous jobs. Do you agree with that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, I agree.

**NANCY RAY:** And why is that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Because you're out there and every person you meet is different. I mean you might meet... I tell you what (*laughter*)...

**NANCY RAY:** Tell me.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** One time I stopped a woman on *unknown name* Road.

**NANCY RAY:** We're gonna call this road Unknown Name Road (*laughter*).

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I stopped a woman on there, she was speeding. I turned around... stopped her. So I started after I finished my routine remarks, then I started asking her questions like where does she work, what her address is... And that woman went off on me and she started cussing and raising cane! And I was... I stood back... and uh she made a fool of herself. I said... I just sat there and listened to her, I wasn't saying anything. Boy she was really letting me have it. And uh she said I know... I know a trooper that works at the bank that I work at. I'm gonna contact that trooper about you. So we got through, I handed the ticket to her. The whole time (*the woman was fussing at him*)... I'll bet you 15 minutes went by and I got a call from that trooper that worked at the bank. He said meet me at the bank so I said I'll tell you what, meet me at so-and-so place, you know where food is served. He said I can't, I'm working at the bank. So I said meet me across the street. I wasn't gonna go on the bank property. So I (*laughter*) went over there and he asked me, what happened? So I told him in no uncertain terms that the lady went off on a binge and there wasn't anything that I would say to her besides the information on the ticket. And so uh he went inside. I left and he went inside and told her. Man... and she was gonna call my captain on me. So I said let her... let her do it. They say that the patrol cars now have the uh...

**NANCY RAY:** Like a video camera?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Does that capture the conversation too?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes, yes. And I wish I would have had that back then but I didn't. But anyway, like I said, that was another one.

**NANCY RAY:** Did she ever contact your captain that you know?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. The trooper, who I'm friends with, is now retired from the DPS. But anyway...

**NANCY RAY:** Oh you just ran into all kinds of people I'm sure. Well what kind of... were you always in Humble? Was that your only duty station?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, I was in Humble for almost every year but one year in Dallas. I was up there.

**NANCY RAY:** And what did you do in Dallas?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh... same thing that I did in Humble but one time, my first day up there in Dallas. I was called out on, to Denny's Restaurant on I-20 there just outside of Terrell, Texas. We got over there and this old boy had been in Denny's and went across the freeway on foot. He was on foot. And two License and Weight troopers had stopped them. I don't know why they stopped him but unless he was acting terrible. They stopped him and they were going to arrest him. And man then the fight started. Unknown to them, he was on LSD. But he went off into into the ditch... and he gave one of them a big black eye, the trooper. And of course we got there about the time he went off into the bar ditch which was about three feet deep in water. And that old boy was in there saying some things to me and-- I'm not gonna say his name...

**NANCY RAY:** You're being very cautious (*laughter*). But they did capture the man who was on LSD? He got away?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, they didn't capture him, we did! The License and Weight troopers were still in the same division but they were in License and Weight that handles big trucks. And we handle everything that's speeding, you know things like that. But when we got there, he was cussing and raising cane at me and the other trooper. And I just decided I was gonna wade in there and get him (*laughter*). I went in there and we had to use some...

**NANCY RAY:** Force? Well maybe not force but

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. We both had billy clubs. And uh we finally got him under arrest and dragged him out on the side and put him in the car and had to take him to the hospital to get sewed up. And uh (*chuckle*)

**NANCY RAY:** So you ran into violent people, it wasn't just traffic.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what were the main drugs? Did you have a lot of trouble with people on drugs?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** What were the... what were they?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Mostly marijuana back then.

**NANCY RAY:** Were people smuggling it or using it

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, no. They were using it. And as far as I know, the... we usually stopped people for speeding, no driver's license... things like that... running stop signs. And when you get them out, that's when they breathe on you... you can smell the marijuana and stuff like that. But they were essentially DWI. We never, they say that nowadays, I've been retired 20

or 30 years, but anyway they say that nowadays they put you in for DUI, driving under the influence of drugs.

**NANCY RAY:** So if it's a DUI is it just drugs or can it also be alcohol?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It can be drugs. DWI is alcohol.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, uh when you first started out in the Highway Patrol, out of Driver's License, did you have a... did ya'll have radar? Did you have a breathalyzer? How did you... what did you do?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well we didn't have a radar for I guess the first five years I was in the DPS. After that, Austin started buying radars and pretty soon they had all Highway Patrol cars with radar.

**NANCY RAY:** So if you were catching a speeder, you had to... how did you know they were speeding?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** You sit on the side of the road. They didn't have moving radar back then. But you just sit on the side of the road and a car come through there and...

**NANCY RAY:** You could tell?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, we looked at the radar.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh, it wasn't the moving, you had to shoot a gun at them or whatever?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, the radar machine was sitting on the dash. The gun was permanently mounted in the window in the back.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, well times have changed. Technology has come a long way.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well uh, were there ever times when you see a car and something like flags would raise or...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** What would make you... can you walk us through something like that? What would you see that would make you suspicious?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, like all right... I'll tell you... me and Ray Avery were working together. He was my partner back then and he has since passed away. But uh we were at Lee Road and Reems(sp?) Road and we just pulled up to the stop sign. And a guy we first thought was turning left in front of me, coming from the other direction. And uh I saw him but he looked drunk, I mean you know nothing else but he turned in front of me and I looked at him all the way around the corner and he looked drunk. He was red-faced and uh... so I turned around and stopped him. And things like that you know.

**NANCY RAY:** Are you still suspicious, do you still watch?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** I just... well your wife rolled her eyes. (*laughter*) I didn't know if you'd ever get over that or not. Well tell me about... you mentioned your partner. What was the importance of your partner?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh, real important. Whenever I wasn't seeing anything, he would probably see something else you know. Partners were real good especially like Ray Avery.

**NANCY RAY:** Tell us about Ray. What did you learn from Ray?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, I was a trooper when he first come in the Department.

**NANCY RAY:** What did you teach Ray?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well that's what I was thinking that I was there to teach him. But it didn't take me but about two months until he knew everything that I did. But he was real good. Boy he

was funny. I have had partners that you know you're going down the road and you're thinking, man I wish this guy ... (*laughter*) would go with somebody else.

**NANCY RAY:** You don't have to call any names (*laughter*).

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** But it wasn't up to me but it was up to the sergeant. But him and Terry Lewis were the two partners that I... well the guy that broke me in was Jack Curtis. He was a captain with the Narcotics Division and he retired. But he's my mentor.

**NANCY RAY:** Well is there anyone... you mentioned Mr. Curtis. But is there anyone else who had a big influence on you as far as your law enforcement career?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, I really don't think so.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of car did you have when you first started out?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** '62 Plymouth (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Would it run?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I was in Driver's License. And then when I transferred to Highway Patrol, I got a '65 Plymouth also but it was a... it wasn't hopped up or anything like that. It was street legal but it was a 386 with a four-barrel... man it would run (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** How fast did you make it go?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh... no comment (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** That fast huh!

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well did you ever have any high-speed chases?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Can you tell us about one?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. We were working on 45 and uh we were working radar at the time. So we were southbound on 45 around uh around... west Houston, 45 at westbound Houston. We were working radar and a car come through at 95. So we immediately dumped our... he, as soon as I turned the lights on, his car sped up to about 120. The traffic was pretty heavy but he was in the inside lane and I would have to be dodging traffic. See he was going straight but by the time, I wasn't right behind him, I was trying to catch up to him. And uh there was a girl with him. And so he finally took off at Parker Road exit, southbound. And we come up on a bayou and I saw him swerve to the right. He was trying to get around a car. And when he went to the right, then that car went to the right also. So he hit the rear end of that car. Come around and jumped over the...

**NANCY RAY:** Like a median-type thing or barrier?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, it was between the freeway and the service road and to the ditch. And of course then I was caught up with him and I immediately put my emergency brake on and as soon as I could, man I was out of the car. You know running after him because I saw go to the left. The girl went to the right. I told my partner. You get the girl, I've got him. So anyway, within a little ways, I was running as hard as I could and my pistol jumped out. Why it jumped out I don't know but I was... Anyway, I got to the bayou. It was about half full of water. And I looked around and the suspect wasn't anywhere. So I immediately... I started to go back and I said no, he's probably in the water, underneath the water. So I waited for about oh 15 seconds and looked down the bayou, not the bayou but the culverts. Looked... this was a big, about an 8-foot culvert. I looked down. There was a light at the end. And I spotted his head pop up *(laughter)*.

**NANCY RAY:** He needed air.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That's right. Well then I jumped in, all my body and everything. I got wet but I got him.

**NANCY RAY:** Um mmm, he didn't get away, did he? I'll bet you were tough on those uniforms.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** *(laughter)* Yes.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. But... my pistol...

**NANCY RAY:** Did you get it?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well yeah when I finally went back, the sight on my pistol had broken off when it fell down and hit the pavement. And boy I got through the wringers for that. Man... Sergeant Duggan was my sergeant. Man! He... I don't know why but he read me the riot act about not having my strap and uh...

**NANCY RAY:** Well that's a safety issue too.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah because it could have fired.

**NANCY RAY:** And you might have needed it when you caught your suspect. Well it wasn't a planned thing anyway. Well I've also heard that being a Highway Patrolman, in addition to being dangerous, is probably one of the most fun jobs. Was it fun?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It is.

**NANCY RAY:** What made it fun to you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh... the Highway Patrol... everything.

**NANCY RAY:** The people or what you were doing?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, the people, but mainly what I was doing you know. I just like people.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** Something new everyday.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what made you decide to go to the Rangers?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That, I have... ever since I was... I went through the patrol school in '67. And about two years into patrol school, or after I got out into the Highway Patrol, the Rangers caught my eye. And I, from that point on, I had always wanted to be a Ranger. And uh I guess it was 13 years in the Highway Patrol and I got a chance to take the test for a Ranger. And I made it.

**NANCY RAY:** Well when you were still a Highway Patrolman, were there any Rangers that you worked with?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, you didn't. Well, I say that the Rangers more or less worked by themselves you know. Uh I worked by myself unless I contacted a deputy sheriff or a city policeman I was by myself.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. All right I was just wondering if there had been a Ranger you had observed and that kind of influenced you.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** Well is there anything else about your Highway Patrol career you want to tell us about? What were the main types of stops that you had the most?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Speeding.

**NANCY RAY:** What about fatality wrecks? Did you a lot of those?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah. About... I don't know how many... probably in the range of 20 to 30 fatalities.

**NANCY RAY:** Now you had Interstate 45 and what were your other highways?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes, 59 and uh... I worked, in the Highway Patrol, I worked 45 all the way over to the county line which is Liberty County. And north to the county line that separates Harris County from Montgomery County.

**NANCY RAY:** All right. Well tell us how did you prepare for that Ranger test?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, we're getting a little bit... I made sergeant?

**NANCY RAY:** In Highway Patrol?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. But I stayed right where I was at.

**NANCY RAY:** You didn't have to move. Well what were your responsibilities as a sergeant then?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Really it was to take care of the 14 Highway Patrolmen I had back then.

**NANCY RAY:** All right. So if someone... that lady had called and complained, she would have called to complain to you about one of yours?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Not necessarily. The captain, or lieutenant, over at the regional office could take a complaint. Then they would call me and then I would call the trooper in.

**NANCY RAY:** Now how long were you a sergeant?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Two years and then I made Ranger.

**NANCY RAY:** Well tell us about... then you were studying for your test as a sergeant then?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** But as a sergeant, you weren't out on the road, is that correct?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. Basically... I was out on the road maybe 5 percent of the time.

**NANCY RAY:** Did you ever ride with the people that were under you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. You have to ride with each trooper during the month you know. Each trooper you had during the year.

**NANCY RAY:** OK so you have to observe how they're doing?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** (*short pause to change disc*) OK, we're back and we're ready to talk about your Ranger career. You've taken the test, you passed it the first time, is that correct?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Right.

**NANCY RAY:** All right and then you were called to the interview board. What can you tell us about the interview board?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It was basically the same stuff as the Highway Patrol, the sergeant's test. I went through the same thing with them. The one question, the captain of the Rangers asked me... He said how long have you been a Highway Patrolman? I said 13 years. He said name one felony that you did in 13 years. Well I was at a loss. I was trying to think but I finally just looked at the captain. I said I know that I have but I can't think of anything right now. He said that's all right.

**NANCY RAY:** So honesty was your best policy.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** I wonder what he was looking for?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I don't know. I... he was looking for...

**NANCY RAY:** Your answer.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Evidently it was a good answer.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I guess (*laughter*). I made it.

**NANCY RAY:** Who were... now I show you became a Ranger October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982. Is that correct?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Right.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Do you know some of the others who made Ranger with you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh... no.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Were you put on a list or how did it work for you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, when I took the test for Ranger, they had 14 days to get us through everything. Because in 14 days, they were going to announce the Rangers that made it or the people that made Ranger. And uh before I knew it, 14 days was there and the list was out and I was number one on the list.

**NANCY RAY:** Well congratulations on that, that's a big deal.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That's the reason I didn't have to transfer again (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** You were able to pick and stay in the same place?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** The same place.

**NANCY RAY:** Well my goodness. So your first duty station... were you still in Humble at this point?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, so that was your first duty station then.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, in Humble they didn't have a Texas Ranger. They had, they were stationed in Houston. And they had the whole Harris County. But I had a lot of cases that I worked in Liberty County, south of Montgomery County and things like that... as well as Harris County.

**NANCY RAY:** OK, so in the 80s then it was probably still more rural then...a lot more than it is today.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes.

**NANCY RAY:** So what kind of cases did you have?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh my first... my first case was the “million dollar boot theft case” in Humble.

**NANCY RAY:** Million dollar boot theft... OK, tell us about that. I haven’t heard about that one.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, I was at the regional office then and a lieutenant from Humble PD called up there. And I get... I supposed my captain wanted me to take it because I had no experience as a Ranger. But I went out on the case and as I come through Humble... to make a short story of the whole thing... a man had burglarized the Humble boot shop. He was working there.

**NANCY RAY:** Is this where they made boots?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, they sold boots. Him and his wife’s... his mother-in-law... both worked there. As we processed through the complaint, the whole thing come down to them two—him and his mother-in-law. They worked there stealing all the boots. The way they did it was they had a truck back up to the store and haul the boots, boots, boots... no clothing except for boots. Anyway, we got it and uh we got on about halfway through the investigation to where I knew the parties involved and then I had an informant come to me. And uh he was the truck driver. He told me that he transported all the boots from Texas up to Colorado and gave me the guy’s name up there. And put them in a warehouse you know, him and this guy up there.

**NANCY RAY:** How many pair of boots did they get?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** All I know it was a million dollars worth. So me and the chief in Humble, we traveled to Colorado, uh Rock Springs, Colorado. And we got hold of the man and he got hold of his attorney. And he decided you have a case and you hate to hear that because the attorney is going to tell them don’t say a word (*laughter*). So he didn’t. But he said I’ll tell you

where they're at so he give me the name of the warehouse and the city that they were in. We went over there and we recovered \$250,000 worth of boots. And had the lieutenant from the Humble PD get in the truck and drive up there you know. Of course we were gone when he got there but he uh brought them back to Houston... back to Humble. And that was that case.

**NANCY RAY:** So had the owner noticed or what prompted... how did ya'll get involved? The owner had noticed that they were missing or what?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** The owner was the mother-in-law. She was stealing her own boots!

**NANCY RAY:** Ohhh... she was stealing from herself?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** Insurance I guess.

**NANCY RAY:** Ahh... what a new wrinkle. We've not heard a case like that, that's different.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** They reported to the insurance what they stole.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, so no wonder... the owner didn't know they were missing. Well you know usually a Ranger, when they go to their first duty station, has to get to know everybody. But I guess you already knew everybody.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Right there.

**NANCY RAY:** So your reputation was already built and they put you to work.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** When Colonel Adams gave him the badge, the Ranger badge... presented it...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well it wasn't him, Floyd Hacker....

**DOROTHY GOODWIN:** Well anyway he said they were announcing what you were to where you were going and he said “Ellis Goodwin, sergeant, Humble or Houston, and then he said to Texas Ranger, Houston, Texas.” And he said huh, must know somebody (*laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Well that made it easy on your family not to have to move.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, it really did.

**NANCY RAY:** Well you mentioned the badge. How did you feel when you put on that badge? Can you put that into feelings... can you describe your feelings?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well this is kind of corny...

**NANCY RAY:** That’s OK. It’s OK to be corny.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** But you put it on and immediately you stand out. Um I remember my first day going over to the regional office and getting to know everybody over there. I don’t know... uh that’s the way I felt.

**NANCY RAY:** Kind of stepping tall that day, I would think. Well to most people, the Rangers... it’s a very legendary organization too and to you, things that you did were basic and routine. But to us, nothing that you did is. You know Rangers are bigger than life so tell us a little bit about your career... about some of the cases that you worked. Or what stands out in your mind right this minute?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well I’ll tell you about the... I got a call one day. I was at the regional office and a guy from Columbus PD called me, a uniformed officer. I’m sorry, a plainclothes officer. And he told me that they had had a bank robbery there and uh he had finally located and made this man a real, real strong suspect in the robbery. It was a one-man robbery. So he told me his name. So then I questioned him about the warrant because warrants aren’t always right. But he convinced me that it was signed by a district judge and all of that. So I then I went out to this

guy's house over in the east part of Houston. I went out there by myself because I didn't figure, with him being a suspect in a bank robbery, that he was gonna be there. But...

**NANCY RAY:** You were wrong, huh?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I knocked on the back door and some woman come to the door. And I said I'm here and would like to talk with the subject. She said he's right in here, come on in. *(laughter)* So I walked in. And in there, there was no... nothing but mattresses laying all around, ten different mattresses. And I said which one is he because there was about 15 people in there. Some of them were asleep and some of them weren't. She said he's right there. Of course I walked over to him and he was laying down on his stomach, asleep. So I noticed he had one hand underneath his belt. So I nudged him with my foot... I nudged him on his foot. And I said Texas Rangers... I'd like to talk to you. When he finally realized who I was, he come out with a .357 but I was ahead of him *(laughter)*. I already had mine, my .45 out. And I told him if you even twitch, I'm gonna blow your head off. So he gave up and I took his pistol with me. But I transported him back to the office and called the guy in Columbus and I told him, he's right here in my office. .You can come over. That was basically it.

**NANCY RAY:** Just all in a day's work. Right?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah *(laughter)*.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of crimes... what kind of cases did you have? Were there bank robberies or ... did ya'll have oilfield theft? What did ya'll have?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, we had very, very, very few oilfield thefts. That's not like it is now. But uh...

**NANCY RAY:** Is there a case that involved uh kidnapping or anything like that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** *(shook his head no)*

**NANCY RAY:** OK.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** What cases stand out in your mind? And what happened to that guy with the bank robbery suspect? Did he get time?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I have no idea.

**NANCY RAY:** You just turned him over.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Turned him over to the guy that had the original warrant.

**NANCY RAY:** Well my understanding with Rangers is a lot of times they... the local law will call you in and you'll do a lot of the work but then you turn them back.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** 99 percent of the time that's what happens. Uh I worked a case, a murder case, back when... I'm not gonna say his name.

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

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** A source told me that he was the one that did part of the killing but he was in the penitentiary in Huntsville at the time. So I went up there, me and Harris County detective Ed Kroshell, went up.

**NANCY RAY:** Now what is that last name?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Ed Kroshell, KROSHELL. Uh we went up there and the old boy... we went to Humble, I mean Huntsville Police Department and they called over to the penitentiary in Huntsville and had him transferred over to Huntsville PD. And we set him down and I believe he knew why we were there. Because as soon as I said it, he said "yep I killed them, what do you want to know about it?"

**NANCY RAY:** He was ready to talk?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** That was... that was the easiest case I have ever worked.

**NANCY RAY:** Well he was already in prison, what did he have to lose?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, **but...** he was only in for ten years. Of course when we got through with him... 99 years (*Laughter*).

**NANCY RAY:** Oh, big difference. Well if that was your easiest, what was your most difficult?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh I didn't solve it.

**NANCY RAY:** There was a case you didn't solve or any case you didn't solve was the hardest?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** I didn't (*emotional moment*)

**NANCY RAY:** That's OK. We'll come back to that one, OK... in a minute. What about uh did you ever have any dumb criminal stories?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh I'm sure there were.

**NANCY RAY:** You're gonna think of it when we leave too, I'm sure of that. Well what about... you mentioned the Huntsville Prison. Did you have to work when that uprising that... was it Carausco Brothers or...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, I was on the Highway Patrol and I was up there, in the back. There were probably 150 Highway Patrolman up there. I was one of them, in the back.

**NANCY RAY:** What did you have to do?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Nothing. The Rangers...

**NANCY RAY:** I heard it was pretty miserable up there.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** All that that happened out there with the Rangers were completely separate from us in the back. Now we could hear the shots and uh, but that's all we could hear. See we were there just in case that old boy... him and the two other, the other guys... got out away from the prison. Then we would have to go in our response.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what about any arson cases?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Had one. The uh... I can't remember his name and the lieutenant with Humble PD, again. He called me and I went out there. And he ran it down to me about the trash... no, dumpster fires in and around Humble. There were five of them. And he said that the chief told him to get that arson case cleared up right away because he was afraid somebody would, is going to get hurt. So I don't remember now how we got the suspect identified but we did. And we went out to his house. Now I knew his mother. And uh I knew her quite well because she worked at Judge Albert Lee's court, the JP. So it was kind of hard for me when I went out there to question him. But we questioned him inside of the house and that's what was... It was really kind of hard. But after about 30 minutes of questioning, he made a mistake. And then I told him he made it and then he said well I set all the fire in and around those dumpsters.

**NANCY RAY:** Well the mistake he made, was it... you caught him in a lie or what?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It was a lie. But I don't remember now.

**NANCY RAY:** Well there is a lot of detail, is that right, for working on a case.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** So if you had... just pick a generic... Go ahead.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well let me tell you the one thing that I learned from the Harris County detectives... learned it from Richard Tidewater. He was a Harris County plainclothes detective. Anytime you're doing a case, at the end of the day, if possible, you need to write it all down. Because if you don't do that, don't write it down, the next day you'll forget some little piece of information that might come in handy another day.

**NANCY RAY:** So documenting, that's what you had to do.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well if you had to uh... say you just had a case. How would you go about trying to solve it? Or what kind of... what kind of skills or tools do you use to solve a case?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well uh... like I say, number one... 99 percent of the cases are done by other agencies. You're called in when they are, they run around the whole loop and they want a new perspective on how you approach the case. Like lie detector, polygraph. You know we used that quite often. But you can't use it on the prosecution side... you can't use a polygraph in any way unless the defense attorney brings it up in court. Then once he says the word lie detector or polygraph or anything like that, once he says it then you can bring it up.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. So was the polygraph one of your most useful tools? DNA was not one...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No.

**NANCY RAY:** So without DNA, what did you use?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Mostly eyewitness. If there was not an eyewitness, you would have to... I guess you'd have to drill the subject and drill them and drill them. I mean you didn't let it stop for 24 hours.

**NANCY RAY:** Well then you didn't work an 8 to 5 job did you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh no, no.

**NANCY RAY:** Were you gone from home quite a bit?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes sir! (*laughter*)

**NANCY RAY:** Well I think I know the answer is yes, you were gone. So what kind of role did you wife play in your career?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** My wife was... let me tell you. The, about the seventh or eighth week of patrol school, I had almost... this was on Saturday I told her... the next day I was supposed to go back and I said I'm not going back because of the... everything was hard. It was hard but

anyway, she set me down and talked to me for about 30 minutes or an hour and finally I went back in. After that it was all pretty easy.

**NANCY RAY:** Well let's go back to some of your cases then. Can you think of a case that you want to tell us about? I know you've talked about on your Highway Patrol there were... you had some gun shootouts. Were you ever drawn on that you want to tell us about... with a gun?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. Not with a pistol but with a rifle, I told you about that story.

**NANCY RAY:** What about as a Ranger... how did you do?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** The only time that I have had a pistol pulled on me was that bank robbery suspect.

**NANCY RAY:** You're fortunate. Did you have other bank robberies?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, that was the only one.

**NANCY RAY:** That's good. Well what about um white collar crimes? Did you have to solve anything there?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh more or less that boot theft was what I called a crime.

**NANCY RAY:** What about murders? Did you have lot of murders?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Why, what causes them?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Family disputes, drugs, one person gets mad at another one over personal problems... I worked a case out of Montgomery County, a murder case. I happened to be on the radio, I heard on the DPS radio, about Narcotics officers. They were in a certain area trying to locate a road. I was close and I called. They said meet us at so-and-so. I met them over there and uh one of the persons was Jack Curtis, my old mentor. He was a captain back then. And uh they said well we have already taken this man back to where he works but in the meantime, you might

check around with the Montgomery County... with some of the men around there. Check with the Highway Patrol and some of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office about a road that is supposed to be gravel... but you know up off of FM1314 so I did. Nobody knew it but I had been on that same road, Gulf Coast Road, it runs between 1314 and 3083. So I went down and believe it or not, it was asphalted.

**NANCY RAY:** Not gravel anymore.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Not gravel. I said well this is new. So I went back, called the captain first. He'd given me... I can't remember his name but he was a Narcotics agent. But he told me, said he turned right off of 1314 on a gravel road. And I said well if it was gravel when ya'll were up here, it had done been paved. He said well that's possible. So I went over in Houston, picked up the guy. Took him out to Montgomery County SO, Sheriff's Office, and picked up the two sheriff's plain clothesmen. We all got in one car and we headed down 1314. We got to 59 and we turned around and I said now, put on the blindfold like you were. See, he told me he was blindfolded from US59 and 1314... he knew that he was on 1314. And I said now get down in the car. He got down in the back seat on the floorboard. And uh we said now think, think real hard about it. We're gonna drive until you tell us to stop. So we go... we drove and we drove and we drove. And finally, we got to Gulf Coast Road where it was gravel but now its asphalt... passed that up.

**NANCY RAY:** He didn't have you turn.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Wait a minute. About a half mile down the road, he said stop. He said I think it was back up the road about a mile. So we turned around and went back up the road. He said somewhere along in here he said... He still had this blindfold on. So I told them, turn off on Gulf Coast Road so they did and that guy said nope. It's not gravel because I can't... He said all

the time we were on the road I could hear the gravel hitting the tirewell. And uh... He said I remember two men being on the oil rig because we stopped and the windows were down. And I could hear the two men working. Well right there at the corner of 1314 and Gulf Coast Road was an oil rig. So I said take the blindfold off. Tell me about where ya'll stopped. We went down there and he was looking to the side. He said on the left, over here, you'll see a Christmas tree. You know what that is?

**NANCY RAY:** I know what that is.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** We got to the Christmas tree and he said all right, stop. It's right in here. So he said off to the right will be a pond. And the body is right there on the pond. So they said it was a pond... it was like a little bitty hole-in-the wall. But I went around and come back with the Narcotics agent and we found a femur. I said that pond is somewhere around here. So he stayed there and I walked 25, maybe 30 feet to the pond, and found it. And uh we got it all bagged up and everything. And then went... the guy was in jail in Harris County, the one that killed her. He was in jail in Harris County because of the Narcotics investigation. So we went to him. He wouldn't give us nothing. So we put it all together, made a case, and got 99 years out of it.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, what is your... as a Ranger, what would be your biggest asset to be able to figure out uh you know... is it negotiating with people? Is it logic, reasoning out? Attention to detail... what do you need?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh, you have to be... details are your biggest clue. If you're not good at details, you wouldn't make a Ranger at all.

**NANCY RAY:** What about dealing with people?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Rangers had to deal with people real well.

**NANCY RAY:** Well what kind of training did you have?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** None. I went from Highway Patrol sergeant to Ranger. And they had a Ranger...

**NANCY RAY:** Like a basic course or something?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Basic course but my captain said he doesn't need it because he has been a sergeant and you know a Highway Patrolman for 13 years. And I said OK. But you don't... I learned my first six months as a Ranger from Harris County SO, Montgomery County SO, and the Humble PD. That was where I learned the most.

**NANCY RAY:** So yours was really on-the-job training.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Who was your first captain... Or only captain?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Dan North.

**NANCY RAY:** And was he the only captain you had the whole time?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah. My lieutenant was Jim Gant. When I was in the Rangers, they didn't have lieutenants. They had sergeants... so Jim Gant. I was a private.

**NANCY RAY:** Well, do you want to go back and talk about that uh hard case... disappointing case? Are you up to that?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well, let's see... how would I approach it and... because it's still an open case. Uh...

**NANCY RAY:** Is it better not to talk about this one?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** It'd probably be better.

**NANCY RAY:** That would be fine. Well what about uh... did you have to do any undercover work? I guess you couldn't... everybody knew you.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** One time I did an undercover with Narcotics.

**NANCY RAY:** Tell us about that.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** And we had a... let me see how I could put it. The suspect was a female who was in an apartment but she was going there under the guise of... let's see... what is it... women's products... that goes to her people's houses.

**NANCY RAY:** Oh like one of these party things... Avon or Home Interior... OK.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Anyway... Mary Kay.

**NANCY RAY:** Mary Kay Make-up, there you go.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** She was the person that we were to follow and any other person that come out of that house, we were to follow. But I... we followed maybe one... the female and maybe two males... nothing. I mean you know we followed them from the apartment to the uh some hotel in Houston. We were on the west side of Houston. We followed him up to the room and then about five minutes later we followed him back. But that happened about three times but...

**NANCY RAY:** You never were able to prove anything?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. Ray Avery, I talked to him. You know I talked about him.

**NANCY RAY:** You did.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** He was my partner when I was in the Highway Patrol. We had him and somebody else. I can't remember their names... Narcotics agents. They made a case on them from going back and forth. We had, when they moved, we would have about five or six different cars because you would follow them like for three or four blocks and then peel off.

**NANCY RAY:** Pass them to the next car?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Next one you know... I'd follow it all the way around and I'd peel off, make a block and come back you know.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I would think being a Ranger there are gonna be long periods of time where's there a lot of detail and trying to figure things out well then finally you solved something. But you're not gonna solve something every day.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No, especially undercover (*he gave me a look*).

**NANCY RAY:** Did you like undercover?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** No. I didn't like it!

**NANCY RAY:** Didn't like undercover or Drivers License.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Let me tell you something. We were at... we were on a detail. Every month, every other month we would switch off with criminal and *unknown word*. I hated this in the Rangers more than anything. We would have to... any time the governor would come to Houston, we would have to... everything dropped. It didn't matter if you were on an important murder case. If he come to Houston, you had to drop it.

**NANCY RAY:** And you'd have to drive him?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Everywhere.

**NANCY RAY:** Who was the governor? Who was it at that time?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Clements was the first one. Mark White was the second one. Ann Richards was the third one. But of course I retired between Mark White and Ann Richards. But anytime they come to Houston, it don't matter if they were there one day, three days. I had to stay with them. I wouldn't come home if they were here for two or three days. You would have to stay with them 24 hours.

**NANCY RAY:** Now were you working as a guard or just doing their driving or both?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** We were... we were driving but guarding the governor. And I hated it.

**NANCY RAY:** OK. Well if that was the part you liked the least, what was the part you liked the most about being a Ranger?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh... I liked... don't get me wrong. The PR work.

**NANCY RAY:** Did you?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yes. You know all these things that happen to you are good to talk about. To you and Eddie but those things you let them... they go by the wayside (*short pause*).

**NANCY RAY:** OK. You were talking about the PR work.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** OK, the PR work is mainly you're talking to the police that are in your area. And I liked to talk with them and ask them about questions... you know... ask them don't tell them. Uh if they want to know something, they'll ask. But uh you always ask.

**NANCY RAY:** OK... well tell me then, I'm gonna ask you. What is... can you think of the proudest moment you had as a Ranger? Or as a Highway Patrolman for that matter... it might have been an accomplishment or you know... maybe it's something we don't... nobody even knows about. What made you feel good?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh I felt good, real good, when we captured a suspect that killed a trooper. What happened was the trooper, Mark Frederick, had a stop over in Sealy, Texas... had stopped this car on the service road. And his partner at the time was Jack Reickert.

**NANCY RAY:** Is that Reiger or...

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** REICKERT. But anyway, he stopped him for a no valid MVI sticker and as soon as the trooper walked up to him, he didn't say squat. He shot and the first one killed the trooper. Of course he, Jack Reickert, he immediately drew his pistol and emptied six shots into the back of the car. Well that was... there, from that time, three days later. This old boy was out in the woods you know. We were about to give up. Everybody was about to go home at the end

of the day. But we were there for three days you know continuously. And about 3 o'clock that afternoon, the DPS helicopter spotted him. He was going across a field where a drainage ditch was on State 36 out of Sealy, south about four miles. Well as soon as they put that out, we were... we were right there. I mean I could see the helicopter but I knew that we were somewhere within a half mile of him. So he told us what street he was south of and we were sitting at that street (*laughter*), just sitting there because nobody had seen him for three days. And we immediately took off down there, went through the pasture, through some fields. And I could see the helicopter. He was telling us which way he was running. And then I come up to the fence and I didn't want to go through it then so I stopped. And my partner... he was cussing and raising cane (*laughter*) because I wouldn't go through it. Well he jumped out and he was... I believe the helicopter set down in front of the guy. The guy turned around and started back down to a tree there out in the field and my partner run up there and him and this... I don't know if that was a Ranger or what he was. They handcuffed him there and then the sheriff come up there. But that was I guess one of my finest points.

**NANCY RAY:** Well that brings up the question of the camaraderie between all the law enforcement officers.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Oh yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** I'll bet it showed up at that time, didn't it?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah, all of it. Man there were probably... there were probably 20 to 25 agencies involved in that out there from Harris County, Columbus County, Sealy was there... but uh that was number one.

**NANCY RAY:** That made you feel good.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Yeah.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I show you retired from the Rangers June 30<sup>th</sup> of '86. Is that correct?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Right.

**NANCY RAY:** OK and what did you do after that? Since you retired, what have you been doing?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Well I... to make a short story... a short story out of a long story... I was a private investigator for Gene Graham downtown... that lasted about six months. I went off on my own and lasted (*laughter*) about four months. From there I went to work over at Jess Lawrence' office, the JP there in Humble. And uh I come up to Montgomery County and worked for a short time for Jim Simmons who used... remember when we first started?

**NANCY RAY:** Um hmm.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** He used to be a DPS Narcotics agent.

**NANCY RAY:** All right. Ya'll kind of hang together, don't you? (*he nodded*) Well we're about to wrap up. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Uh... no. I really don't think so.

**NANCY RAY:** Well I would like to thank you for your time today, for sharing your story. And also I'd like to thank you for serving the state of Texas and having a long career.

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** Thank you.

**NANCY RAY:** And I hope you enjoy your travels and more retirement. OK?

**ELLIS GOODWIN:** OK.

**NANCY RAY:** All right, thank you very much.