

Interview with
HENRY LIGON
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Mr. Ligon's Home
Kerrville, Texas
Monday—April 13, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Henry Ligon, Wanda Ligon, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



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HENRY LIGON
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

NANCY RAY: My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Henry Ligon of Kerrville, Texas. This is Monday, April 13th, 2009. Present with us are Eddie Ray and your wife, Wanda. And the purpose of this interview is to discuss your career as a Texas Ranger. Ranger Ligon, do I have your permission to record this interview?

HENRY LIGON: Yes.

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

HENRY LIGON: Um hmm.

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

HENRY LIGON: Yes.

NANCY RAY: OK. Let's start by learning a little bit about you. Where were you born and when?

HENRY LIGON: Well, I guess 1928, May 6th, I was born in West Texas.

NANCY RAY: Where in West Texas?

HENRY LIGON: On a what used to be a nice ranch and it turned into a place for a nursing home and what have you... in a cabin on a set of springs. We moved from there to Austin when I was six months old.

NANCY RAY: When you were six months.

HENRY LIGON: And I grew up there and we had five boys and two... five brothers and two sisters.

NANCY RAY: Where were you in the order?

HENRY LIGON: Number 3.

NANCY RAY: Who are your brothers and sisters?

HENRY LIGON: I had an older sister. She lives in Austin. She has two children and grandchildren. The next one... no the oldest, I'm sorry. I kept saying my sister but the oldest is my brother Louis. He worked at the post office.

NANCY RAY: Is that LOUIS?

HENRY LIGON: LOUIS. And he died at 65, cancer. Then was my sister Rosalie and then here I came along. I'm the third one. Then I had a younger brother... what was he? 18 months younger than I? Then we lost him three years ago now I think to cancer.

WANDA LIGON: He had heart problems.

HENRY LIGON: Then I had another sister... she's a dandy.

NANCY RAY: What's her name?

HENRY LIGON: Peggy. Then the next one came along, another younger brother, William. Of course I say he's younger, he is, but he's bigger too. He weighs around 300. I'll show you a picture of him after while. He was a police officer.

NANCY RAY: Where was he a police officer?

HENRY LIGON: Austin. We were raised in deep east Austin.

NANCY RAY: OK. What were your parents' names?

HENRY LIGON: My parents' name?

NANCY RAY: Your dad's name...

HENRY LIGON: He was Buster, or B. F. Ligon, and my mother... Myrtle Anderson.

NANCY RAY: OK. So did you go to school in Austin?

HENRY LIGON: I did. I didn't finish high school there. I went into the service and got my diploma through the...

NANCY RAY: Like the GED or something?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah and when I graduated out of the DPS Academy.

NANCY RAY: Well tell us about your military career?

HENRY LIGON: Well, I was in the Navy the first time. I was 17 years old, that's what... in a little bit I ended up in Japan. And I had it on ship that we transported gas on... one station to the next all over Japan and Korea... made every port that there was.

NANCY RAY: OK. And what year was that?

HENRY LIGON: 1945.

NANCY RAY: OK so the war was over?

HENRY LIGON: It was just over. I was in boot camp looking out the fence and I wasn't out there having the fun the rest of them were. And then I went... I went out of the service, Navy, in '46 and then I went back into the Air Force and I ended up in Germany. And there I was in the...

NANCY RAY: You were in Germany in the Air Force?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. We transported all the food in the air lift. At that time there wasn't a war on. Everything was handed over... and I was in charge of a group that loaded the aircraft. And that's what I did there and then I come back home.

NANCY RAY: And when did you get out of the Air Force?

HENRY LIGON: That was April... let's see... no, no, it was June 23rd, 1950. And after that...

NANCY RAY: Did anything really interesting happen that stands... while you were in either the Navy or the Air Force?

HENRY LIGON: In the Navy they had me aboard ship and I was steering the ship of course. And I looked up ahead and we had that flat-bottomed round-nosed tankers... (*chuckle*) it was a mine! And it... the break hit it and it pushed around. It wasn't magnetic. It went around us... they took me off the wheel house anyway. And they fired four or five rounds and that thing went off and I was standing on the deck up there... it pushed me back.

NANCY RAY: The force of it was pushing you?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: Oh my.

HENRY LIGON: It was. Anyway... of course that was a little later on which it's not a big thing really but it was a magnetic mine and we stayed away from it... these little destroyers, they come out and sank it. They wouldn't much bigger... looked like a little old battle ship. They had about four or five men aboard and they'd go out search these fields by day, cut them loose and blow them up. And we had some blow up before they got them cut loose... lost a ship too.

NANCY RAY: Were you ever injured while you were in the Navy doing that?

HENRY LIGON: No... . And the Navy... I transferred... I worked my first... I ended up on another ship. It was remodeling different things.

NANCY RAY: Remodeling?

HENRY LIGON: Right. The funny thing was I loved to carpenter then and they had one of these suicide boats... that's Japanese. You could see... leather and chrome. Everything was just

as pretty as it could be. And they had... the props... they had it tied up... the props to what was holding the sides and they gave it to me to fix. Good old me... I knew what I was gonna do. I was gonna put that pretty pine wood in there instead of oak wood. And they had it all finished and put it over to the side and the next morning that tied line... had sunk.

NANCY RAY: Oh no. Because of the pine wood?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, it had swelled up and popped out. So the captain didn't get his boat
(laughter).

NANCY RAY: Well that's...

HENRY LIGON: But those were little things. Other than that...

NANCY RAY: All right. Well when did you marry?

HENRY LIGON: I married... I met her two weeks before Easter. I married her on June 30th.

NANCY RAY: OK and what year was that?

HENRY LIGON: 1951. And we've been 57 years now, Mama?

WANDA LIGON: It will be 58 in June.

HENRY LIGON: Oh...

NANCY RAY: Oh my, you missed a year. Well that's good it must have been a good match then.

HENRY LIGON: Yes.

NANCY RAY: OK, what about children?

HENRY LIGON: One boy.

NANCY RAY: Now your wife's name is Wanda. One boy, what is his name?

HENRY LIGON: His name is Jay, JAY.

NANCY RAY: We have a son named Jay.

HENRY LIGON: Oh you do? Mine is 52 years old now.

NANCY RAY: OK. And does he have children?

HENRY LIGON: Yes, there she is (*he pointed to a picture*). I had heart problems back there when she was born, way before that... had surgery. And I quit smoking right about the time... she was born January 17th. She just now turned 17 years old.

NANCY RAY: And you haven't smoked in 17 years?

HENRY LIGON: No. So nearly 18 years...

NANCY RAY: That's a good way to remember, isn't it?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah. It was an easy way to quit. I come off the old hill out here and the last cigarette looked good but I said if I smoke it now, that would be it... and I never picked up another cigarette.

NANCY RAY: Well congratulations on that, that's good.

HENRY LIGON: Yeah because I had bypasses 39... how many years ago was it...32 years ago? On my heart... heart bypass surgery and both legs at the same time. And it lasted 32 years and they went back and they redid my legs again 7 years later. And then I went back just here in July and had two stents put in.

NANCY RAY: OK, but you're doing well now?

HENRY LIGON: I've feel healthy... well it's a funny thing. The doctor walked in there and I didn't know who he was, it was Dr. White. And he said well, I put in two stents and he had a heart attack. I don't know when but... (*laughter*)

NANCY RAY: Oh my goodness.

HENRY LIGON: They never decided when or where so apparently I healed after the heart attack. I hope so anyway.

NANCY RAY: Well when you were in school, is there any... were there any subjects in particular that you liked?

HENRY LIGON: Do what?

NANCY RAY: Were you in school, before you graduated, what subjects did you like? Were there any that you liked?

HENRY LIGON: Oh... I didn't like English worth anything... but I did, I went back and I took my English... not my English class, took my history classes and math. I left after the eleventh grade. I never even tried to find out whether I could get a diploma or not. Don't need it.

NANCY RAY: Don't need it, that's right. Well when you got out of the Air Force in 1950, is that when you became... did you go into the Department of Public Safety?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, right. I had a friend or two... we all discussed it after we went into the service. And I went in and decided to go and talk to my wife and I went up to Camp Mabry.

NANCY RAY: Camp Mabry? Oh good.

HENRY LIGON: Chief Elliott was chief at that time.

NANCY RAY: OK now who was the Chief?

HENRY LIGON: Elliott, Chief Elliott... the only chief...

NANCY RAY: OK, so... now you're our first person to talk to who went to Camp Mabry so tell us... tell me first of all, when did you enter? Do you remember the date you entered... the date you entered Camp Mabry?

HENRY LIGON: September something... September 23rd, 25th, something like that, 1951... graduated a hundred men I think on that class.

NANCY RAY: A hundred men? OK. All right well tell us about...

HENRY LIGON: There were less than a hundred of us at graduation.

NANCY RAY: They weed out a lot, don't they?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah. We worked several counties at one time you know. And in the Ranger Service that's what four counties... I worked nine out of Austin. But I was raised in Austin.

NANCY RAY: Well let's go back to Camp Mabry. What did you learn at Camp Mabry?

HENRY LIGON: Well, I learned what's right and what's wrong (*laughter*). And it was good training... that's where we trained on motors and trained on our lessons and what have you.

NANCY RAY: OK, so they trained you on motorcycles?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yes, they trained on the old iron horse, that's the old one at... you ride those things... it's just like riding a wagon or something.

NANCY RAY: Wasn't a smooth ride?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. They trained us on the base there. And a lot of them come up on those old dry tanks, come up there on a bluff there... and I run my sergeant off that bluff. When I come up, I wasn't steering too good. But I went on and joined them all later. After I found them.

NANCY RAY: Did you ride off of the...

HENRY LIGON: Oh yes. We took rides in the Hill Country... all around the lakes up there and what have you.

NANCY RAY: Sounds kind of dangerous.

HENRY LIGON: Well yeah, they get you a 40-mile leader and the man in the back is running 75 trying to keep up you know. But back and forth... We wore those aviator caps and goggles you see on motorcycles... tears would get in your eyes and run in your ears... *(laughter)* you couldn't see. We had one or two of them run off the road and get pinned up in the fences and up against a tree or something. One of them ran into the mess hall with their motorcycle and I was up the steps *(laughter)*. But I was lucky, I didn't do that.

NANCY RAY: You didn't have any crashes on the motorcycle?

HENRY LIGON: No. My brother... he didn't either. He was in charge of all the motorcycle squad in Austin.

NANCY RAY: Well out of the hundred in your class, how many graduated, do you remember?

HENRY LIGON: They all got out... some... I don't know whether...three or four maybe. There were not any as far as I remember. That's the biggest class I think.

NANCY RAY: Well what else besides the motors did you learn? Did they teach you...

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah, we learned how to drive cars...

NANCY RAY: Like how to do a high-speed chase or something?

HENRY LIGON: High speed chases... showed you how to get a man out of the car or keeping them... whatever is necessary.

NANCY RAY: Well what was the hardest part of the school?

HENRY LIGON: Oh... wanting to get out *(laughter)*.

NANCY RAY: And go home probably?

HENRY LIGON: But I didn't want to because if I go... but I was going back to Chief Elliott, I went to see him. I had two young ladies that grew up with us. One married a brother was on the

Highway Patrol. But I knocked on his door and he said “what do you want?” (*laughter*) I said I’d like to be a Highway Patrolman. “What do you want to be that for? What do you do?” I said well I’m a printer... I was working in a print shop. “You’ll make more money at that than you’ll ever make as a Highway Patrolman.” Well I’d still like to be one. He said “it’s too late to send in this copy. You fill out this form and you bring it to me Monday morning... you’ll be a Highway Patrolman.” So that’s how I got in the Highway Patrol. But there’s several hundred took the test I guess.

NANCY RAY: Well when you got out, where was your first duty station?

HENRY LIGON: Well, San Antonio. Five years there and I opened this station here.

NANCY RAY: Here in Kerrville?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, my boy was 30 days old then, that was February... March... I moved up here a month before they did. They were still in the hospital on February 1st. But I opened this station up here and then I stayed here. Moved to Austin back in ’66 and stayed there until ’67 and then went back to Austin in ’68. But in ’67 is when they had a manhunt... they had in Bandera County, they had several men broke jail and killed a Highway Patrolman.

NANCY RAY: They killed a Highway Patrolman?

HENRY LIGON: Then... and I went with them on that manhunt and my partner, he was a deputy... and he left with the Ranger and had coffee and I looked around and I was by myself. So I drove up to the little place and had a pretty white fence... went in there with his wife and little boy out there feeding chickens some bread. And the old hills over there are straight up and down... you climb them (*chuckle*)... that’s near Leakey and Bandera. And of course we got to talking and that old boy said well my horses are acting up but there’s a helicopter flying around.

He said that's probably what it is... that horse has been like that all morning. He said he's upset about something. I said I'll go down the embankment and see what's going on. And I fell off the embankment and took about ten steps across there and saw a leg and a foot.

NANCY RAY: A what?

HENRY LIGON: A leg and a foot laying on the ground there... bluejeans. I said what did I tell you... the element of surprise. Good old English language that you don't normally use and one round of ammunition was a waste of time. ... didn't know. So something was walking in and next time there come five armed men out and there I sat and the lady was on the radio calling... telling them where we were. And her husband had my rifle on them. So we captured those five pretty easy.

NANCY RAY: And they had escaped prison?

HENRY LIGON: huh... they all went to prison, yes, got out at Hondo.

NANCY RAY: At Hondo.

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, they overcome the jailer so they took all his money and took all the guns he had and they were out there in the brush.

NANCY RAY: Now you were a Highway Patrolman at this time?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, just the year before. We...

NANCY RAY: Well normally Highway Patrol are working traffic, is that right?

HENRY LIGON: (*chuckle*) Normally.

NANCY RAY: You weren't normal, were you?

HENRY LIGON: I guess we're all... they're good officers... they're great officers.

NANCY RAY: So what else did you do as a Highway Patrolman? Let's start with San Antonio. What went on in San Antonio?

HENRY LIGON: Oh not much of anything went on in San Antonio. I worked the Laredo highway over there. Lots of wrecks, lots of people... it's hard to tell you how many people you meet at a funeral home... have to tell them how the person's child or sister, brother... what have you.

NANCY RAY: What caused those wrecks?

HENRY LIGON: A lot of things. They used to say speed was... speeding might cause you to run stop signs, passing in no passing zone, DWIs is the worst. I've been behind... pursuit where the man didn't know I was behind him. Went out on the highway, it was during the Christmas holidays. An old boy... had two little children in the car, wasn't even his. But I called the deputy sheriff just south of the San Antonio line and that Chevrolet just came at you wide open... and there was a beer joint across the street. And they told him, where they all saw him...they told him they were gonna call me. And that's what set him off and he took off for San Antonio. And I was calling ahead trying to get an officer to block the road. He didn't get there in time because he'd caught one on the bridge... spun out and a passenger in the car come across meeting him and couldn't go anywhere. Killed a passenger in that one and the little were kids butchered up. And he eventually died there at the scene. It's just simple little things...

NANCY RAY: But the things you saw, how did you handle that when you went home? How did you get over seeing things like that?

HENRY LIGON: Well, I tried to forget it. Put it behind me. And it's not easy sometimes because it...

NANCY RAY: Well tell me about this. When you graduated from Camp Mabry and you went to your first duty station, what did they issue you?

HENRY LIGON: They me a not a complete uniform. They didn't have enough badges made. We wore khakis and I was wearing a cap. And my captain, N. R. Smith, he was stationed in San Antonio. He was tough. And he called me in his office and he said I told you I didn't want you wearing that hat – a cap's not a hat. You get (*laughter*)... You get you a hat... yes sir. And I did.

NANCY RAY: They didn't provide it though?

HENRY LIGON: No.

NANCY RAY: What about a gun? Did they issue you a gun? Did they issue you a weapon?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yes, it was a .38 Special. Mine had a bent barrel and some of them wouldn't shoot at all. And we... (*laughter*)

NANCY RAY: They needed some quality control.

HENRY LIGON: At least they'd make noise anyway. We used to go to training all the time. And in fact, my partner and I built the background with telephone poles for a shooting range. We were all out there getting ready to shoot and then the Captain come down to give instructions. And they said get ready to go up and hold... get set... and *BOOM*, I pulled the trigger and I shot through a 110-volt wire (*laughter*). And then I had another friend, he was a real nice fellow. But he was older and he said well... school... made me an officer. But he was shooting off the ground and he said *bam bam bam bam* ... of course all six rounds went into his blanket right in front of him.

NANCY RAY: His blanket?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: Oh goodness.

HENRY LIGON: We didn't have good scores back then. But they've finally got the training and we do have good people now.

NANCY RAY: Well did you have ... did they teach you how to use firearms in the school?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah.

NANCY RAY: What was your first car, patrol car?

HENRY LIGON: My first car was a '51 model Ford, or a '50 Ford is what I started with. They give me... they'd run a hundred miles an hour but you couldn't stop them (*chuckle*) you know but...

NANCY RAY: Did you run a hundred miles an hour?

HENRY LIGON: We have, yes, quite a bit.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever have any crashes... or accidents?

HENRY LIGON: Crashes? No, I never wrecked one... except one and I was chasing a drunk driver that time. He run from me and I sideswiped going through a gate, rock gate, and I hit the side of it. It didn't hurt it that much.

NANCY RAY: Well were you ever afraid when you were trying to stop someone?

HENRY LIGON: Ma'am?

NANCY RAY: When you tried to stop somebody... what kind of thoughts were you having? Were you concerned about yourself...

HENRY LIGON: You walk up behind and... if you do have a partner, he'll be on the right-hand side and he'll be watching through the back side. You'll be on the left and you'll see the back of his head and what he's doing in the front. And you can ask the man to get out.

NANCY RAY: OK. Who was your first partner?

HENRY LIGON: Oh, the one I had was a boy by the name of Maroney.

NANCY RAY: Say that name again?

HENRY LIGON: Maroney.

NANCY RAY: MARONEY?

HENRY LIGON: Right. And he was a good one. He was our neighbor. And he ... told me he was getting old he turned 30 the year I was 23. I always just worried him to death. But he's heart bypass surgery or was having it now it's been several years. And he died on that. Then I had another one by the name of Fred Hurst and he'd been with them when they started Driver's License. And he, then he ended up being a good officer.

NANCY RAY: Well now was your partner, Mr. Maroney, was he the lead when you got there?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. No he had just turned 30 in December that year.

NANCY RAY: So he was the senior partner.

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah he was senior.

NANCY RAY: What did he teach you?

HENRY LIGON: Taught me how to drive, I know that. One time I pulled out on the road and meeting traffic. You always look ahead. And there's two or three cars coming. Don't pull into traffic thinking that second or third one's gonna be back there. And this was back (*laughter*)... and he pulled out and said looky there! And he grabbed the steering wheel and I was back there on the there on the shoulder. He said don't do that anymore (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: You nearly had a crash!

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. But I've had some good chases and I had a real good friend that I had pictures of him in here the other day. He died here just recently. But I give pursuit on... this Harper Road was more crooked than it is now. And I'd give pursuit up to a hundred miles an hour and you'd round a curve, a blind curve, and I come around there and there was a car sitting in the road just on my side just all the front end gone. And two people in it and he was off on the shoulder. I went off on the shoulder, went by the other and turned around and come back. And I was running at ninety or so. The next boy that come along the road was his brother... they'd been to Harper that's where their parents lived. And I worked with this one at the bank... but you see them... that happens.

NANCY RAY: Did you and your partner ever play any pranks each other?

HENRY LIGON: Oh we pulled some once in a while.

NANCY RAY: Are there any you want to tell us about?

HENRY LIGON: No...

NANCY RAY: I didn't figure you would.

HENRY LIGON: Oh I did all right... but the kids played all night... And I had a good friend of mine was a deputy and he point his finger at me and he'd jump up and run. But I put one under his car seat and it went up under the dash so I promised I'd ... the wiring, his wires were crossed. So I didn't pull anymore.

NANCY RAY: So that was it. Well some of the Rangers that we've interviewed talked about how much fun they had as Highway Patrolman. Was it fun?

HENRY LIGON: Oh it was. We enjoyed it. You learn lots of things from people. You don't tell people what to do, you gotta ask them. I know that for a fact. It helps. And then they got

choices... if you're upset in whatever you do... if you win this one here there might be another one come along you might not win. But I never had much problem with the people.

NANCY RAY: Well when you came to Kerrville, how was that different from San Antonio?

HENRY LIGON: Just like heaven (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: It was? What was the difference?

HENRY LIGON: Well San Antonio was a wild city at that time... narcotics, drinking and driving. We had Johnson grass on the side of the roads back then... seven or eight foot. Just look every hundred yards and you'd see where one had probably been through that brush. And when you opened a car door they'd fall out on the ground and that's... DWIs.

NANCY RAY: But Kerrville wasn't like that?

HENRY LIGON: No. Well yeah, it had some similarities but we didn't have as many. I think the first two or three years I was here, I don't think we had but a few car... major accidents you know causing death.

NANCY RAY: Well that was a nice change.

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. Change...(*chuckle*)

NANCY RAY: Well who was your partner? Did you have a partner here in Kerrville?

HENRY LIGON: Did I have one?

NANCY RAY: huh.

HENRY LIGON: Well for the first couple of years I did, I have one. His name was R. W. Wright. He left here and moved to Arizona. He come out of Houston and then the one I had here was my sergeant... he was in Highway Patrol school with me. He graduated with me. We're close all these years.

NANCY RAY: Mr. Maroney? Is that the one...

HENRY LIGON: No, this is James R. England. You'll hear a lot about him.

NANCY RAY: I've heard about Mr. England.

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah... I got pictures of him around here somewhere.

NANCY RAY: So he was your sergeant?

HENRY LIGON: My sergeant at that time was Burns and then England when he come back.

NANCY RAY: Well what stands out in your mind when you were here in Kerrville as a Highway Patrolman? Does anything...

HENRY LIGON: Well I apparently got it through a sergeant. I think we had these fellows when we first moved to Kerrville. They didn't particularly fall in love with law enforcement. So but ... somebody has to be ... he's still in law enforcement.

NANCY RAY: So how long were you here as a patrolman?

HENRY LIGON: As a patrolman? I come in 1957... 1968. So eleven years. I was one year in Austin as a Highway Patrol. I transferred up there.

NANCY RAY: All right. So that's when you became a Ranger, is that right?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, right.

NANCY RAY: Well what made you want to be a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Well I just liked to help people. I did, I really had that thought. I couldn't save the world but I just enjoyed being around people.

NANCY RAY: Was there someone...

HENRY LIGON: And there wasn't no bully in me (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Is there someone who influenced you toward becoming a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Yes there was. But I was just thinking about him the other day. And I was little boy. A man, a city policeman named Perry. He had a three-wheeler motorcycle and they lived on my street. We lived on... where 35 is now. And we lived on Fourteenth Street up there later, what they call Sweet Hill. I'll tell you a little bit about that in a minute. But anyway, he'd take us riding on that motorcycle and then heading out to interstate on Sixteenth Street there's another Mr. Anderson. And he was the street policeman... the Sixth Street, he had a drawer of clubs ... broken clubs training them people down there. And that was quite a... it made me think. I'd like it. My brother did the same thing.

NANCY RAY: So was your brother a Ranger also?

HENRY LIGON: No, he's with the Austin Police Department. I tried to get him to transfer and he wouldn't do it. He makes more money than I do (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Well when you , when you became a Ranger... how did you become a Ranger? What did you have to do?

HENRY LIGON: Well you're... to the board.

NANCY RAY: OK. Did you have to do any kind of a test at that time?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah... well no. They say you're going in for an interview and just...

NANCY RAY: And how did you get accepted to go to the interview?

HENRY LIGON: Oh, I worked... submit my petition there. I had my... L. H. Purvis right here...L. H. Purvis, he was a Ranger here. His daddy was a captain in Houston for years. And I just felt like I would enjoy doing more work in the criminal investigation and get off the highway. You don't live forever at a hundred miles an hour.

NANCY RAY: No you don't. Especially on these crooked roads.

HENRY LIGON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: OK so you were invited to an interview. Tell us about the interview.

HENRY LIGON: Oh they asked you everything and ...

NANCY RAY: How long did it last?

HENRY LIGON: Too long (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Do you remember who was on the board?

HENRY LIGON: No, I can't remember. Oh one was from Dallas, what was his name? I can't think of it. But he was here and I met him. And Colonel Gossett... I was next door neighbors to him in San Antonio. He was safety officer. And that's when I went to ... when they had the dedication of Falcon Dam. He and I went down there on assignments on that together. And just... that's 17 years with the Highway Patrol and I wanted a change.

NANCY RAY: Well do you remember any of the questions they asked you?

HENRY LIGON: No, I don't.

NANCY RAY: OK, that's fine. So who else made Ranger with you?

HENRY LIGON: One other... I can't call his name right offhand.

NANCY RAY: You'll think of it later.

HENRY LIGON: He's in Beaumont... I lost it. I can't recall it... Carpenter I believe.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well where did you go? What was your first...

HENRY LIGON: Well they first called me... I oversleep every now and then when I was a Highway Patrolman (*laughter*). I got a phone call one morning... there were two people on the line, two lines. And it was the colonel and lieutenant colonel. It was Gossett and the other one was Colonel Speir. Congratulations, Henry... (*chuckle*) Texas Ranger. I said thank you. He said

where do you want to go? You want to go to Beaumont or Austin... no it was San Antonio. I said I'd prefer San Antonio. Getting down there in East Texas and I'd probably have been there the rest of my life. But that was where I was sent and it was a good place to go?

NANCY RAY: You went to Beaumont or San Antonio?

HENRY LIGON: No, I was a Ranger now. They sent me to Austin the first year.

NANCY RAY: All right. So what was the first thing you did... well let me ask you this. When they gave you your badge, how did you feel?

HENRY LIGON: Good.

NANCY RAY: Can you describe that?

HENRY LIGON: I had three of them when (*chuckle*). My sergeant, Bill Wilson was my sergeant. And my captain he was on a trip and the Colonel was there later. So I ended up getting three different badges but they got them all back but one (*chuckle*). But it did make me feel good... there I am, I've got one of the top law enforcement jobs in the state. And I still feel that way about it.

NANCY RAY: Well now as a Ranger, you didn't have a uniform, is that right?

HENRY LIGON: Didn't have a uniform.

NANCY RAY: All right, tell us how did you dress for the job?

HENRY LIGON: Khakis... khaki shirt, black tie, black belt...

NANCY RAY: Cap?

HENRY LIGON: White hat.

NANCY RAY: White hat... not a cap, I was teasing.

HENRY LIGON: Yeah... I can think of a lot of things but I keep forgetting them.

NANCY RAY: All right, what was the first thing you did as a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: The first thing I did as a Ranger. They called me as I was moving in my house in Austin, Texas. And Bill Wilson had them... found me with the neighbor across the street phone. He said they had a man in a motel in south Austin that was wanted for attempted murder of his wife. They wanted me to go over and handle it. And it was one of them motels in south Austin. And I went over there was a deputy sheriff standing there. I asked him what do you want to do? I don't know. Well, let's go. So I knocked on the door and I saw the handle turn and I kicked that door across the room nearly (*chuckle*). And I had... I had three or four pistols there and he had a woman in there with him... just having narcotics. So that was one of my first jobs that I went on. Later on I worked one out of Austin. A real young man killed his father. He had really... what happened, they're from Paraguay. The daddy was...

WANDA LIGON: Veterinarian.

HENRY LIGON: Veterinarian... And he, the boy was mistreated by his daddy. He told me... He kept that boy out in the barn sleeping, not in the house. And treated him that way. And he come back and they had a ranch and he had a rifle. He had a .30-caliber rifle. And he laid out there and waited for his dad to show up out on the porch and he shot him right there. They buried... took his socks off and put them under a rock. And he took the gun with him. He couldn't lift his daddy so he throwed a rope up... tied it to the bumper... pulled him up in the trailer, dropped him in the trailer. Then he went on to north Texas the other side of Waco. And pushed him off in a "bar" ditch and he throwed the knife out there and it stuck in the ground. And anyway, we got him. We picked him up and I had George Roach and Lynch were the two officers in that area that helped do the job with me watching him. But they was the ones that sent

me down there in that draw by myself to get that rifle where he threwed it. He picked it up before I got it but I got the gun.

NANCY RAY: How did you find this...

HENRY LIGON: We had... I don't know... he give up pretty easy. I took him back by myself. I put him in that old jail down there and he wrote me a I don't know how many pages on what happened.

NANCY RAY: Like a confession?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. And he married that little old girl. She was like a toy. She was running around jumping over chairs and everything. But anyway he got time.

NANCY RAY: He did, OK. Well I understand that a Ranger works with the other law enforcement.

HENRY LIGON: We help them. Yeah, we'll do anything for them if they need it.

NANCY RAY: Well how did you establish yourself with those other law enforcement officers?

HENRY LIGON: I don't know. I never had a misunderstanding with one. Not one. And they called me. Like one old man called me over there in Georgetown and he looked at me and he said Henry, he said I like you. I said why? He said you wear working clothes, the other ones wear suits (*chuckle*). I didn't have enough money to buy one (*laughter*). But we had a good relationship with...

NANCY RAY: Were you gone from home a lot as a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, quite a bit. We worked lots of murders. Had one over here in Burnet one time that an old boy owned the café on 281, a beer joint, and he was married to an older lady. But they took on some help on the ranch out there... just drifters is what they were... three

of them... two girls... one girl, two boys. And the husband, he got involved and burglarized a house and took things and he... he said I can shoot everyone and call the sheriff you know... Nothing will happen to me you know... But anyway he hit one boy with a rifle, just skinned his head up over his eye. And they... they took him out there and he was laying on the ground there and they shot him... but the others were in the house. This other one had a pistol that they had. They walked up to the screen window and shot the man. And first come back they said he died of strangulation. But got a lot further in the investigation and it went as far as Washington, Indiana. They traveled and went all the way up there and gathered up guns and diamonds and everything else. And anyway, the way it was reported to us, they had... the wife saw a man laying on the ground and thought it was a black man... it was in July or August. He was just as dark as he could be. You couldn't tell the difference between white and black... it was her husband.

NANCY RAY: And that was because of the heat?

HENRY LIGON: Right... intense heat. And I've had one... one fellow we had... we had a Mexican boy shot one of our officers here. It was a game warden. And they went out here and he was working for a JP. And he went in to get something and the old boy got to acting up on him so he called the sheriff's department and one of his... ex-game warden is what he was. But they shot him with a .22 and hit him right above the eye and around the back is where it come out. Didn't lose that eye I don't think. And then the other officer walked into the barn and he was standing face to face with them... one of them metal old windows... he was standing there and he just emptied that rifle at that officer and it's a wonder he hadn't shot himself... it just shattered that glass and went to the floor. But them old white cabinets you used to see years ago, porcelain, he walked back and he went back and that boy ducked behind that cabinet and he

emptied his pistol through there... they was in the cabinet. Another time we got into it on a manhunt and he lost and we won... had to. And then I had other things happen. Do you want to go into any of those or...

NANCY RAY: Yeah.

HENRY LIGON: My good friend that used to be in coin collection... he was a good friend of mine.

NANCY RAY: What was his name?

HENRY LIGON: His name was Oscar Park... and his wife, they had no children. But he adopted sort of a godchild that he had. But he was in Arizona on his regular trips and they burglarized his house. Went in his safe and took all his coins... his coin collection. But he had baskets of that stuff in the banks here, silver and what have you. And right after that we had an armed robbery at a ranch up at... They robbed him and shot the wife through the hand, broke her hand. Tied them to the bed. That was the Hamilton Wilson family. And then... then we got a call on the telephone from the police department said go to the Hamilton Wilson ranch. Said a woman's been shot and they've been robbed. It was one of the robbers that called. So we went up there and sure enough, he had fallen off the bed and that old hand had turned black... and choked off, and her little hand just shattered. And she was all right, she come out of it. And we went to Corpus Christi with this case. I wanted to get his interview. The little lady listened quite a bit. And we had one of them down there in boosters. There were several involved in it. But they run to California and come back with clothes... that's what you call boosters... thousand dollar suits or whatever they could get... driving Cadillacs. And anyway, we got most of those

rounded. One of them was loaded... two of them was loaded. One of them paid back some of it but the other one, he passed away. Then I got two more that didn't pass away.

NANCY RAY: You know, I never asked you... who was your first captain?

HENRY LIGON: Who was my first captain? Clint Peoples. Peoples was the first. I'm trying to think how many I made. I always told them I made them captains (*laughter*). I was slow on reports... carried them in my shirt pocket.

NANCY RAY: Well now you were in Austin first. Where else were you a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Well I had nine counties out of Austin that year and then I came back to Kerrville. Let's see I had Gillespie County, Kerrville, Leakey, and then I had Junction. And that's just about... four to five counties.

NANCY RAY: So you spent your entire, other than Austin, the rest of your Ranger career was in the Kerrville area?

HENRY LIGON: Kerrville.

NANCY RAY: You were very fortunate.

HENRY LIGON: Yes, 52... 52 years I've been here. I took two years off so that'd be 50 years.

NANCY RAY: That's very good.

HENRY LIGON: And I've got other things... what else did I do?

NANCY RAY: Well did you ever have any kidnappings?

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah, I lost my judge here.

NANCY RAY: You lost your judge?

HENRY LIGON: Yes, his son and his daughter-in-law.

NANCY RAY: Tell us about that.

HENRY LIGON: I got called out and to his house. The deputy sheriff went out there, Jimmy Gibbs. He called me and I said well Jimmy, what's wrong? Did they get drunk? He said no it's worse than that Henry, come on out here. I went on out there to his house... snow on the ground. And the man... killed by a man who knew him is what I'd say. First he'd shot ...

NANCY RAY: Had been shot?

HENRY LIGON: Shot him through the back. You could see where he just pulled him over... blood all over the house. And his son took the two little 18-year old daughters from his older brother because they... they shot the little wife... shot her in the breast. And her husband... did him like they did his daddy. Shot him under the chest... shot him in the back.

NANCY RAY: Why?

HENRY LIGON: That one, according to Grand Jury, had he still been alive... he killed himself. In an accident supposedly in a Volkswagen that he took of his daughter's and said it was... left a note and said it was having steering problems with that little Volkswagen. And anyway, it was on 1604 in San Antonio... deputy sheriff worked the accident. But the right shoe was on the accelerator and the brake pedal was on top of it. And he didn't get it out... has to be timed. And there was... it was a deliberate thing. Apparently he called his wife. She got to crying and what have you and first the story she said that they had some German Shepherd puppies they were gonna register and she didn't get it done. And he said something that made her unhappy and she was crying. And the owner of the store let her go home. I think he told her goodbye. So assumed that's what would be. We searched the house and we had about two guns to start with. And they come up with it and they said maybe one of them was a... they couldn't see. They both were in the gun business... the judge was and he was. And he owed the judge money.

NANCY RAY: Well you really ran into some sorry people.

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah (*laughter*). But in twelve years, I'd seen a lot. I had lots of captains.

NANCY RAY: OK, tell us another captain.

HENRY LIGON: Oh... who are they... Bill Wilson was one of them.

NANCY RAY: Bill Wilson was one of them. I might even have a list. You were in Company...

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah, Bob Mitchell was my captain.

NANCY RAY: What about Butch Albers?

HENRY LIGON: Albers... I've got his picture out here in my storeroom. I don't even know where I put it but he was a fine man.

NANCY RAY: Well now what happened when you were working for Captain Albers?

HENRY LIGON: Oh I was doing everything. Most of that I took one man to Louisiana and he told me to bring him back or don't come back. Yes sir. Said I'll bring him back (*laughter*). He wouldn't leave for nothing. I know where he is today but nobody else does I don't guess.

NANCY RAY: Even today?

HENRY LIGON: But I say... that man was one of the top thieves for diamonds in the state of Texas.

NANCY RAY: Did you bring him back? Were you able to...

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah (*laughter*)... I brought him back. He didn't leave me. But

NANCY RAY: Well did you ever have any kidnappings?

HENRY LIGON: Yes, I had a kidnapping here. I was retired then. That was a girl out of the bank... or the boy out of the bank, his wife. Then I had bank robberies. I had one over there in... just going to Waco to turn my reports in... Marble Falls... a little red-headed boy. He was

running up and down the creek losing his money and what have you and finally got him caught. He said that his wife was gonna... to do something... robbed a bank. Then I went on to work. I've got boxes out here of my life... in that storeroom. It's all dust and dirt.

NANCY RAY: Well tell us what was the most interesting case you ever worked on? Is there one that stands out in your mind?

HENRY LIGON: That one. Boy they come out of some big-time people and I was promised they would never come back. I didn't know one of them to come back here. They might have but I don't...

NANCY RAY: You don't think so? OK.

HENRY LIGON: A senator passed away.

NANCY RAY: Which senator was that?

HENRY LIGON: Betts (*sp?*)... Did you hear about him? He lost his life in Corpus Christi.

NANCY RAY: ... no.

HENRY LIGON: I can't tell you too much of that because that's still open.

NANCY RAY: OK well I won't...

HENRY LIGON: But I had him at different places. I had him at the Capitol... different places.

NANCY RAY: Well did you ever have to work any serial murders?

HENRY LIGON: No, I didn't... I didn't have any that I knew of.

NANCY RAY: Well... the... what were the most common crimes for this area?

HENRY LIGON: Oh mostly burglaries and armed robberies... things like that.

NANCY RAY: OK, like of banks?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, like banks and individuals... motels... they'd go there. In Austin I worked one there. The trouble was they were robbing everything in the world. The only one I missed, never got him caught, was...

NANCY RAY: OK.

HENRY LIGON: He tied the old boys up with strings and put them in a closet back there at the motel. I'm trying to think of the nickname they had for him... Paddlefoot.

NANCY RAY: Paddlefoot?

HENRY LIGON: Yep... that was his partner though. And he pled guilty the week after they put him in jail... went to the penitentiary.

NANCY RAY: Well did you ever have any prison breaks that you had to work... other than the one you told us about as a patrolman?

HENRY LIGON: No, no I didn't. I was... had surgery when all that was going in the prison... that mafia group out of San Antonio and they shot them in prison, in jail there.

NANCY RAY: *(pause to change discs)* OK, we're back. So let's go back to some of your cases. Did you ever have any hostage type cases?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, I suppose... if I could just say when. I had one that wasn't no hostage to it... that was just before I left the Department. He said he wouldn't be taken alive. We made it down the street and he'd run out of the house... out in the middle of the road wanting to give up. So those, that's simple.

NANCY RAY: Well what were the tools that you used to solve a crime... like fingerprints, or lie detectors, or...

HENRY LIGON: Anything. Lie detectors were used quite a bit and I used a lot of fingerprinting then, back then. I ruined lots of good hats just by...

NANCY RAY: How?

HENRY LIGON: (*he motioned*) that black ink, you don't get it out. And usually we tried to find eyewitnesses.

NANCY RAY: Did you work with informants?

HENRY LIGON: Not many, never paid an informant.

NANCY RAY: Not many, OK. What about undercover work? Did you ever have to do that?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, I've done some of it but not much.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. Well what about drugs or narcotics?

HENRY LIGON: I didn't work narcotics much. They had a smaller group but they... and of course they worked by themselves back then. Now they've got a larger group that go out and... made state troopers out of them.

NANCY RAY: Yeah, they probably need it too.

HENRY LIGON: Right... huh... Intelligence is better.

NANCY RAY: Can you remember a time when somebody drew their gun on you?

HENRY LIGON: No, I had an old boy one time slapped my (*chuckle*) my reports out of my hand.

WANDA LIGON: Now that wasn't a bad guy. (*laughter*)

HENRY LIGON: It wasn't I don't think...

NANCY RAY: Why did he do that?

HENRY LIGON: Well, I don't know. He put his wrist like this and slapped his foot on them and grabbed my throat. I throwed him through the door... broke that real thick glass. Sounded like a cannon at the courthouse. I wanted to hurt him I guess.

NANCY RAY: Had you arrested him or what?

HENRY LIGON: No, he was a deputy sheriff.

WANDA LIGON: They were just horsing around.

NANCY RAY: Oh!

HENRY LIGON: He never did it again. But the old judge come down there, "what's going on?" Nothing. But I'll pay for it.

NANCY RAY: Did you have to pay for it?

HENRY LIGON: No.

NANCY RAY: Well what were some of the duties you had to do as a Ranger... maybe driving people or...

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, I did.

NANCY RAY: What was that?

HENRY LIGON: I drove... the daughter out of Germany... what is his name? He come over to visit here Lyndon Johnson. And I was her... and I drove ... well every year we drove someone in Austin on the legislature and what have you.

NANCY RAY: All right. So did you have to drive Lyndon Johnson?

HENRY LIGON: No, I punched him in the nose with my elbow (*laughter*). He was coming through the gate and he wanted me to... our governor at that time was Connally. And he wanted to thank us boys for being good officers. And he was driving a convertible and I reached over to

shake hands and he turned around and hit him, hit him in the nose. Then we got caught in his kitchen eating his pie (*laughter*). He asked us not to do that anymore.

NANCY RAY: Was that at the ranch?

HENRY LIGON: That's... Hoss, Hoss Cartwright was over there and all... Let's see Eisenhower, we handled security on him at the Falcon dedication, he was down there. And then handled the president on Lyndon Johnson's Library after he'd already passed. That was... which one was it Mama?

WANDA LIGON: I can't even hear you sometimes.

HENRY LIGON: The one that resigned, one of the presidents that resigned.

EDDIE RAY: Nixon.

NANCY RAY: Oh, Nixon, President Nixon.

HENRY LIGON: Nixon, yeah. And my brother was working there undercover and he handled some people that had numerous guns in their homes back during that period of time... and stopped all that. He was on that shooting in Austin. He was on his way up the stairs there where the shooting took place at the University tower.

NANCY RAY: Well I just read a book about that, about Ray Martinez. I just read a book about the tower shootings? So you were in Austin at that time also?

HENRY LIGON: No... Yes I was. I was stationed there. They were calling... we were off on the weekend.

WANDA LIGON: Yeah, but you were off that day. We were in Kerrville that day.

NANCY RAY: You were off, OK.

HENRY LIGON: I was in Kerrville and a little boy come running out of the house and said they're killing people off the tower.

NANCY RAY: That was pretty amazing. Well what about manhunts?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, I had a lot of them.

NANCY RAY: How did you... how did you pursue... how were the manhunts? Did you use dogs or horses or helicopters... what?

HENRY LIGON: Everything. Helicopters, foot... we had a lot of them over in Llano over there back... and had one that burglarized and everything in the Hill Country... Bob Favor's territory. And he was in school that week and I went up there with a white shirt and a pair of khakis and a brand new pair of boots that I got from San Antonio. And I walked that river in that granite and I cut them all to pieces and I didn't have no clean clothes. And I worked there for like I say a week on that manhunt. And finally they caught him.

NANCY RAY: What had he done?

HENRY LIGON: He had burglarized houses... house after house after house. He'd sit up there and carry places off and not be within ten foot of a Ranger... Pulled a pregnant wife off on a bicycle I remember one time (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Did you ever use dogs?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah, we had dogs. I had one up there and they brought them in from the prison system.

NANCY RAY: What kind of dogs were they?

HENRY LIGON: They were little hounds... not much bigger than a terrier hardly but they... they do good work.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well what about ... what was the most... as a Ranger... what was the thing you enjoyed the most about being a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Staying alive... I guess.

NANCY RAY: That's a good thing to do.

HENRY LIGON: I just liked being what I was.

NANCY RAY: What did you enjoy the least?

HENRY LIGON: I come from a little old seven kids and a mother and daddy and a two-bedroom house... it was in Austin, Texas, at 1010 East Fourteenth Street... my granddaddy's house next to it. And old cemetery right there. And the ...

NANCY RAY: That's how you got your start.

HENRY LIGON: huh. We lived close to the likes in that country... they had all east Austin. Never had a robbery or a burglary or a theft as long as they run their store. It's still there but it's not open anymore.

NANCY RAY: They were fortunate. Well are there any other things or any other cases you would like to tell us about as a Ranger? What about... was there a murder... something about a murder in Austin, at UT?

HENRY LIGON: Yes.

NANCY RAY: Tell us about that.

HENRY LIGON: Right after I left there, just prior to that they had two university students, girls, disappear. That's just before I went in the Ranger Service. And they found their two bodies on the north side out of Wheatington subdivision. And they'd come in to change clothes and... So he, this boy killed them. I didn't work that case on that one. But this one, I called it the white

murder, one of the boy's... his daddy was an attorney, lived in I think Corpus. I can't think of the girl's name. But she was very nice looking girl. And lived out on Goldcreek Road. My sister owned that café off that 2220... it was out there where the boats are and they've got that big fish... no barbeque place. But that is back when them creeks they was out there there together. And he walked in on them. He'd bought a pistol, he didn't like hippies I don't guess. The boy had long hair and he first shot him... shot him in the head. Then beat him with a rock. Then he heard a car coming and he forced her to get a hold and drag him and they dragged him across the creek bed, shallow water, and fell face first in it and he drowned. Then took her. Ended up over on Lake Travis, in that area, and he got a house. But he stopped at a station. Bought gas and left her in the car. She wouldn't leave. When he got over there, he broke her leg and throwed her in the lake. The old man run him off the place, it was a Volkswagen is what it was. And I found one over by the, over by the ... It had blood under the hood and the color was good and there was a sarape that she had... one just like it was in it. And they lived on that road and they were coming from there... just happened to be coming. That's how close you can get... almost right and not right. But then again they turned in that pistol. He gave it to the deputy sheriff. Well all of us worked it... every officer in the country. It wasn't just Rangers it was everyone. But they called in this boy that brought this gun back... he didn't like him. And that's where they got... we were gonna check, we had him on the list. We went every... and it was costing the University. And that was a sad murder.

NANCY RAY: A sad one, yeah. Well was there a case that you were not able to solve that just really sticks with you and that you would, you even think about it today?

HENRY LIGON: Well... no... nothing.

NANCY RAY: That's good. That's a relief isn't it? Well are there any other cases you would like to tell us about?

HENRY LIGON: Well, gosh I don't know... there've been so many. I say so many that you are a part of but not all of. Other officers are just as responsible for his own on some cases.

NANCY RAY: Well what kind of changes... what are the biggest changes that you've seen from when you were a Ranger to what they have today?

HENRY LIGON: Well they, they do a little more report writing which I don't like.

NANCY RAY: That'd be the thing you liked least about being a Ranger?

HENRY LIGON: Yeah. That's the way I do. We had a preacher that shot a boy... got him over there in Bandera County. He killed his brother's killer. And we got his bullets... me and Bob Warner, he was a Highway Patrolman then he was a captain in the Rangers. But we worked that one real good as Highway Patrolmen. Just like brothers you know. He's dead, he died. But anyway, they're setting up the bank robberies out around Randolph and they were getting all this information and we got into it and we found this car they took... and impounded it. When we got it, it had a hole in the dashboard. And we got that bullet out of there that come out of the body... one didn't go in the body... it was in the dash... it was perfect. That old boy let it go off in the dash. And we used... I carried it in my pocket when I went to trial over, in that little box. I'd put it in my coat pocket and take it out. They didn't know I using as evidence or not. He pled guilty (*chuckle*).

NANCY RAY: Did he do time?

HENRY LIGON: Yes, he did. And he, he burned the gun and tore it to pieces and threwed it in the creek bed. All it takes is that little old bullet if you can find it in the right place. And he was

a preacher. He'd lay on the floor. He was afraid somebody would kill him. They did some killing. They killed this boy's brother and another man in the *unknown name* area. They'd carry them out and dump them no telling where.

NANCY RAY: Well I show that you became a Ranger August 1st, 1968. Is that right?

HENRY LIGON: Um hmm.

NANCY RAY: And that you retired August 31st, 1980. Is that right?

HENRY LIGON: Um hmm.

NANCY RAY: And what did you do after you retired?

HENRY LIGON: What I did then... I went to work for Nevada Shelton, Shelton Ranches. He's the grandson of the King Ranch. And he's a big shot. He spends lots of money I wouldn't spend it for. But he wanted me. I was recommended by a colonel... that I go to work for him. And I took it really as a... He told me Henry, I'll take you and you'll retire from this company with the seventeen top highest retirements in the state of Texas. And I took it because I was thinking about my wife. I'd already had that surgery. I didn't know whether I'd live a day or not. I wasn't unhappy about it if I did you know. But I lived... let's see, I was 49 years old and like I said I'll be 81. But anyway, I lasted about eighteen months... (*couldn't understand this comment*) This, that and so forth... I haven't talked about it a whole lot. But I went to his funeral. Heart killed him, took his life. And I was sad for that. And I told her then and even after if he'd let me go. If you've got a problem, call me... I can handle it. But I let it go like that. I had a judge, federal judge, come to me and another well a trial attorney... he said Henry, we'll take your case. I said no. And they would have. They said you'll win. I said let it go. Things will take care of themselves. I'm happy. I built this house. I didn't build this house... bought it, but we rebuilt it. I

built that other little house out there... did all that... poured out of a wheelbarrow... built the fences.

NANCY RAY: Well it sounds like you're doing... you're enjoying your retirement anyway.

HENRY LIGON: Oh yeah.

NANCY RAY: Well do you have anything else then before... I know we can only capture a portion of your career. But is there anything else you'd like to share?

HENRY LIGON: Oh I found out today from one of my good friends that was a Ranger one time... before the colonel told him... I didn't know that. I laughed about that... Jim Peters, that's the one that lost the eye. He called me and asked me if I could find him a derringer and I wouldn't do it. But I looked but I never did do anything so he bought one. He took his jacket off and it hit the ground and that's when it hit him in the eye. Never packed a derringer. I built one case that we should have tried is over 30 some odd years old. An old boy had been shot in the back of the head, hitchhiker out of Junction. And they threw him off a bridge. And then later on that pistol, some 30 years before, was found under a within walking distance of a Highway Patrolman's house at a creek at Segovia. That old boy's hair had blood... it was real short and thick. And his daddy come from... they was in the military in England and he tried ... attempted rape at twelve years old over there. He was in the penitentiary out there when we found him for robbing two other armed robbers and getting their money. And they never did go to trial.

NANCY RAY: Goodness. Well it sounds like you had a full career.

HENRY LIGON: I hope.

NANCY RAY: And I want to thank you today for this interview and for sharing your story. And

...

HENRY LIGON: I hope I didn't make any mistakes... that I didn't hurt anybody's feelings.

NANCY RAY: Well thank you again for your time today...

HENRY LIGON: I appreciate you putting up with us.

NANCY RAY: Oh, it's been good. And thank you for your service to the state of Texas.

HENRY LIGON: One of these days... I told my little sister if she wants to write the book she can and I'll give her half of it.

NANCY RAY: Maybe she'll take you up on it.

HENRY LIGON: It wouldn't sell.

NANCY RAY: Thank you again.