

CAPTAIN BOB MITCHELL
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

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PROJECT: TEXAS RANGERS

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED AT THE FARM OF
GLENN ELLIOTT
WINDOM, TEXAS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1996

INTERVIEWED BY: ROBERT NIEMAN—LONGVIEW, TEXAS

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Present At Interview: Captain Bob Mitchell and Robert Nieman

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Captain Bob Mitchell
Texas Ranger—Retired

ROBERT NIEMAN: My name is Robert Nieman and this is Tuesday, October 29, 1996. We are visiting with Mr. Bob Mitchell of Waco, Texas. We are at Glenn Elliott's farm in Windom, Texas. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Mr. Mitchell's involvement in and with the Texas Rangers. Captain Mitchell do I have your permission to record this interview?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes you do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Captain Mitchell, you understand that this video tape will belong to you and to me?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And finally, Captain Mitchell do I have your permission to present copies of this tape to various historical organizations such as museums, libraries, schools and etc.?

BOB MITCHELL: You do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What is your full name?

BOB MITCHELL: Robert Kenneth Mitchell.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When and where were you born?

BOB MITCHELL: I born in Troup, Texas on May 17, 1934.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And what was your father and mother's names?

BOB MITCHELL: My daddy's name was E. D. Mitchell, my mother's name was Ruth Oleda Skillern Mitchell.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Chronologically?

BOB MITCHELL: I have a brother Darwin who's my oldest brother, a brother Wayne, a sister Wanda Wilkinson of Palestine and a little brother who.....a younger brother who is deceased named Jimmy Mitchell.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And your wife's name?

BOB MITCHELL: Gerry D. Busby Mitchell.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And do you have any children?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And how many?

BOB MITCHELL: Three. Ah.....Carol Mathison who lives in Atlanta, Georgia is our oldest child, our middle child Karen died in 1990, suddenly and unexpectedly of a brain hemorrhage and I have a son, Robert K. Jr., Bobby, who lives in Waco.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Where is your wife from?

BOB MITCHELL: Waxahachie.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Where did you mainly attend.....what do you call your home town?

BOB MITCHELL: Palestine.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Is that where

BOB MITCHELL: That's where I grew up. I attended Elkhart public schools and graduated there in 1952 at ah.....we moved to what is now inside the city limits of Palestine when I was about a freshman in high school and my parents.....my dad still lives there, my mother is deceased. But I consider that my home town.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....when did you.....after you gotwhen did you graduate from school?

BOB MITCHELL: 1952, I graduated from Elkhart High School and ah..... I attended Henderson County Jr. College on an athletic scholarship.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What kind?

BOB MITCHELL: Football, for one year and then went in the service and ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Which branch?

BOB MITCHELL: Army. And ah..... I served in Korea after the war was over and I was fortunate enough to get chosen for a football team over there and ah.....mostly college graduates and some big time football players and I thoroughly enjoyed my tour over there, touring the far east playing football.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What position did you play?

BOB MITCHELL: I played center and line backer.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....when did you get.....what years were you in the Army?

BOB MITCHELL: I went in, in '54 and was discharged in '56.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay ah.....when you were discharged what did you do?

BOB MITCHELL: Ah.....moved to Austin and enrolled at the University of Texas. I had married after coming back from Korea and I still had a year in the Army and my wife and I went to Ft. Leonard Wood and we had a child about a year after we was married.

ROBERT NIEMAN: That's in Missouri?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes. The child was born in Missouri. And I came back and enrolled at the University of Texas and ah.....we got a little child on the way and I couldn't afford to go to school on the GI bill with two children, so I applied for DPS and was accepted in the patrol school.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What is your official date of joining the DPS, Department of Public Safety?

BOB MITCHELL: April 1, 1958.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And how long did you attend school then?

BOB MITCHELL: At the University of Texas?

ROBERT NIEMAN: No, at the DPS school, how long was it?

BOB MITCHELL: I went through patrol school ah..... I believe it was like sixteen weeks at that time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any special remembrances of the patrol school, any special people? Who were some of the people you went to school with?

BOB MITCHELL: I went to school with ah.....four of us wound up being in the Rangers, Jimmy Ray and ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Now that Chief Jim Ray's.....?

BOB MITCHELL: Nephew.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Nephew.

BOB MITCHELL: Ah.....a fellow named Green, I don't recall his first name, but ah.....he did not stay in the Rangers long and resigned and ah.....Lefty Block and myself. And Lefty of course went on to become and Senior Ranger Captain for several years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....when you got out of schoolwell was there anything special about the school that was.....was anything special incidents happen, or what part did you like the best or dislike the worse?

BOB MITCHELL: Well, I guess I liked all of it. I was young, I wanted the job, I needed the job ah.....the class rooms was a challenge. The athletic part of it, to me, was not much of a challenge,

it was to some of them, but because I had played ball the year or two before well I was in good shape.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well when you applied were you just looking for a job or had you wanted to be a lawman?

BOB MITCHELL: No, I wanted to be law enforcement, I wanted to be a Texas Highway Patrolman.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What had influenced you to be that?

BOB MITCHELL: An old trooper stationed in Palestine named Lane Fuller. I had visited him several times and he kind of recruited me and I just thought that was the neatest, keenest, job that a man could ever have and I still feel that way, I served ten great years on the Highway Patrol and loved every day of it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You were ah.....around Palestine, did you get up in the Athens area much?

BOB MITCHELL: Ah....ah.... I went to school in Athens.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you know Jess Sweden, former Sheriff?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh yeah, knew Jess well, went to school with his children.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did he influence you any?

BOB MITCHELL: No, not really ah.....Jess was an expert pistol shot and I recall him coming out to the college and putting on some shooting exhibitions for us. And he had a one armed black man that worked for him and he'd hold potatoes up on sticks and he'd the potatoes out and ah.....it impressed me, but ah.....it didn't influence my wanting to get into law enforcement.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, you finished your Highway Patrol school ah.....where did you go to patrol school?

BOB MITCHELL: In Austin.

ROBERT NIEMAN: At?

BOB MITCHELL: At the DPS Academy.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Is that Camp Mabry?

BOB MITCHELL: No ah.... I was in the second class that graduated from the present day DPS facility on Lamar Street.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Where was your first station?

BOB MITCHELL: New Braunfels.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And who was your first Captain?

BOB MITCHELL: N. R. Smith, one of the greatest men I ever worked for.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell me about him.

BOB MITCHELL: N. R. Smith was the type guy that if you did your job you could do no wrong in his eyes. He expected you to work but you knew you had his total support at all times. I admired him as aas a man and as a leader and he's still alive today and I have great respect for him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well how long were you in New Braunfels?

BOB MITCHELL: Ten years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: So when you joined in.....where you at on August 1, 1966, the day Charles Whitman.....?

BOB MITCHELL: I was in New Braunfels and ah.....they sent several troopers from our area down there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Let me.....go ahead and explain what Whitman was and what he did so the people watching this might.....

BOB MITCHELL: Charles Whitman climbed to the top of the UT tower and heavily armed with high powered rifles and just began to randomly shoot people down on the ground and killed several, I don't recall how.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Fifteen.

BOB MITCHELL: Fifteen people.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Wounded thirty-three I think.

BOB MITCHELL: But several troopers from my area were sent to Austin, but it so happened that I was the only trooper in my county, I was stationed there for four or five years and ah.....but they elected not to send me and leave the county without a trooper, or Highway Patrol.

ROBERT NIEMAN: So ah.....where were you on ah....when Kennedy was assassinated?

BOB MITCHELL: I was in New Braunfels ah....ah.... I was in a coffee shop with my Sergeant.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who was?

BOB MITCHELL: Homer Spellman, and we were having lunch and the waitress came out and told us the President had been shot and we went to our cars and ah.....shortly thereafter I learned that he had died.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You weren't.....

BOB MITCHELL: The Governor was also shot, Governor Connolly.

ROBERT NIEMAN: With the Governor having been shot also, did you receive any special instructions?

BOB MITCHELL: No, no. Of course it was in Dallas and you know, 250 miles away.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who were some of your other trooper Captains?

BOB MITCHELL: That's the.....N. R. Smith is the only trooper Captain I ever had.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. Ah.....any special experiences could we talk about as your days as a trooper?

BOB MITCHELL: Lots of interesting things happened.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Let's talk about them.

BOB MITCHELL: All right. I'll talk about one incident ah.....ah.....a friend of mine who was a local police officer Sergeant answered a disturbance call one night. And ah.....he pulled his car up in front of the house and left the overhead lights on. And the.....it was a young man who was whipping his mother. He went out the back door as the officer came in to the front door and came around the house and jumped in the car and took off, the police car, with the lights still on. And I was notified, I was south of New Braunfels on the interstate and they notified me that the police car had been stolen and that ah.....it was believed to be headed south on the interstate. I looked up and I could see the lights coming, the wrong way on Interstate 35. So I set up a road block, just pulled my car out in the interstate and turned my lights on. But before he got to me he cut over onto right and got on the proper lane and would be going south on the interstate. So I jumped in my car and tried to pull over closer to him and get him stopped, but he blew on by me, so I stepped out and shot him. And it was a slanted back '59 Chevrolet, and ah.....at that time we carried .38 specials with wad cutters in 'em.

ROBERT NIEMAN: A wad cutter being?

BOB MITCHELL: A reload. And ah....when that bullet hit that slanted glass it flattened out, but it hit him in the back of the head. And ah.....the car's stop lights came on and it ran off in a ditch down there and I got down there and he was down in the floor board with a big old open hole in the back of his head and not moving. So I turned him over and there was a smaller hole over his eye. Well I thought he was shot clean through the head. And ah..... I got on the radio and

called Captain Smith and Sergeant Spellman, they came to New Braunfels. Well an ambulance came and picked this young man up and carried him to New Braunfels hospital. And what had happened, that bullet had hit that thing and flattened, went in under the skin and hit the skull and came around and came out over his eye. And ah....he had come to by the time they got to the hospital and we wound up putting him in jail that night. But that was one interesting situation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about some others.

BOB MITCHELL: Several years after that he went to the penitentiary and when he got out of the penitentiary he had.....well he had tried to escape while he was down there and the dogs caught him. And he got up on a fence, just standing up on the wire and fence post and those dogs chewed on him pretty good. He was impressed by the dogs and ah.....he came by my house one afternoon and ah....he had a blood hound, said, "I'd like to give you a blood hound". But I didn't take it, but ah.....he called me several times after that and some time ten years ago I guess it was, twenty years after that happened, he walked into the Ranger office down at Kingsville, Casey King was the Ranger, and ah.....he asked Casey if he knew Bob Mitchell. And he said, "Yeah I know him". He said, "He's really a nice guy", said, "He turned my life around for me". And Casey said, "What do mean, he turned your life around". He said, "He shot me through the head".

ROBERT NIEMAN: Got his attention. Well tell us about some other Highway Patrol cases.

BOB MITCHELL: Well I guess one of the worse wrecks I ever worked was a Greyhound bus and a semi truck that had jackknifed and slid across the median on the interstate and hit a Greyhound bus head on, killed several people. Of course they were from all over the United States and we spent seemed like for ever notifying next of kin, running 'em down and notifying 'em. By far the worse accident I ever worked. I made lots of friends on the Highway Patrol, or

felt like I did. We had gone to New Braunfels, a town that my wife or I knew absolutely nothing about, but after ten years it really became home to us and we still treasure our friends there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah.....did you ever.....when you'd stop a car, you said you was the only trooper in the county, now it seems like and this being 1996, that if you see a car stopped there's either two patrol cars or two patrolmen, or troopers. Ah.....so would you consider it more dangerous now or is there some official policy why you have two instead of one?

BOB MITCHELL: I don't know what the thinking on the policy making has been and I'm not sure that ah.... I would agree with that. At the time I didn't feel like I was in any danger, although I was. But ah..... I didn't give it any thought then and ah.....of course I was young and thought I could handle any situation I guess, but ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did you ever have anybody try to fight you?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh yes, a lot of times. But ah....like I say, I was young and I thought I could whip anybody that come down that highway and did a good many.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you ever have one of them get the better of you?

BOB MITCHELL: Almost.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you want to talk about it?

BOB MITCHELL: I will.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell us about it.

BOB MITCHELL: Late one night, I guess about 1960, I stopped a car south of New Braunfels on interstate and wound up arresting the driver for DWI and he cursed me all the way to the jail, which was fifteen, eighteen miles away. And ah....really you expect some of that from drunks but you get tired of it. But we got to the jail and as I booked him and ah....locked my weapon up, which was a policy before you go up in the jail, and then took the handcuffs off of him and when

I took that last cuff off he hit me, and the fight was on and ah....he was a tough guy, construction worker. And he really hurt me several times when he hit me, but I think I was hurting him a little too. But he knocked me down and ah....we had fought around into a courtroom and he knocked me down and he was over me and his face was about that far from my face and he was working on me pretty good. And I got my hand in an old brass spittoon that they had in courtrooms back in those days, and ah....he probably would of really hurt me had I not found that spittoon. But when I came up and hit him up side the head with that I knew I had hurt him, because I was looking him right in the eyes and I know I hurt him after that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was this in New Braunfels ah....courthouse?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes. But ah....he wound up in the hospital that night and ah....he had bloodied me up pretty good and tore my uniform nearly off of me, my shirt, but ah....he wound up the loser. Not all in the fight in the courtroom too.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah.... I mean when you'd come home and your shirt almost tore off of you and bloodied and what not, I mean did.....you know, we hear so much about the wives.

BOB MITCHELL: Wives....law enforcement wives have got to be a special breed of people and the toughest women in the world. I really believe that ah.....my wife should of been on the state payroll along with me because she took my calls, raised my children, done a lot of things that I should of done as a parent that I didn't have the opportunity to do. But she never complained one time and ah....an officer has just got to have a special kind of woman to live in his house and put up with things like that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well when did you decide you wanted to be a Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: About 1966. Well I had known for a long time that that's what I wanted to do in the long run. But it was about 1966 when I talked N. R. Smith, my Captain, about it. And

not only was he my boss, he was also my friend and we spent a good bit of time together. I expressed my desire to him and he was a great deal of help to me in getting into the Rangers.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....was there any....when you were a child did the.....you know, did you play cowboys and indians, Rangers and anything like?

BOB MITCHELL: No, we had horses and we played cowboys just like all boys do. But ah....nobody in my family that I knew of had ever been in law enforcement.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did?

BOB MITCHELL: Until I met Lane Fuller, the Highway Patrolman stationed in my hometown, I never gave it a thought.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did any of the old Rangers everdid any of them influence you, I mean like the old Lee McNelly's and the John Jones and the Lee Hayes.....or the Jack Hayes and people like that, or did you.....had you studied any of the history of the Rangers?

BOB MITCHELL: I had studied very little at the time. I knew several of the Rangers in my area. Zeno Smith worked Comal County there in New Braunfels for several years and I got to know him quite well.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell us about Zeno.

BOB MITCHELL: Zeno was a unique individual. He was the only Ranger I ever knew wore a black hat. I just noticed you wore one today. I thought about that but ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Frank Hamer wore a black hat.

BOB MITCHELL: He did, he did. I did not know that at the time but I know that now. But ah.....he ah....Zeno would ah.....come and he'd interrogate people way into the night and then set down with two fingers and work for hours taking statements or confessions. That's one of the

hardest working old men I ever knew, and he was old then. But he impressed me as a law enforcement officer.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who were some of the other older Rangers you knew?

BOB MITCHELL: Alford Alley was the Captain that worked in that area.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well he was one of the ones I did want to talk to you about. He was quite controversial.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Could you tell us about Captain Alley, your thoughts on him?

BOB MITCHELL: Captain Alley was a good man, a very good man. But ah....and he'd always done what he thought was right. And ah.....you know he was controversial but ah.....the criminals respected him and ah.....he didn't know what the word fear meant. And ah..... I don't see anything wrong with being controversial if you're right or think you're right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah....you ever talk to him any about theand I guess you'd of been a Ranger when this happened in fact, the labor problems in south Texas?

BOB MITCHELL: I've heard him talk about it at length. And everything he done down there that he was accused of doing, that some people thought was wrong, he went to his grave believing he was right. And in most cases I believe he was right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....what about Homer Garrison, did you know Garrison?

BOB MITCHELL: Homer Garrison made me a Ranger. I was one of the last Rangers that he pinned a Ranger badge on. Great respect for him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did he pin it on you personally?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes he did.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell us about Colonel Garrison?

BOB MITCHELL: I did not know Colonel Garrison well but ah...ah.... I never will forget, when I went for my interview for a Ranger they had twelve to fifteen people there to interview that day, but the Public Safety Commission had a full agenda and they didn't get around to interviewing the Ranger candidates until late in the afternoon. And it probably was nine o'clock at night when I got in to be interviewed and ah...of course we went home not knowing, the Colonel was going to let us know in the next few days. But the next morning he called my house and caught me at home, my wife answered the phone, "I don't know who this is, he wants to talk to you", and it was Colonel Garrison. I didn't recognize his voice. And ah.... I asked him who.....after he said something to me I said, "Who am I talking to". He said, "Homer Garrison, you didn't think it was your banker did you". He told me that he had been impressed with my interview and he wanted me to be a Ranger and he said, "I'm sending you to Corpus Christi". Well I didn't care where I went, just all I wanted was the Ranger badge and the Ranger job. And ah....later that day he called me back and he said, "Captain Crowder at Dallas has called me and asked to have you stationed in Tyler", and he said, "If Tyler is satisfactory with you I'd like for you to go to Tyler instead of Corpus Christi". So Bob Favor who made Ranger with me that day was destined to go to Tyler, and me to Corpus, but he just changed us. And come to find out later, I did not know why this had happened, but come to find out later, N. R. Smith my patrol Captain and Bob Crowder, my first Ranger Captain, were very good friends and they had talked on the telephone that day and I guess Captain Smith sold him on me. But I enjoyed working for Captain Crowder, one of the best men I ever knew.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell us more about Crowder.

BOB MITCHELL: He's a big old ex-Marine, 6'4", just a great leader of men, wonderful personality, everybody that knew him loved and respected Bob Crowder.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you know ah....did you ever meet Frank Hamer?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I did, but ah....in a very casual way. I knew his brother.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Earl?

BOB MITCHELL: No ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....ah....

BOB MITCHELL: Harrison.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Harrison, Harrison.

BOB MITCHELL: I knew his brother, I met him several times, but ah.....Frank Hamer died in about 1955 before I even went with the DPS. But I had been in a crowd with him in about 1953 in Athens with Sheriff ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Sweden?

BOB MITCHELL: Jess Sweden.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did him or his brother Harrison, of course I've got to ask, you ever hear either one talk about Bonnie and Clyde?

BOB MITCHELL: I heard Harrison talk about it, of course he wasn't there and ah.....ah..... I don't know that he knew more than you and I know about the actual situation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about Manny Gault?

BOB MITCHELL: I don't know Manny Gault, I know who you're talking about, but never knew him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Bob Goss?

BOB MITCHELL: Didn't know him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.... I know you knew Lone Wolf Gonzauillas.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I've heard part and read part of an interview you did with Captain Gonzauillas shortly before he died, they have it down at the Hall of Fame.

BOB MITCHELL: Uh hum.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Could you tell us about Gonzauillas?

BOB MITCHELL: I love Lone Wolf Gonzauillas, Manual T. "Lone Wolf" Gonzauillas was what.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what did you call him, I mean you didn't say, 'Hey Lone Wolf', I mean that just.....

BOB MITCHELL: I called him Cap.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay.

BOB MITCHELL: And he came to Waco quite often because he loved the museum and the Hall of Fame. And he loved to be invited to your company meetings. And he loved to tell young Rangers stories about how it was then. Lone Wolf Gonzauillas was a super intelligent individual and he made the transition from the old days to the modern days, something that a lot of them couldn't do. But ah....he brought a copy of the first report down, I recall one time to a company meeting and ah....ah....it wasn't much bigger than a cigarette paper, but ah....and it didn't have but two or three blanks on it, but he talked about how the men raised cane when they had to start filling out that report. Our guys.....or my guys there in the company thought that very humorous because most Rangers hate to do reports.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well that leads me to one of the questions I was going to ask later but I'll go into it now and that is that the official reports changed dramatically. In the early years of this century reports were slim, as you just said, to say the least, and the classic example of this was in the early 1920's when a Ranger named Kiowa Jones was sent after a notorious Mexican outlaw

and he caught the Mexican and his whole report said, 'Mean as hell, had to kill him'. That was the whole report.

BOB MITCHELL: I think Captain Gonzauillas covered that in his presentation to the men there that day.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what kind of individual was he? I mean, you say he'd talk about.....did he talk about the Kilgore days any?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, a whole lot. Hehe was a small man, but I guess he was big in the eyes of everybody that knew him. But he talked about Kilgore and Gladewater days and when ah....they had a Church where they ran a chain from the front end to the back end and that was their jail, they'd just take 'em in and handcuff them to that chain.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The trout line.

BOB MITCHELL: Trout line, yeah. But ah.... I guess he made most of the boom towns during his time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Borger and Kilgore and Burkeburnett and

BOB MITCHELL: Mexia.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Mexia. Did he.....you know him and Goss were partners back in Kilgore, did he ever talk to you about Goss any?

BOB MITCHELL: I don't recall whether he did or not.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. Ah....what would be your thoughts of being around somebody like a Goss.... I mean a Hamer who reported killed fifty men, Gonzauillas you know they.....you say seventy-five, he said it probably wasn't more than twenty-two, you know it ah.... I mean Rangers in those days were different, they acted how they had to act, you got(unintelligible)....

BOB MITCHELL: They did what they had to do.

ROBERT NIEMAN:on their period.

BOB MITCHELL: And ah.... I have never heard one of them say in a boastful way, I killed somebody or had to kill so many. But they did what they had to do and ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well, would you agree with the statement I make to people is, the Rangers yesterday would have probably couldn't make it today.

BOB MITCHELL: Absolutely!

ROBERT NIEMAN: The Rangers today, if they tried to apply.....Richard Sheen and Ronnie Griffith and Al Alexis are really close friends of mine and I say, if they tried to apply today's methods to the '20's and '30's they'd get laughed out of town. Cause today's methods wouldn't work then too.

BOB MITCHELL: We can't get on a horse and ride through the sleet all night and eat fried beans for breakfast and coffee.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And try to give a man his rights while he's shooting at you and you know.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah. But ah....they couldn't get in these modern automobiles and aircrafts and do what you have to do today.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well one of the points I'm trying to make here to is that, the people, the population at that time, wouldn't respect a lot of the methods used today.

BOB MITCHELL: That's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: They wanted results, plain and simple, they didn't.....you know, they demanded.....so that the Rangers then, just like the Rangers today, they'd do it the way the public basically wants it.

BOB MITCHELL: If the Rangers didn't kill 'em on the spot, they'd brought 'em to town and they tried 'em and hung 'em at the courthouse, that's the difference in

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well the old Benton.....ah....Bill McDonald, you know, one Ranger, one right. You know McDonald was raised down at Henderson, lived in Longview and went to Mineola and got in law enforcement in Mineola. Some say that he's probably your first of your modern Rangers, around the turn of the century, Bill McDonald. And he the one.....you know, one Ranger, one right, and good man.....a man in the wrong can never up against a man in the right, he keeps on coming. And ah.....so I think that pretty well does totally concurs with what you've just said. Ah.....did you know ah....and if you did, what your thoughts were, any Ferguson Rangers, the old notorious..... one for Ma Ferguson, any hoodlum that wanted a Ranger badge she'd pin one on 'em back in the '30's.

BOB MITCHELL: I don't recall having ever been acquainted with one of those people.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....when was your first official day as a Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: December 1, 1967.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....how many Rangers became Rangers at that same....basically same.....

BOB MITCHELL: There were three of us.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You and the man you just mentioned, went to Corpus.

BOB MITCHELL: I want to tell you about my first day in the Rangers.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah, okay.

BOB MITCHELL: My first day in the Rangers I reported to Captain Crowder about seven-thirty in the morning at the Ranger office in Dallas and ah....met he and Ernest Daniel and Bob Badgett and Sergeant Lester Robertson. And Captain Crowder had, had a request from some governmental agency to go to Groveton and arrest the doctor, the only doctor in Groveton.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And where is Groveton?

BOB MITCHELL: Groveton's down in Trinity County, it's the county seat of Trinity County. But what had happened, this ex-convict had kind of learned a little about medicine while he was working in prison in the hospital. And he when he got out he went to Tennessee and burglarized a doctor's office, stole all his credentials and he going through Groveton one day and he stopped at a drug store there and they brought this child in back cut. He told 'em he was a doctor, he'd take care of him and he did, stitched him up and took care of him. Well the people there in the drug store, several of them, got to talking to him about how bad we need a doctor here in Groveton. So he just stayed there and opened a practice, and a booming practice. He'd even treated an old uncle of mine who had really hurt a hand bad in a farm accident. But anyway, he said, "I'd like for you and Ernest to go down there and arrest this guy and bring him back to Kaufman County". So Ernest was an old man at that time and ah.....he made me drive and being in the lead my first day in the Rangers. But he was telling me what we needed to do, go to the Sheriff's office when get down there and tell the Sheriff what wegot a warrant for the doctor, supposedly doctor. So we went to the Sheriff's office and he was a tall, lean gangly guy and ah.....he had a little old office and there was several people there in it, we called him out in the yard to talk to him. And he leaned up against the tree there and we told him we got a warrant for this doctor across the street. He said, "Oh no", said, "We just had a town meeting this morning and we voted this morning to build him a new clinic we was so proud of him". He went on to tell us about miracle healings he had done and how he'd sit in a home all night with really sick people. And he set in the home because he was afraid they would die you know. But ah....anyway, we went over and his office was full of people and he was with a patient when we walked in and called him by his righteous name. And he had met and married a lady there since he'd been there and built a big fine home, he was really doing a practice. But the old Sheriff's

had told us that morning he said, “If ya’ll go over there and arrest that man as much as they like him, you’re going to have to shoot your way out of town”. But we didn’t, we carried him across the street to the courthouse and arraigned him and cuffed him and loaded him up and brought him to Kaufman. I thought it was a very interesting first day.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Way to break in. Well after this, did you have any special training, as a Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, the best training in the world. They sent me to Glenn Elliott and Red Arnold and different Rangers. OJT.

ROBERT NIEMAN: On the job training.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....

BOB MITCHELL: And they sent me to some schools along, but that on the job training with guys like.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well tell me your first meeting with Glenn Elliott.

BOB MITCHELL: Well I worked around the Dallas office there a few days and then Captain Crowder said, “I want you to go out in the field”, my family was still in New Braunfels and I was staying in a hotel, so it didn’t matter to me where I was. But I drove down to Longview sometime in December in 1967 and met Glenn and we worked together a few days and it was coming up on Christmas and I had three little children then. And ah.....got about the 20th or 21st and Glenn said, “You get in your car and go home and spend the holidays and show on your report, making preparations to move my family to Tyler”. And I did and while I was home we was fortunate enough to sell our home and shortly after the first of the year I moved my family to

Tyler. And Glenn and I worked adjoining counties for the years I was in Tyler and I learned an awful lot from Glenn and Red.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what.....your first meeting with Red Arnold, Mount Pleasant?

BOB MITCHELL: Well after..... I don't remember how many days I stayed down there around Longview working with Glenn, but come time to go to Mount Pleasant and ah.... I didn't call Red and that was a mistake, I just went to Mount Pleasant, checked in a hotel way after night. But after I got in my hotel I called Red at home and told him where I was and that ah..... I'd like to work with him the next few days. He said, "I'll be up there in a minute". And he did, he came to the hotel and he eat me out pretty good for not coming and staying at his house, but we stayed there in the hotel and visited until about midnight and then I had several interesting days with Red.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I bet. Well let's jump ahead a few years. Your first meeting with Max Wommack?

BOB MITCHELL: I guess the first time that I met Max Wommack was when he came into Company B and there was three of them came in at that time, Tom Arnold, Roy Scott and Max Wommack. Ah....Tom had a finger cut off, one of his trigger fingers and ah....Roy Scott was one eyed and Max Wommack was one eared. And we called them the band-aid gang. I had an opportunity to work a lot of days and nights with Max Wommack.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Would you....it's been said that back in those days when yougoing back when you first became a Ranger that you know, today there is a lot testing and this and that, but back in those days if your Captain wanted you to be a Ranger you got to be a Ranger.

BOB MITCHELL: That's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And ah....had you known Crowder before you became a Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: No but ah....my spokesman had.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Your Captain.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: In the Highway Patrol. Well, okay, you're in Tyler, do you remember your first case in Tyler, of significance?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah I do. I inherited a case, a murder case, down in Rusk County at Minden, which happened to be Captain Crowder's home town. And ah....the man's name was Thompson, Jim Ray had worked on the case for a year or two before.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: And you're succeeding.....let me interrupt you, you're succeeding Jim Ray.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, who washad been promoted and moved out and I took his place in Tyler. But ah.... I worked that case, very frustrating.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was....give me the details on it.

BOB MITCHELL: Old fella had gone back in his pasture to check on his cattle and failed to come out and the family went back and found him in a creek, he'd been shot several times with a shotgun, most of his blown away and robbed. And ah.....there was not much of an on the scene investigation, like two or three Polaroid pictures taken and ah.....just wasn't much to go on and we just had to start interviewing people and acquaintances. And I made a trip to California to talk to a suspect out there. Very frustrating case I never did solve. Still think about it a lot.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah. Did ah....conceding that the East Texas merry go round existed, did you ever use it? Or our next question. What ah.....any other cases.....

BOB MITCHELL: Talking about the merry go.....you know, that was abused but.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well explain what the merry go round was, or proported was supposed to have been.

BOB MITCHELL: That's moving prisoners from one jail to another just to keep him in custody until you are ready to officially charge him. And ah....you know, most people in that time used it some, and it could easily be abused. But it solved a lot of crimes that needed solving quicker than you could do it any other way.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well we talked about Jess Sweden and his book, he talked about one of the most heinous crimes I've ever read about and it got solved by the merry go round.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I mean, we won't go into that here because that's ancient, ancient history, but I mean, the merry go round is the only reason he got that thing solved, and it was a terrible, brutal murder this man committed, murders. Ah.....okay ah....but....could you tell us about some other cases that you worked there in Smith County and Rusk County. What were your counties when you first become a Ranger there?

BOB MITCHELL: I had Wood, Van Zandt, Smith and Henderson County....or Rusk County, Henderson, Rusk County. And ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: No Henderson County, Henderson, Texas which is in Rusk County.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes, Rusk County. But ah.....of course Glenn had Gregg County but we kind of shared the Kilgore area because that gave us a chance to meet and discuss our.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well part of Kilgore is in Rusk County.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, that's right. But ah.....and Glenn helped me in my territory and I helped him in his, depending on the crime and what's going on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well of course Rusk and Gregg County will forever be known for the oil.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The great East Texas oil field. Did you work a lot of oil field thefts and oil field related crimes?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I did. Ah....Frank Brunt, an old East Texas Sheriff and a Special Ranger who was an investigator for Humble Oil for many years and a life time acquaintance of mine and my family's, was stationed in Tyler and ah....if you'd let Frank he'd had you working oil field thefts every day. But you have to set your priorities and work on what you considered to be the most important. But I worked a lot of oil field theft cases.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any in particular that stands out in your mind?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes ah.... I guess one kind of particular ah.....we had a informant that gave Glenn and I, Glenn Elliott and I, some information and ah....we was going to send the informant to sell some stolen property. And some way the thief found out that ah....who our informant was and what he was doing and shot the windshield out of a pickup we borrowed. But we wound up catching him and recovered the property some time later and tried him down in Panola County.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any other particular murders or bank robberies or hijackers or anything like that, that.....cases that readily to mind?

BOB MITCHELL: You know we worked a lot of bank robberies and homicides and rapes and every imaginable case and they're all important at the time, especially to the victims and the officers that's working it, but ah....you know looking back 25 years, some of them will jump out at you and others don't. One case that I worked that I got a lot of personal satisfaction out of, on 155 south ofon 31 south of Tyler, sweet old lady run a store out there and I had stopped in there a few times. Got a call out there one day she had been shot and killed and robbed.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Is this before you get to Chandler?

BOB MITCHELL: It's between Chandler and Tyler.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay.

BOB MITCHELL: And ah.....we got to working on that and ah....as it turned out our suspect was an old ex-convict who lived down at Athens and got him in and got to talking to him and he finally admitted that he had done it. And he led us to a lake out south of Tyler between the murder scene and the loop, just off the highway, and he'd pulled in there and thrown the gun in that lake. We got a diver out there and he threw a rock about where he thought the pistol was, diver went out there and he wasn't gone out of sight didn't seem like ten seconds and he come up with that pistol in his hand. So he put the rock right where he put the gun.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what was his motive?

BOB MITCHELL: Robbery. And ah....he got the death penalty but he never was executed. Like so many back then they were given a life sentence rather than execute.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well was Justice Billy Wayne Justice in Tyler at that time?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes he was.

ROBERT NIEMAN: We'll pass on that one. Ah.....a question I missed here, I'd like to go back to, back when you become a Highway Patrolman what was your starting pay?

BOB MITCHELL: \$320.00 a month.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And when you joined.....

BOB MITCHELL: But you know what, in the mid '50's that wasn't a bad thing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well it's.....

BOB MITCHELL: You know we made house payments and paid our bills and we ate good and ah.....I was proud to get it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about when you joined the Rangers?

BOB MITCHELL: I made about seven hundred and fifty or sixty dollars a month, ten years later.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Fed your family, paid your house payment and that's.....

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What Captains did you serve under while you were in the Rangers?

BOB MITCHELL: Well I started out working for Captain Crowder and before I left Company B, Bill Wilson had taken Crowder's place when he retired. Bill Wilson was promoted to Assistant Senior Ranger Captain and went to Austin and G. W. Burkes came in and I worked for him a short period of time. Then when I promoted to Sergeant I went to Austin and worked under Captain Butcher Albers in Waco. And ah.....then I was named Captain.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any other particular cases around there in your area that you remember that jumps out at you?

BOB MITCHELL: As a Ranger?

ROBERT NIEMAN: Uh hum. Or any kind of case, doesn't matter if it was Ranger or not.

BOB MITCHELL: Well in Tyler a case that Glenn and Red and Max and Lester Robertson and several of us worked ah.....ah.....Warren was the name of the President of the company, I can't recall his first name.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Glen?

BOB MITCHELL: No. President of Tyler Pipe.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Oh okay, okay.

BOB MITCHELL: But he came to me one time and said, "I'm not sure what's happening but I think that we're being shorted on scrap metal we're buying", and he said, "It's cost us a ton of money, it's going to break this company if we don't get something done about it". So he and I

went out and looked and ah....he was buying that scrap cast iron from a group that was operating out of Tarrant County around Ft. Worth. And ah....we set up a surveillance on it one morning. They would come in like four o'clock in the morning, gather out there in front of the scales, but it would be after daylight before they weighed. But they'd pull in there and ah....they'd send one man down under the scales and he knew how to manipulate the scales to double, or more than double, theshowing the weight on the truck. And then when they'd come out they had a secret compartment on the last truck, he'd move a man hole cover, climb up through that into this secret compartment underneath the truck and they'd drive out and get paid for two or three times the scrap that they actually sold. And we caught them and ah....that was.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: How long did it take you to catch 'em?

BOB MITCHELL: We caught 'em the first morning we went out there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: First morning?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, uh huh. Lucky, but we caught and arrested twelve or fifteen of them and tried 'em and convicted 'em. But they had been doing the same thing at a foundry in San Angelo and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama, they just kind of made a circuit and they'd hit one company and then move on to another.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....was the ah....once you were a Ranger ah....did you look at things different? I mean, I'm a Texas Ranger now.

BOB MITCHELL: Well, you know when you're in the Highway Patrol you have a schedule to follow and you have a schedule to work from such and such time to such and such time, and then you're on call and subject to call all the time, but as a Ranger you don't have a schedule, you make your schedule. And ah....most Ranger supervisors I ever knew didn't want somebody working for 'em that had to be supervised, so ah..... you just go out there and do what needed to

be done, when it needs to be done and do it the best you can and if you need help call the supervisor or a neighboring Ranger to come help you. So yeah, you look at it differently. You have to take more responsibility for your work and your actions.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But ah....you know the ah....you know just the badge itself, you know I mean, now then the one right.....one Ranger right..... I mean you know, you become.....join an organization that literally a legend.

BOB MITCHELL: I've never known a Ranger that wasn't proud of theof our history and heritage. But I'm firmly convinced that ah....the Rangers are making history today, just like they did 150 years ago when ah.....I'm extremely proud of the sharp young Rangers we have today. I think they're the best trained, best equipped ah.....Rangers in our history.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....let's talk about the Lone Star Steel strike.

BOB MITCHELL: All right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Just give me your thoughts on that and ah.....when did you go up there?

BOB MITCHELL: I guess it would of been

ROBERT NIEMAN: 1968.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, '68 in the fall. But Captain Crowder called me one morning and said, "There's going to be a little old strike at Lone Star Steel in the morning", and he said, "Get you some clothes where you can stay up there three or four days and go up there and meet Red Arnold in the morning". And we got up there and that little old strike lasted seven months and three days. And violence like you would not believe and ah....bombings, killings, beatings, clubbings and ah..... I know Glenn Elliott and I did most of the major investigations during that period of time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ya'll room together?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, seven months and three days. And ah.....you get to know a fellow quite well when you work with him 100 hours a week and share a room with him. But ah.....it was an experience, we were fortunate when it was over that we didn't get more people killed and hurt than we did. Ah....Captain Crowder and I was involved in a shoot out during that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell me about it.

BOB MITCHELL: Violence had really picked up, beatings, severe beatings. We'd had us an employee killed coming into work, trying to feed his family. And the strikers would sit outside the gate and follow people and stop 'em, force 'em off the road, whip 'em with chains and shoot at 'em. So Captain Crowder and I got some hard hats and borrowed a pickup from somebody and drove out of there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Out the front gate?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Main gate?

BOB MITCHELL: And headed down towards Longview and we noticed a car follow us immediately. And we got two or three miles down the road and it pulled up close and went to shooting at us and hitting us, hitting our vehicle. So Captain Crowder was driving and he pulled over to the side and I jumped out with my shotgun and emptied it in 'em when they come by, three pretty good sized men in a pickup, had a lot of bullet holes from buckshot and didn't touch a one of 'em. But we had a pretty severe chase with 'em and ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Now one of your tires is flat, is it not?

BOB MITCHELL: They had shot a.....yeah, but it didn't go flat immediately. We run them into Ore City and ah....around in the little old city there several blocks and got 'em hemmed up

on a dead end street. And ah....our tire went flat immediately which they volunteered to put the spare on for us.

ROBERT NIEMAN: They did? Any.....okay, when you got ‘em stopped, anything special happen now? You’ve come out of the pickup that you’re in. I would think if they’d been shooting at me, I’d of had blood in my eyes.

BOB MITCHELL: I did. I was young, but I was with an experienced old man and he said, “Robert, don’t kill ‘em”. And it was as good advice as I ever had.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did he normally call you Robert?

BOB MITCHELL: No, that’s the only time he ever did.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well do you feel like though, if it had come down to it and a shooting had of happened and one of ‘em had of got shot up or killed, would that of shortened the strike?

BOB MITCHELL: Probably. It would of shortened the violence.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I’ve gone through some of Glenn’s files on that and it’s just unbelievable ah....Red Arnold ah..... I don’t have it with me, I wish I did, I didn’t think of it, Captain Crowder assigned Captain.....or assigned Red Arnold ah.....to make up a list of violent acts that just Rangers were aware of, I’m sure there were probably plenty of others that, for what ever reason, you weren’t aware of. And there’s some thing like I think 121 incidences of violence that happened up there.

BOB MITCHELL: Extreme violence. Blowing up trucks in front of the Holiday Inn hotel in Mount Pleasant with a full house and pieces of those trucks would weigh a ton, landing on the building, going through the windows, over the building into the swimming pool. We caught those guys almost immediately.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anything happen to ‘em?

BOB MITCHELL: And tried 'em in the courthouse there later and ah.....a jury of their peers, union workers, set 'em free.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about ah.... I once again I don't want to get into Glenn's interviews, but there's some things he brought up I'd like to mention to you. They discovered.....ya'll discovered a bomb inside the plant.

BOB MITCHELL: In the mess hall.

ROBERT NIEMAN: In the mess hall at ten minutes to twelve, set to go off at twelve I believe.

BOB MITCHELL: A bomb that would of killed everybody in there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And how many people would you estimate would of been in there?

BOB MITCHELL: Many times at mid day, lunch hour, a hundred or more.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How did.....were you one of the ones that found the bomb or?

BOB MITCHELL: No ah....we had an anonymous tip on that and I don't recall just how it came about. Ah.... I believe me and Glenn was the ones that found it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you....what.....you.....of course.....did you empty the hall?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, yeah, immediately. We emptied it before we found the bomb as I recall.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And then did the bomb crew come in, or did ya'll move it?

BOB MITCHELL: I think we disarmed it, it had a.....it was hooked to a clock and it was a simple bomb that all you had to do was pull wires loose. And I believe that Glenn and I disarmed that thing. They had, had several very similar to that up there and of course we had talked to a lot of people about those clock bombs and it was a simple matter to disarm 'em. And if I remember right I think Glenn and I disarmed that one.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You want to tell me about Smitty Blackman?

BOB MITCHELL: Smitty Blackman was a good little old hard working country family man that ah.....needed to work to feed his family. He had built a new home, he had house payments, new baby and he simply couldn't afford to go on strike. And he continued to work and ah....his house was shot into at least once I recall and I believe I'm right, three or four times. But I recall one incident because ah.....a high powered rifle had gone into the window, across the baby's crib and through the wall behind the baby's crib. And then just a few nights later he was shot and killed as he drove to work on a back road there not far from the plant. Very frustrating, Glenn and I put hundreds of hours into it, didn't solve it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Can you describe the shooting incident?

BOB MITCHELL: Somebody had pulled up beside and shot him with a 30/30.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I think ah.....let's see you had some help on that, I know ah.....let's see, John Woods.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, John Woods found the spent cartridge.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And ah.....

BOB MITCHELL: John Woods and Joaquin Jackson was there and ah.....but John found the cartridge.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I think at the car.....best I remember from that report ah.....there at the cartridge scene.....the cartridge scene was John Wood and Frank Kemp.

BOB MITCHELL: Frank Kemp, yeah might of been Frank.

ROBERT NIEMAN: At the.....I'm not saying Joaquin wasn't, but I'm just saying, where the cartridges were found ah.....was John Wood and Frank Kemp, best I believe. And one that never.....do you.....looking back on it, that killing today kind of.....like that killing that you inherited in Smith County. Do you ever feel like you even came close to solving it?

BOB MITCHELL: We'll never know now, we'll never know. We might of talked to the killers and I wouldn't be surprised that we didn't because ah.....there really wasn't that many people active in this violence. But ah....you couldn't do anything with them when you got to court and the people that was active in the violence were very hard people and we very well talked to 'em. But we'll never know probably.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did....did the attitudes of the strikers and/or the plant management change after this killing? Did they get better, did they harden up, dig in more?

BOB MITCHELL: No I think the situation got a little better. I know that ah....the people at the plant were very touched by it and ah.....many of the strikers were very touched by it. And ah....the violence did let up for awhile after that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I know Glenn worked this case, I don't know if you were with him or not, a guy named Tommy Mathis stopped a young boy, I think his name was Tommy Viscule or something like that, he was a high school boy who delivered a port-a-potty up there. And this Mathis stopped him between Lone Star and Longview and told him he had a flat tire on his trailer and as he got out to go look at it this Mathis drew a chain and started whipping on this boy.

BOB MITCHELL: That happened the same night that Crowder and I had our shoot out.

ROBERT NIEMAN: It did?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes ah..... I was not with Glenn on that, but ah....it happened the same night that I was with Crowder, that beating took place.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And like your incident, nothing happened to Mathis, he walked.

BOB MITCHELL: Tried in Gilmer, all of them were tried in Gilmer, but all of them walked.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah. That would of been the most frustrating thing to me about that.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, that's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: To me, you know, personally.

BOB MITCHELL: You know, here sets the scum bags, you know they're guilty, no question about it, the jury knows they're guilty, no question about it, but because we're all in this together you walk.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well we have to talk about Charles Robert Mathis. He was a thief is the only way to put it, that worked Northeast Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma.

BOB MITCHELL: Professional thief.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Professional thief that would steal anything that wasn't tied down and if there was anything not tied down he could pry up. He worked your area, can you tell us some of your incidences with this?

BOB MITCHELL: Well he sold several pieces of equipment, mobile homes and pulled several burglaries in my area. As a matter of fact it was a burglary in my area that ah.....got us on to Mathis and his running mate, burglary of a television shop, a nice big shop where they hauled off a load of colored televisions, high dollar color.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And this would of been in the late.....?

BOB MITCHELL: Late '60's.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And color TV's were really just coming in.

BOB MITCHELL: Uh huh. Might of been about 1970.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Uh hum.

BOB MITCHELL: And ah....anyway, wewe figured out who one of them was and we knew that he ran with Mathis. And we talked to this young man at his house which was a stolen

mobile home and he was watching one of the stolen color televisions as we set there and talked to him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you.....how long did it take before you realized that you in a.....this guy had the tenacity to actually sit in a stolen mobile home watching a stolen TV?

BOB MITCHELL: Well it didn't take us long to figure it out. As a matter of fact we.....we checked the number on that TV while we was there and ah.....realized where it came from. He knew we knew and he agreed to cooperate with us. And he told us that he had been working with Mathis and had gone on several deals with him where they stole equipment, most of time carried it up into Pauls Valley, Oklahoma area or the Texarkana area. And ah....he told us that they had looked at a place at Beaumont, at Willis down near Huntsville, south of Huntsville and one in Dallas that they were going to do like that weekend, or soon, and I believe it was that coming weekend. But anyway, we set up surveillances on all thoseall those places. And the one in Dallas that ah.....where they actually hit ah.....Max Wommack, Glenn Elliott, Red Arnold, and Stuart Dowell was not in there with us but he was out in radio contact, and myself and we set in there all night on Saturday and nothing happened and all day Sunday. Sometime mid afternoon or so on Sunday, maybe two o'clock, the phone went to ringing and it must of rang several minutes and we felt it was him checking out the place and sure enough it was. And in a few minutes he and our informant showed up and the informant jumped over the fence and I guess Mathis was parking the car. And ah.... Mathis showed up shortly thereafter and the informant backed the truck out with a tilt bed on it and dropped it down and Mathis showed up and ah....fired up a bull dozer and started backing it up on the truck. And as he did well we came out and ah.....he came out with a pistol and lost.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....did you catch.....did the informant?

BOB MITCHELL: He got away.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....Mathis was acrime rate I suppose went down dramatically after that.

BOB MITCHELL: Oh yeah. We spent several weeks, I say we, Glenn and I mostly, but Red Arnold and Max came up and helped us some in Ardmore and Pauls Valley area, gathering up equipment that he had sold up in that area, sold. And around the Longview area and Texarkana and I don't recall the dollar value or even the number of pieces of equipment, but at that time it was a tremendous dollar value on the equipment that we recovered that he was responsible for stealing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah..... I know that I think Stuart was on a crime task force of some kind.

BOB MITCHELL: Uh hum.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And ya'll had his mobile home in Longview staked out and I I think there was even a.....you know, an authorized wire tap put in there. Did ah.....how longdo you remember how long that ran before the surveillance?

BOB MITCHELL: No I don't.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. Ah....did you when you joined the Rangersor anything else you want to say as a Field.....what I call a Field Ranger, before we move on?

BOB MITCHELL: I think that pretty well covers my time. Ah....ah..... I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a Ranger, it was one of the most rewarding times of my career, but ah..... I was offered a promotion and I thought it's best for me and my family to take it. And thanks to people like the guys I had worked with that encouraged me to take it, so I left and went on to supervisory positions.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, at that time it was a Sergeant, which is today a Lieutenant.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.... I can't.....you know all Rangers today are Sergeants and of course our friend, mutual friend, Louis Rigler had rather strong sentiments about that, about Ranger Sergeants and Privates, but it's not important to what we're talking about. You became a Sergeant when?

BOB MITCHELL: January the 1st of '72.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And you're stationed in?

BOB MITCHELL: Austin, Company F.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were ah.....okay is that Company F headquarters then?

BOB MITCHELL: No, Waco was Company F headquarters, but there was three Rangers stationed in Austin and that's a very busy station because of all the State agencies and the Director and the Chief felt.....and Senior Ranger Captain felt that they needed somebody there to supervise the activities of the Rangers there and to assist them in those investigations involving other State agencies, which takes up a lot of the Ranger time in that area.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you spend your whole time as a Sergeant in Austin?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were some of the ah.....well when you joined the Rangers, did you have it in mind then to promote? I mean was that a goal?

BOB MITCHELL: Not really. You know ah..... I don't see anything wrong with it and I think it's very honorable to spend a life time being a Texas Ranger, but ah..... I was encouraged to promote by my co-workers and my supervisors and I have no regrets of doing it. But the most enjoyable time of my career was being a Field Ranger.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....what were ah....some of the ah..... I guess for lack of vocabulary, the biggest shocks you had as aonce you become a Supervisor, things that you hadn't anticipated that you would be faced with? Such as maybe budgetary items ah.....

BOB MITCHELL: Oh you're always frustrated over budget in your business or any other business, never seems to be the money there to do what you'd like to. And ah....that really didn't frustrate me that much because we were well equipped and we had pretty much what we needed. Ah....having to discipline a co-worker or a subordinate is probably the most difficult thing that a Supervisor can do. Because the Rangers are a very, very close knit organization, almost like brothers and ah....thank goodness you don't have to discipline many of them, but occasionally something will happen that you do have to, that was difficult.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well especially being in Austin ah....what was it like having to work for the politicians and the bureaucrats?

BOB MITCHELL: It's difficult. It's hard to satisfy everybody all the time. I recall one time that they had, had several deaths at the Austin State Hospital, mentally retarded patients, like 35 of them and ah....parents and family members had petitioned certain legislators. And Colonel Spear sent me down to the ah....Lieutenant Governor's office one day and ah....he wanted a task force to investigate those deaths and you know, to do a thorough job on something like that you've got to have doctors involved and pathologists, somebody that can review records and medications and autopsy reports. So I appointed to head up a task force of people who had been in the medical profession, pharmacists and doctors of all kinds and we spent months looking into those like 35 deaths out there. And ah.... I got to know Dr. Mickey Lamatter, who was then at the University of Texas Medical School who's now with the MD Anderson Hospital, quite well and made friends that I would not have made any other way. But it was a several month investigation

and something that I felt like was totally on my head. Thanks to the professional people that was assigned to work with me on it we got the job done.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What ah.....as a Sergeant there you weren't directly.....being in Austin is this the only company in the state where the Sergeant would office at a place separate from the headquarters?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes it is.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....and who's your Captain in Aus.....in ah.....Waco?

BOB MITCHELL: My Captain at that time was ah....ah....Butch Alvers.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....well were your duties there quite a bit different than they would of been if you'd of been in Waco?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes. Ah.... I had ah....the three Rangers stationed there were my responsibility, the Ranger at Kerrville and the Ranger at Llano and they sent their reports to me and was responsible to me. But ah.....in turn I was responsible to Captain Alvers and I thought it worked quite well.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How long was you in Austin?

BOB MITCHELL: I promoted to Captain on September the 1st of '74, so I was over there like three years, a little over.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well our mutual friend and I guy the succeeded, Jim Ray, ah.....makes no secret of it thathe said to me once, "When I die I don't have to worry about going to hell, I already did ten years in Austin". Would you look at it in any of that similar light or was your experiences different? Now Captain Ray became ah.....

BOB MITCHELL: The Chief.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Of?

BOB MITCHELL: Criminal Law Enforcement.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Criminal Law, so he was second highest law man in the State of Texas, would that be right?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, in criminal law.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Uh hum.

BOB MITCHELL: No I didn't look at it that way at all. Of course he had a lot more responsibilities than I did, but ah.... my enjoyed my tenure in Austin. My family enjoyed living there and ah.....ah.....for the most part I enjoyed my job and my responsibilities and ah....really got to know people in the department through out the state. I thought it was a great opportunity for me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When ah.....well let me ask you before we....we....ah.....go into your Captain days, as a trooper you only had one Captain so that's a moot question, but did you have a particular favorite Ranger Captain? You had three or four that youand I'm not talking about one being better or anything, one that you just clicked better with and it has nothing to do with.....

BOB MITCHELL: The best friend I ever had as my Captain was Bill Wilson. We hunted and fished together and he was like a brother to me, I was a pall bearer at his funeral, I went fishing with him three or four days before he died and

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell us about Bill Wilson then.

BOB MITCHELL: Bill Wilson..... I had known him as a Ranger when I was a Highway Patrolman and been in some incidences with him, shooting hostage situation over atin Guadalupe County. I had known Bill for several years before I went in the Rangers and two or three years after I went in the Rangers he became my Captain and we became really good friends

and did a lot of things together, hunted and fished and traveled. I think it's rare that you can work for a man and still be good friends like we were.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The golf tournament at the annual Ranger reunion is named for him.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell me about the ah.....the hostage situation.

BOB MITCHELL: There was a guy who had a mental problem and ah.....gotten into a house there at ah.....near Lake McQueeney and ah....scared his parents to death, he had whipped his mother. And they had ran out of the house and went to a neighbors house and called the Guadalupe County Sheriff's office. And when the deputy drove up he shot him, didn't kill him, but he knocked down behind his car and continued to shoot the car. But he was able to get to his mike and call for help and a lot of us responded. And ah.....and we got there and he was in a brick house set up on a hill, no cover, and he was steadily popping at everything that moved there. And ah.....somebody, I don't know who, called the Rangers and Jim Riddle and Bill Wilson responded. And they had an old tank in Austin at that time, each company had one, but they had the Highway Patrol driving that tank up there intending to just run through the house and get him, run through the wall, cause that was the only way we felt like we could get him out. But the tank broke down in San Marcus and it was way on up in the morning then, still dark, and ah.....Bill and Jim said, "We're going to get that son of gun out of there tonight". And old Bill worked his way around to the back door and ah....we had shot gas in it for two or three hours. Every once in awhile he'd come and bam, bam, bam, so we knew he was still in there, no doubt about that, but we couldn't figure out how he was staying in there without.....with that gas. And what he had done, he had turned the shower on full force and on each side of it there was some windows and he was standing there with his face right in that water and every once in awhile

he'd load that gun and pop it out those windows and shoot. Well old Bill worked his way up to that back door and he could hear that shower running and ah....then he saw him run to the windows and shoot and right back in the shower. And old Bill eased that door open and just eased down that hallway and just snatched him out of that shower and the hunt was over. That's the first experience I ever had with Bill. But ah....we were involved in a lot of things together.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And when did that take place?

BOB MITCHELL: That's when I was on the Highway Patrol back sometime in the '60's.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....well when you became a Sergeant, did you at that time decide, well if I'm going to promote I want to try to promote all the way to Captain?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh yeah, yeah. By then wasn't any doubt, I didn't want to be a Sergeant all my life.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well when you became a Sergeant did you have to take tests or was it just the Captain said, "I want you to be my Sergeant", and your a Sergeant.

BOB MITCHELL: That's the way it was.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, what about when you become a Captain?

BOB MITCHELL: Same thing.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who decided you want.....they wanted you to be Captain?

BOB MITCHELL: Ah....Pat Spear and Jim Ray.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. Tell us about your days as a Captain.

BOB MITCHELL: I want to tell you about how I found out I was a Captain.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay.

BOB MITCHELL: My son was a small boy then playing little league baseball and ah.... I did not want to go to the FBI Academy because it's a full semester of college work and that meant

being away from my family four a half months, but I was encouraged to do so. But the night before we went up there my boy was in a play off game a few blocks from my house, little league. And as we walked from our car to the bleachers, just a little old kid probably twelve came through that parking lot just skidding and sliding and a lot of folks were around. Anyway I got him stopped and took the keys away from him and he lived three or four blocks over there and I said, "You go home and get your mother and daddy, ya'll come back up here and I'll give them the keys, but you're not going to drive". Well we started watching the ball game and ah... this drunk came up there to where I was and said, "Give me the keys to that car". And I said, "Are you this kids parent". And he said, "No I'm a friend", a grown man. And ah..... I said, "No I'm not going to give you the keys. I told him to bring his mother and daddy and I'd give them the keys". And he began to cuss me. And I didn't take very much of that and I had whipped him pretty good there in front of all the little leaguers and all the parents. And I started to jail with him in my personal car and didn't have my handcuffs, and I got up to the Interstate and stopped at a stop sign and he jumped out and run off. And like I say, he'd been whipped pretty severely and ah.....the next morning I was to leave about daylight for the FBI Academy. So I spent....and I knew the Public Safety Commission was meeting to decide on whether or not I was a Captain and I could just see this complaint coming in. So I spent the first night in Memphis and the next day that's all I had on my mind and I stopped up right at the edge of Knoxville and called Jim Ray. And I said, "Jim have they made a decision yet". He didn't know about this incident at the ball park I didn't think, but he had found out. He said, "Yeah, everything's all right, they don't know about the fight, you're a Captain, go on".

ROBERT NIEMAN: They don't know about the fight, go on.

BOB MITCHELL: Wallace Spiller and Joe Davis had ah..... I had made them aware of it before I left. Jim thought he needed his rear end whipped. Public Safety Commission didn't know it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Jim's Jim. So tell us about being a Captain. What kind of duties, what kind of frustrations ah.....

BOB MITCHELL: When I went to Waco.....

ROBERT NIEMAN:particular problems.

BOB MITCHELL:I had a great company of Rangers the entire time I was there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who was your Sergeant?

BOB MITCHELL: Well Jack Dean, Bud Newberry was for two or three months and he requested to go back home to Lubbock and Jack Dean came as my Sergeant.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And Jack had come from?

BOB MITCHELL: McAllen.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And he had been a patrolman in Tyler, did you know him in Tyler?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, oh yeah, we was friends in Tyler. And ah.... I went there September 1st and Jack came December 1st. And I had a.....my oldest daughter was a cheerleader and had started school in her senior year, so I elected to leave my family in Austin and let her graduate there. Jack had a similar situation in the valley. At that time we had bunk room there at Ft. Fisher, at the Ranger office, and he and I shared that bunk room and lived there until our kids finished their school year.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ya'll had a long term together too.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah we did, you know, worked together all day and then go back to the back .

ROBERT NIEMAN: And share a room back there.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, watch TV or do something until bed time, but ah.....Jack was a great Sergeant and I'm delighted that he's had such a successful career.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Just for the record, Jack went on to become a Captain and is now a United States Marshall.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes, yes and a very dear friend. But after Jack promoted to Captain I had Bobby Prince and after he promoted to Captain had Joe Wiley who was my Lieutenant when I retired.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And succeeded you as Captain in Waco.

BOB MITCHELL: Well not immediately, Bobby Prince transferred back from Houston but he retired within a year and then Joe, who had made Captain and gone to Lubbock, came back from Lubbock and he has since retired.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When did you retire?

BOB MITCHELL: I retired June 30th of '92.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were some of the peculiar problems that you had as a Captain?

BOB MITCHELL: Well ah....there was lots of problems, I mean you know, always got somebody mad or ticked off about something ah.....a Sheriff or somebody will get angry about something and you've always got that kind of problem to try to smooth over. Ah....most of the time Rangers will take care of that and the Captain don't have to get involved, but sometimes it's a situation where you do. Ah....you're always short of travel money and expense money and you've got to watch your budget very closely. You've always got a major crime going on where one particular Ranger may need two or five or a whole company to handle the situation, you've got to schedule that. Ah....a Ranger Captain seldom ever sleeps all night, there's something going on either a Ranger's got a major problem or a major crime that you need to know about or

some of the local Sheriff's or police or District Attorneys is calling you. Ah....all of which goes with the territory and ah....it's tiring sometimes, but you expect it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did ah....as a Captain did.....was there any particular cases that came across that your men had to work that werethat you would call ah.....that required some of your efforts too?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh yeah, a lot of them, hell many of them, you know, we'd be out for days at a time. We had one that wound up over in your area in Panola County. I had several prisons in the territory that I was responsible for and one night after dark Warden Bob Cousins and one of his Majors had poured some concrete, convict labor had poured some slabs for hog pens, it was after dark and all these are bad criminals and they attacked the Warden and Major. And one of them was using a crowbar on the Major and he broke both his arms and another one cut the Warden's throat from ear to ear, but he's a heavy man and ah.....as he stuck that knife in and started for the jugular vein, he ducked his head in and kind of followed his chin around and he thought he'd cut his throat from ear to ear, but it actually followed his chin. But they drug him out of his car and the Warden was loosing lots of blood and the Warden with two broken arms ran across a field a mile or so and got help for him from some of the other prison people. And we had a man hunt, they took the Warden's car and was headed for Louisiana, but they ran out of gas down in Panola County and we got a sighting on 'em and several of us took after 'em and ah.....had the dogs there shortly afterwards and we caught two of them that night....the next night. And then the following day ah....we had dog killed in the lake down by that power plant down there and the dog's throat was cut and we knew it was that other convict so we just stayed in there and got a helicopter and a ground and probably had fifty or seventy-five officers spread out walking where we could see one another on each side. And Jim Estelle, who at that time was

Director of the prison system, he was in the DPS helicopter and he spotted this convict in a.....way up in a tall tree. And of course he radioed us on the ground and Bob Prince and I were the first ones to him and got him down out of the tree. There's something like that going on all the time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what did you do, tell him to come on down or we're going to shoot you down?

BOB MITCHELL: He came down pretty quick. I never will forget, Bobby Prince is absolutely horrified of snakes and

ROBERT NIEMAN: I can identify with that.

BOB MITCHELL:and this was a swampy area and although we was walking right toward him, there was swamp came up in there, I really didn't think it would be more than knee deep or a little deeper, and I could see the convict in that tree by then. And I just kept walking and Bobby didn't say anything then, but later he stoppedI've heard him tell several times that, "I couldn't believe he'd walk off in that snaky water". But he followed me and ah.....and Jim Estelle, I've heard him tell it later, he said, "I didn't think it was very deep either until I saw their hats floating".

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well you ah....we're not going to go into the Branch Davidians, you're already retired and gone by then.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But were they there before you retired?

BOB MITCHELL: Yes they were.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And did you have any relations or anything with them before you retired?

BOB MITCHELL: Several years before there had been a shooting incident out there that the Rangers were not called on, the Sheriff's office handled it, as they should have and they arrested several of them and they were tried and not convicted there in Waco for some assault charge, I forget now what the charge was.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was the shooting about, do you remember?

BOB MITCHELL: One faction trying to take charge from another faction.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was Koresh involved in it?

BOB MITCHELL: Koresh had.....yes Koresh had his people at Palestine at that time and they came over there and initiated the gun fight, going to just take the property over. Which they did later on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But not at this incident?

BOB MITCHELL: Not at that incident.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was that your onlywell then you weren'tdidn't have a direct run in with them there did you?

BOB MITCHELL: We never heard from them ah.....you know, they lived out there, lived a quiet life and ah....sure he was stock piling weapons, but there was nothing said about it. And ah....really no way of us knowing about, because we don't check weapons like the ATF does, so we didn't know they was buying and trading all those guns, Sheriff's office didn't either.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well then speaking strictly as a civilian then, were you shocked when you saw what was going on out there?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh absolutely, yeah absolutely. A lot of things in hind sight that could be changed but ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well everyone's got 20/20 hind sight.

BOB MITCHELL: That's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well why did you decide to retire? Was there any one thing or was it an accumulation of things or?

BOB MITCHELL: Well of course I had worked enough years and ah.... I had seen my mother and daddy plan a retirement and she had a stroke and they never to enjoy a day of it and ah....then I had a Ranger working for me that was killed.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who was he?

BOB MITCHELL: Sam Guffey.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Can you.....do you want to go into

BOB MITCHELL: Well let me finish my reasons. And ah....in 1990 our middle child, who was 32 at the time, died suddenly and unexpectedly and ah.....it just got to where it wasn't much fun to me after that. Ah....losing a child is the toughest thing that can ever happen in a parent's life and we handled it all right but I think about her every day. And I just wanted my wife and I to have some good years together and we've had some good together.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You know I heard a I don't much pay attention to what a lot of your actors and actresses say, but I heard one whom I don't even like from a political stand point on TV here several months ago make the truest statement in the world, you know, you don't know what terror is and fear is until you have child. I thought about that a lot, that's true.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....anyway ah.....you want to talk about you losing a Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: Well it was the result of a kidnapping that had taken place in an exclusive housing division ah.... ah.... on a lake north of Austin, Horseshoe Bay to be exact, million dollar homes. And this old parole violator had drifted in there and got to burglarizing those homes and

he realized that, nobody in most of them. He just made himself at home, he'd drink their whiskey and eat their food and drive their cars that was in the garage. And he wound up kidnappinghe wound up kidnapping an attractive young lady who was a nanny for a very wealthy family there and drug her into a house and we had been looking for her for several days and just couldn't come up with a clue on what happened to her. And ah....about the fourth day she called and ah....about all that the Whiteheads, the people she worked for, got is, "I'm in a big house". Well every house out there is a big house. And ah....we searched most of them. But the house, it wasn't very big and two houses down across the street we didn't search, no reason to search it and ah....he kept her in there a few days and raped her apparently repeatedly. She had cigarette burns all over her. When we found her body her hands was taped together, her mouth was taped closed and he'd got the tape up over her nose and actually she smothered to death. But after she died he went back to the Whitehead's house, I suppose they'd left a door unlocked, he went in the house, picked up several items in the house including their four year old beautiful little girl out of her crib and carried her across the street and like four o'clock in the morning he calls and demands a ransom. And ah....my Ranger who works that area called me and I called several Rangers and by then it's getting daylight and I get the helicopter and Joe Wiley, my Lieutenant, and I fly out to Marble Falls and ah....we notify the Bureau, we got the District Attorney there and he's going to call back in give drop arrangements. So we made arrangements for the money. Throughout the day we was putting plans together and ah....ah.... I guess aboutsome time late that afternoon he called and ah....had further contact, it was really not a consequential telephone call, but he did say he'd call back at ten o'clock that night and tell where the drop was going to be. And he was very abusive on the telephone, very tough and ah....anyway, our District Attorney had just bought a new Lincoln town car and ah....we took the back seat out of it and I

assigned John Acock and Sam Guffey and ah....the daddy was going to drive the car and make the drop, but they was just going to cover him. And ah....as it turned out when he calls, it's two doors down and across the street. And he wanted a good fast car for a get away car, with his ransom money. So ah....the daddy gets in the car, Sam and John are in it, got their bullet proof vests on and they drive two houses down and pull in the driveway, he leaves the motor running, the money sitting on the front seat, the crook comes out of the house

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you remember his name?

BOB MITCHELL: Hum.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: That's all right.

BOB MITCHELL: Beeler, Beeler's his last name, I can't recall his first. But Beeler comes out carrying the little girl and he's got a blanket thrown over her head and he walks up to the car and just opens the door and just pitches her over on the seat, looks at the money there and he pitches it over in the back seat. Well he realized it didn't hit a seat and ah....John and Stan sense that and that's when they come up. Well he has not set down in the car yet and he just whirls and with a .44 magnum and shoots through the window and just makes a lucky shot and hits Sam in the head. And of course John goes to fanning him then and kills him. But ah....saved the little girl, but then we found the nanny in the house had been brutalized for days. And the sad ending on that is that the Whitehead's are a very wealthy family, owned a huge trucking company based out of Junction, a year or so later they fly to Oregon and the little girl and the mother stay there to take skiing lessons. He and a friend fly on down to Pebble Beach and play golf and that night.....they got pilots and that night they come back and pick up mother and the child and their son, their only son, had not gone with them because he was involved in little league and they had.....in play offs. So they felt like they had to come on in that night because he was with

friends in Llano. And ah....they landed in Alamagardo, New Mexico for fuel late at night and they take off and fly into a mountain about 5,000 feet up there and killed everybody on board.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Hmmm, Hmmm, Hmmm.

BOB MITCHELL: Seemed like such a waste.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah, after a good man going down.

BOB MITCHELL: Uh hum.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And what year was this?

BOB MITCHELL: '88.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did that have any....did that also influence you any on retiring? I mean you lose a man, that's got to

BOB MITCHELL: There's no doubt about it. I know Iyeah. He left four sons and I knew 'em all, thought a lot of 'em.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You still stay in touch with the family?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah. She has remarried, she married a doctor and they're.....he's practicing in Missouri now and we still correspond.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, you've retired ah.....what do you do with your retirement days?

BOB MITCHELL: I've had more fun, I really didn't know how I was going to handle retirement.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How have you handled it?

BOB MITCHELL: Wonderful, I've not had a bad day since I retired. I miss the guys and miss my association with them, but my wife and I have done more things and had more fun. And I do some farming and ah....we live on a little old place 7 1/2 acres, I've always got work to do there, I've spent quality time with my five grandsons and we've hunted and fished and done things that

I never really had a chance to do with my own son. And my son and I have spent quality time together.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about ah....ah....the Ranger ah....Hall of Fame?

BOB MITCHELL: I love the Ranger Hall of Fame and did you know I've been involved in that since day one.

ROBERT NIEMAN: No I did not.

BOB MITCHELL: Yes I have.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Tell me about it.

BOB MITCHELL: During the period of time that I was a Sergeant in Austin is when we were raising the money through the sale of Ranger stuff to build that and we built that at no expense to the State payer ah.....tax payers at all. And ah.... I was assigned while I was there to ah....put together a film, which I have a copy of I'd like for you to see some time, it's a low budget film but it tells a wonderful story and many of the Rangers that you know are in it, including Elliott and Arnold and Wommack and Stuart Dowell.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Oh I'd love to see that, love to see that.

BOB MITCHELL: And John Wood and ah.....but I spent several months as a technical advisor on that down at Bracketville at the ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Alamo Village?

BOB MITCHELL:Alamo Village and ah.....Bill Gunn and I went up to Colorado to film the last part of it on the little old train up there at ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Silverton?

BOB MITCHELL:Silverton. And ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well I'd like to borrow that and get it and watch that some time.

BOB MITCHELL: I'd like to give you a copy of it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: That ah....what about the foundation, the Texas Ranger Association Foundation?

BOB MITCHELL: I'm proud of the Foundation too ah....I don't take credit for it having been my idea, but I've been involved in that since day one too and some people you know and are close to in your area, it was their idea and some good Ranger friends and supporters put up the seed money to start it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Sonny Spradlin, Billy Crawford and ah.....

BOB MITCHELL: Darney, Steve Darney.

ROBERT NIEMAN:Steve Darney.

BOB MITCHELL: Richard Harvey, there was ten of them put up a thousand dollars to....they call seed money and from there we have ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well I speak personally here as my I pride myvalue my Foundation membership more than anything in the world.

BOB MITCHELL: Well I'm proud of mine too.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....before we leave I just want to ah.... I want to mention some names, we've mentioned some already, I won't repeat myself, but your thoughts ah.....ah....Jim Riddle?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh Jim was a great Ranger, a great Sergeant and a great Captain.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Deservingly just put in the Hall of Fame.

BOB MITCHELL: Deservingly went in the Hall of Fame, yes sir.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you have any, other than the deal on the hostage situation, did you workyou were not a Riddle Ranger.

BOB MITCHELL: No.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....Clint Peoples?

BOB MITCHELL: Clint Peoples was a friend of mine and ah....you know we didn't always agree on things but ah....Clint had a big ego, but he was a good man, a good family man and he loved the Rangers as much as any human being could ever love an organization.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I've heard said many times that Clint had the biggest ego any one had ever seen but everything he did he took the Rangers with him.

BOB MITCHELL: That's right, that's right. And he could get things done like ah..... I saw him take like twenty Rangers in their state cars to Lake Tahoe one time to provide security for a Governor's convention. Nobody but Clint could of pulled that off.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....Jay Banks?

BOB MITCHELL: I thought a lot of Jay Banks ah....ah.....he did things differently. He was a macho type and ah....he didn't try to conceal that at all, but I thought a lot of Jay Banks.

ROBERT NIEMAN: James Wright?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh I love James Wright, he's like a brother to me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I don't guess we could say much more about that.

BOB MITCHELL: When Iwhen I was sick with cancer and having chemotherapy I'd hear my lawn mower running in the morning when I was to sick to get out there and do it, it'd be James Wright out there mowing my yard. And he's just been a great friend and like family to me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....G. W. Burkes?

BOB MITCHELL: G. W. Burkes and I never worked close, although our.....he was Captain of Company B for many years while I was Captain of Company F and we worked together. We never were close friends ah...G. W. was a little bit different as I viewed Rangers. I never will forget the first time I met G. W. when I went into Company B, he came to a company meeting

with a beard ah.....low quarter shoes, a turtleneck sweater, with a gold medallion around his neck. He was claiming to be working undercover.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay. Ah....Charlie Miller?

BOB MITCHELL: I knew Charlie Miller quite well and worked with him, had the opportunity to work Charlie for a year or two before he retired. He was a tough old man, involved in lots of violence himself. But ah....he was one of the few that could change with the times and you know he typed his own reports, he handled all his correspondence and he was one of the old time Rangers that came into the next century and excelled.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah...Colonel Jim Adams?

BOB MITCHELL: A lot of people didn't particularly like going outside the department and hiring a Director, and I was one of them, but ah....as I got to know Jim Adams I become I respected him more and ah....we got to be very good friends. As a matter of fact we've hunted and fished together in this country and Canada.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Glenn's told me, he said when Adams was named he said, "Don't confuse me, he's an FBI, I don't like him, I ain't going to like him and there ain't nothing you can do to make me like". He ended up liking him a whole lot.

BOB MITCHELL: You know he was the kind of guy that you could go to and get an answer. And ah....ifif he didn't agree with you, you could go in there and quite often you could show him he was wrong and he'd change and ah....he just gave us great support.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....Pat Spear?

BOB MITCHELL: Loved Pat Spear ah.....at the time he was a Director and of course I promoted to Sergeant and Captain under Colonel Spear and I've told him thank you many times. I didn't think at the time that ah....he had enough confidence and showed enough respect for the

Rangers. But after he retired he was working for Southwest Texas State University and ah.....they were flying to a football game down there one night, the President of the University and Pat and their wives, and he asked a Patrol Sergeant to pick ‘em up at the airport. And he told him he couldn’t do it, that wasn’t Highway Patrol business. So Colonel Spear called Jack Dean and Jack Dean had a Suburban go out there and get ‘em and take care of ‘em. Colonel Spear has told me many times since that since his retirement the only people that have shown any respect is the Rangers, he wished he’d handled his situation a little different while he was Director.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Jim Ray?

BOB MITCHELL: Oh Jim Ray is a great guy and ah....Jim has....I’ve got to give him a lot of responsibility for me being a Captain.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I like the old man, I really like Jim. Louis Rigler?

BOB MITCHELL: Louis Rigler is a unique individual and

ROBERT NIEMAN: To say the least.

BOB MITCHELL:you could strip him naked and put him in the desert and he’d walk out in a thousand dollar silk suit and a pocket full of money.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....Slick Alford?

BOB MITCHELL: Slick’s a good friend and we worked together as Rangers and then Slick worked for me several years as a Ranger while I was his Captain. We had a lot of good times together.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....regretfully I only know Company B people....or most of the people, almost all of these have been Company B. Any other people you’d like to name that I don’t know?

BOB MITCHELL: Well you know every member of Company F that ever worked with me is very special to me. Some of the finest police officers and the best talent that I've ever seen in the profession, I thought I was blessed with in my company. Without naming some of them and forgetting to name all of them, I'd just say everybody that I ever worked with in Company F.

ROBERT NIEMAN: My final question, what iswould you consider the biggest changes in the Rangers from the day you entered to the day you retired, good and bad?

BOB MITCHELL: Well when I came in the Rangers service the average age was.... I don't know what it was, but it was older men and the average age today is young men. In my opinion, better educated and better trained than they've ever been in their history, but lacking in experience. The Red Arnold's, Red Arnold knew every criminal and had a file on 'em, that operated in his area. I'll never for.....we got an old bulletin that we called a D-4 bulletin, and I'm not sure how Red done that, but he set there at night in his kitchen at his desk and cut those things up, and what his filing system was I don't know. But one time we were driving south of Tyler on our way to Austin and we went by a vegetable stand, driving the speed limit or more, and he whipped off the side of the road and he said, "There's an old boy standing back there that's wanted". And we went back and sure enough it was, an old man that had gone to the penitentiary his first time for stealing chickens, but he'd spent most of his life in the penitentiary and there was an outstanding warrant. But Red just knew everybody in his territory and it just seemed that everybody then was experienced and been on for a long time, and that's not the case anymore. But ah..... I don't know which is good and which is bad. I think a mixture might be best, but we certainly have young, talented Ranger force today.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what would you like to add that I haven't asked. I've been totally inadequate I know on this.

BOB MITCHELL: I think you've done very well and the only thing I'd like to add is that, I'd like to thank my family for their support through all these years. A lot of things I missed with kids and children that I regret, but they understand. And my little old wife is the toughest girl in the world and a fine Christian mother and ah....they just made it all worthwhile to me.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you notice that people look at you different when they find out he was a.....that you never met and they see you the first time, he was a Texas Ranger?

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah, yeah I know that. And you know having served as Captain there at Ft. Fisher for 18 years ah....people come from all over the world there and ah....they want your autograph, want to have a picture made with you, just want to meet a Ranger and that makes you very proud.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I tell Glenn, and I tell a lot of the guys, I don't think you guys really realize the impact and the legend that you are. Ah....classic example here, I was privileged here a couple months, Ronny Griffith the Ranger there in Longview where I live, invited me to join him going to Marshall. Every year there they have a banquet for the fire and law men and during the banquet they ask all the firemen to stand up and all the Sheriff's department and all the police department, and they ask the Texas Ranger to stand up and Ronnie stood up.

BOB MITCHELL: Got the biggest ovation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well he got a good one. But the point is, I didn't think.....you know, I mean, yeah everybody's applauding and I didn't..... I really didn't think a whole about that, but when the banquet was over this elderly gentleman come.....you could see him rushing through the crowd to come from oh five, ten, I guess ten, fifteen feet away and he came up to Ronny and he said, "I'm 72 years old and I wanted to shake the hand of a Texas Ranger my whole life". And that said it all to me.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah. Like I say, having served 18 years there at that museum and tourist in there every day from all over the world, I understand that maybe a little better than some and I know that Rangers are held in awe and respected by many.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what I I get.... I really do get frustrated, and I don't know, maybe this shouldn't go on the tape but I'm going to let it go on there anyway, I get frustrated with some of the guys sometimes, you're not just another law man, you're a Texas Ranger.

BOB MITCHELL: Yeah I understand that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Bob anything else you.....

BOB MITCHELL: But you know what, we don't like to blow our horn like that about that, we like to hear concerned citizens say that. But you're not going to hear many Rangers say that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well I think that people like Gonzauillas and Peoples and I think the Rangers....Glenn and I just have....have some heated words.....well not heated words, but we disagree on this some, I think the high..... there's nothing wrong with a high profile, a Jay Banks or Clint Peoples or Gonzauillas, I like the idea. But that's not for the tape. Anything you.....anything else you'd like to add?

BOB MITCHELL: I don't think so, II've enjoyed visiting with you and ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Bob I'll get you a copy of this and get it to you.

BOB MITCHELL: I appreciate that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Thank you Bob.

BOB MITCHELL: Thank you Bobby.