

Interview With

DON MORRIS
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project:
Texas Rangers

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Introduction

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Don Morris
Retired Texas Ranger

TONY HILL: My name is Tony Hill. We're in Lufkin, Texas with retired Ranger Don Morris, who lives here in Lufkin. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Morris' career as a Texas Ranger. Ranger, do I have your permission to record this interview?

DON MORRIS: Yes you do.

TONY HILL: You understand that this videotape will belong to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame Museum in Waco?

DON MORRIS: Yes.

TONY HILL: And do I have your permission to present copies of this tape to various historical organizations such as museums, libraries, and schools through the museum there in Waco?

DON MORRIS: Yes you do.

TONY HILL: I appreciate you meeting with me today. We're going to go over a list of questions, some of them may or may not be appropriate for you and ...but the main thing to remember in us talking today is that I've got plenty of tape and this is a story of your career and your life that we want to preserve for the future people to read and learn about when they are studying the Texas Rangers. So take all the time you want when we're talking to explain anything that you want to explain.

DON MORRIS: Thank you.

TONY HILL: What is your full name and where do you currently live?

DON MORRIS: I'm Donald Ray Morris [address removed - editor]

TONY HILL: When and where were you born Don?

DON MORRIS: I was born in Henderson, Texas , which is Rusk County in 1948.

TONY HILL: You're older than I am.

DON MORRIS: September 3, 1948.

TONY HILL: And what were your parent's names?

DON MORRIS: My dad's name was Frank Morris and my mother's name was Velma...V-E-L-M-A Morris.

TONY HILL: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

DON MORRIS: I am the eighth child out of nine kids.

TONY HILL: So you're the baby.

DON MORRIS: Next to the baby.

TONY HILL: Can you....with that many I don't know whether I could name them all, could you tell us their names, from the oldest to the youngest?

DON MORRIS: The oldest is Thurman Morris, then it's Betty Warlick, then it's Ruby Henderson, then it's Virginia Shank, then there's got a set of twins in there, Doyle and Dorothy, and then there's me, then my youngest brother Alton. I left Lawrence out....Lawrence out, he's above Virginia.

TONY HILL: Did you go to high school there in Henderson?

DON MORRIS: No we moved at an early age to the area around Gladewater and I went to school at a little old town called Union Grove. My dad worked in the oil field and he moved over to that area working in the oil field when I was a youngster.

TONY HILL: Is Union Grove kind of northwest of Gladewater, up in there?

DON MORRIS: Union Grove is between Gladewater and Gilmer on Hwy 271.

TONY HILL: Okay, okay, yeah that's right, I remember.

DON MORRIS: It's just....it's closer to Gladewater, it uses a Gladewater address.

TONY HILL: Did you go....did you have an college experience?

DON MORRIS: I went to a year and a half of college before I went in the DPS and after I was DPS I took a lot of law enforcement classes at the Henderson County Junior College, I think it's called Trinity Valley Junior College now, at Athens.

TONY HILL: While growing up in high school or in college, were there any special friends or teachers that had an effect on your life that pointed you in a particular direction or anything like that?

DON MORRIS: Well I had a lot of good teachers out in Union Grove, we were fortunate...I think it's a real good school, it's a small school. I had a particular lady, there was an English teacher out there that I really looked up to, she lived in our neighborhood and I did a lot of extra work for her, mowing grass and stuff like this, and she was just real influential on my life. That ah...kind of want her to see I'm doing good you know.

TONY HILL: What were your favorite subjects in school?

DON MORRIS: Math, I exceeded in Math in there and as a matter of fact I was going to do an engineering degree when I went to Kilgore Junior College. And I found out calculus wasn't my line of work.

TONY HILL: Math is good up to calculus, I understand that. Did you play sports or any extracurricular activities like that?

DON MORRIS: At Union Grove, it's a small school, from the time you're a freshman to high school...to senior, you played football. In the 7th, 8th and 9th you played Jr. High football. And I played all them years of football, played basketball a couple of years, but mostly it was a football school. You played football every year.

TONY HILL: Are you married?

DON MORRIS: Yes.

TONY HILL: And could you tell us your wife's name?

DON MORRIS: My wife's name is Phyllis, her maiden name is Suthoff and she's from Houston.

TONY HILL: I see. What about your children?

DON MORRIS: I have three boys. The oldest is Douglas Ray Morris, he lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana at this time, David Ray Morris he lives in Livingston, Texas, he is a State Trooper down there, and my youngest son is Daniel Morris, he's living at home with us.

TONY HILL: I met your son down in Livingston.

DON MORRIS: Yes.

TONY HILL: Were you in the military service?

DON MORRIS: Never was in the military.

TONY HILL: When did you first decide you wanted to be in law enforcement?

DON MORRIS: Well that's kind of ironic because I was over at Gladewater working, after I'd dropped out of college and I was over there working at some railroad yard, we were cleaning out tanks, rebuilding railroad cars and stuff like that and just working up a storm. I mean, you'd go to work in the morning with clean clothes on, afternoon you come home you'd just be dirty, filthy. Hard work, not much money over there and I had a buddy that joined the DPS that went to school, and he joined the DPS and went down there and got to telling me that you could sit in the classroom all day long, don't get dirty, nasty, and enjoy the class and do a little exercise and draw \$500.00 a month. And that was more than I was making working in the railroad yard over

there. And I said, “You mean to tell me they’ll pay me \$500.00 a month to sit and do nothing and do a little exercise”. He said, “Yes”. I said, “Well where do I sign up”.

TONY HILL: So your first law enforcement job was going in the DPS?

DON MORRIS: Yes it was, I was 20 years old.

TONY HILL: How long did it take you from the time you applied until you assigned to a school?

DON MORRIS: Well I applied in ah....it’s going to be like October of 1968, I turned 20 in September of ’68, in October I applied, I got to go to school in December of ’68.

TONY HILL: So pretty quick turn around.

DON MORRIS: Yes.

TONY HILL: You graduated from high school in what year?

DON MORRIS: Be 1966.

TONY HILL: ’66. How long was the recruit school when you attended?

DON MORRIS: When I attended recruit school, if I’m not mistaken, I think it was like sixteen, eighteen weeks. It’s considerably more now.

TONY HILL: Do you remember any of your monitors that you had in the school?

DON MORRIS: I remember every one of them. There was a Highway Patrol Sergeant named Ethridge, he was a Highway Patrol Sergeant in Palestine, he later got killed in an accident down there when a car fell on him, a state car, he was changing....or checking the brake line or something like that and it fell on him down there. Floyd Ethridge was his name. We had another monitor named Bobby Poiner, Bobby Poiner later became a Ranger stationed at Gonzales, he’s retired now, living in Edgewood. And then we had a McKnight, he was an elderly Sergeant from San Antonio who was in motor vehicle inspection, a good man. And then we had a John Mason

who was a license and weights Sergeant....a motor vehicle inspection Sergeant out of West Texas out there in the Panhandle. We had some good monitors, they were good with people.

TONY HILL: Back then what were some of the classes that you had in the school?

DON MORRIS: Well you take the basic courses, you know, where you go through there and you take the basic criminal law enforcement, traffic law enforcement classes. And there's Texas history, there's ...good gracious, all kind of classes. I felt like I was going to college again when I was down there. And of course the physical training and then eventually get into the driving and everything. And it's real interesting.

TONY HILL: What did you like best about the school, was there any particular thing that was in the recruit school that you liked better than all the rest of the thing?

DON MORRIS: Fridays.

TONY HILL: Fridays.

DON MORRIS: We got to go home on Fridays.

TONY HILL: And I guess Mondays might be the least

DON MORRIS: Sunday.

TONY HILL: Sundays is the least. When you were going to recruit school did any Rangers speak to the school?

DON MORRIS: You know I don't remember any particular time that....we had different services come, mostly uniform service I remember.... I do not remember any type of Ranger. Of course in the cafeteria there, we shared a cafeteria with the DPS, you'd be in there in your little old khaki uniform, you'd see the Rangers and stuff, cause they are very visible who they were. And it was always interesting to see them in there.

TONY HILL: In your basic class did anybody besides yourself progress to being a Ranger?

DON MORRIS: Yes, we had a few, Ray Nutt.

TONY HILL: Ray Nutt.

DON MORRIS: made a Ranger. A guy named Key out of Abilene made Ranger, I think he was the first one. And then me and I'm trying.... I don't think of another one that made it, just us three.

TONY HILL: What about anybody in your recruit class that progressed on into administration with the DPS, any.....

DON MORRIS: No, only ones I know made as high as Sergeant in the traffic law enforcement.

TONY HILL: Were you originally assigned to the Highway Patrol?

DON MORRIS: No, when I graduated from recruit school I got assigned to drivers license, which I didn't particularly like, I was 20 years old and you know, ready to get on the road and do some work out there. But at that point and time, the military they thought....they assumed I was going to be drafted, cause I wasn't married and you know, I was going to be drafted. So no need sending me to Highway Patrol, they sent me to drivers license. And so I got assigned to Houston in the drivers license. And Bobby Poynter, our monitor down there, was a Sergeant in the office I went to. And I didn't get drafted, but anyway, I stayed there a year an a half and then I transferred to Highway Patrol.

TONY HILL: When you were transferred to Highway Patrol, where was your first duty station as a Highway Patrolman?

DON MORRIS: I went to Richmond, which was Fort Bend County. My Sergeant was Bill Ennis out there and I worked there for 3 years, from '70.....September of '70 to I guess September of '73.

TONY HILL: Were youdid you transfer from there or what?

DON MORRIS: I left there and went to a little town called Emory, which is in Raines County up here on Hwy 19, south of Sulphur Springs. And we worked there a year and a half and I did not like the smallness of the area. My wife did not like the smallness of the area, so we transferred down to Athens in November of '75, 1975. We stayed there in Athens until I made Ranger in September of 1981. And Athens is one of the good stations that we lived....we really liked Athens and if I had not made Ranger I'd still be there today.

TONY HILL: Still be there, that's a nice town. Who was your training officer at your first Highway Patrol station?

DON MORRIS: When I went to Richmond, Fort Bend County down there, a guy named Bob Dillard was myassigned to work with me. And Bob was an old German guy, I say old, I say he wasn't old, to me he was old, I was 21 years old and he was ...he wasn't 30, but I say an older man, he had only about 8 years of experience....ah....5 or 6 years and we worked together and we had a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun, we had a lot of enjoyment out there. And Bob is one of them old boys that he just want to push your button, push your button until you balk up to him you know. And it was real interesting, old Bob, he was real hard on people, he just....he's real pushy on people. And he kept riding me for the first month, just riding my case, you know, you couldn't do nothing right. There was nothing you could do, there ain't no way you could do anything. It comes from language to how you did your work out there, whether you wrote tickets and the like, it didn't matter what you did, you couldn't do it right. And he got on my case one night, I don't know, maybe I had a bad night or something like that and I told old Bob, I said, "You pull this car over, I'm fixing to whip your ass". He looked at me and he said, "What". And I said, "Pull this car over, I'm fixing to whip your ass, I've had enough of you". And he started

laughing and everything and said, “Let’s go get some coffee”. From then on he left me alone, he left me alone and we got along fine and we enjoyed our time we worked ...(inaudible)...

TONY HILL: What made you first decide to want to be a Ranger?

DON MORRIS: Well I was in Athens up there and there was a guy named Bennie Krueger up there. Me and Bennie Krueger got to be good friends, there’s a guy....there’s a Ranger up there at that time when I first come named Dale Brice. Dale was a fine fella, Dale had cancer and didn’t last very long after I came up there, about a year or something like that. And then a guy named Slick Alford come up there, who later became the Sheriff of Henderson County over there. And me and Slick was friends and I’d visit with them and got to know him and I got to know Bob Mitchell, I got to know Ronnie Brownlow, you know all the guys. Bob Prince, Bob Prince got stationed in Palestine, got to know him up there. And I felt real nice about....these were real good people on the thing. And I approached them one day, you know, about taking the test and they encouraged me and I took the test and went from there.

TONY HILL: Was Bennie retired when you got up there and that Brice fella was

DON MORRIS: Bennie Krueger was retired, he was retired and.....

TONY HILL: Was he working as a....he worked as a court bailiff there for awhile....

DON MORRIS: Yes he was.

TONY HILL:that was....that’s what he was doing?

DON MORRIS: He was a court bailiff up there and Bennie Kruegerhe wasn’t a big fella, but I’m going to tell you, you knew what he said. And you respected what he said. And you did what he said.

TONY HILL: Who was the first Ranger that you remember seeing as a Ranger.... I mean, not you as a Ranger, but what is the first person you remember meeting that was a Texas Ranger?

DON MORRIS: I guess it would be Bill Wilson.

TONY HILL: Bill Wilson?

DON MORRIS: Bill Wilson was a Captain at that time and I had met himwell I take that back, I guess it would be Bob Mitchell as far as Supervisors and stuff, is Bob Mitchell and then later he introduced me to Bill Wilson. And that was real interesting to meet them.

TONY HILL: And you became a Ranger in 1981?

DON MORRIS: Yes I did, September, 1981.

TONY HILL: Can you tell me what stations you were at?

DON MORRIS: When I made Ranger I got the fine duty of being sent to Houston. And I had just left, you know, my wife is from Houston and I started out in Houston, went to Fort Bend County and I was working myself away from down there. And of course naturally you get sent back to Houston, even though you might not want to go back to Houston. You had to adjust whether you want to be a Ranger or you want to be a Highway Patrolman. So I went to Houston down there and it was quite a family sacrifice as far as going to Houston. But we went down there and made the best out of it. And then a year and a half later Captain North let me come to Lufkin and that's where I have been since I made Ranger was here in Lufkin.

TONY HILL: What year?

DON MORRIS: November 8, 1982 I came to Lufkin.

TONY HILL: Was North Captain when you went to Houston or was

DON MORRIS: No, Captain Grady Sessions....

TONY HILL: Grady?

DON MORRIS:was Captain down there and Dan North was a Sergeant then. They called them Sergeant and Lieutenants now.

TONY HILL: Now you started out serving under Sessions then and then Dan North.

DON MORRIS: Dan became Captain when Grady left...retired.

TONY HILL: And who was Captain after that?

DON MORRIS: After Dan left, if you'll remember, we got Jim Gant there as a Sergeant. But Jim Gant did not make Captain there, Bobby Prince came in as Captain. And then of course Jim Gant retired and ah.... I'm trying to think who come after....ah...Vickers, Dee Vickers come up there as a Lieutenant then. And then eventually Dee Vickers made Captain and ah....

TONY HILL: Madera was....

DON MORRIS: Madera come in after that, and then Madera didn't make Captain, and then Earl come in after that. And then after Earl was ah....

TONY HILL: Cleat.

DON MORRIS:Cleat Buckaloo come in after him, when Earl went to Austin on the thing. That's some good Captains.

TONY HILL: Yeah, and you left before Jim came back, right?

DON MORRIS: Yes, Jim had left and went to Lubbock and he was already a Captain in Lubbock, but he was never my Captain.

TONY HILL: Was there special training school for Rangers when you first made Ranger, at the time you went in?

DON MORRIS: When you go into the Rangers, the first year or more you're going to be going to school, every kind school there is to go to. They've got a basic Ranger school you go to on criminal law enforcement and then there's fingerprint school comes along, a vacancy occurs, you'll go to them. Any kind of homicide school, any kind of major crime school you'll go to if, you know, the schedule permits on there. But that's what you do the first year.

TONY HILL: A lot of training the first year.

DON MORRIS: A lot of training the first year, there's a lot to digest on that.

TONY HILL: Did you feel that once you left the Highway Patrol and went into the Rangers that people treated you different, or did you feel the same respect as a Highway Patrolman that you did later becoming a Ranger, or could you tell a difference.

DON MORRIS: You could tell a difference. I can instantly sense that once you become a Ranger people readily accept you, they thought ah.... I won't say put you on a higher level, but they thought of you better because of the tradition of the previous Rangers. That they have made a foundation there that's hard to live up to, because there has been some Rangers in the past that have really done some excellent jobs.

TONY HILL: In your career as a Ranger is there any special type of crime that you enjoyed working more than any others?

DON MORRIS: I enjoyed working homicides. I think that is our bread and butter as far as the Rangers goes as major crimes is a homicide. And you get a lot of assistance from the cities and counties on your investigations. You've got to have that, it's hard to maintain just your unit by yourself, you've got to be able to work with the different cities and counties, in a different jurisdiction where you're at to get these crimes solved.

TONY HILL: But ah... I just one of the main purposes of the Rangers is also to lend a lot of expertise to the smaller counties that don't have the....don't have developed homicide investigators and things like that.

DON MORRIS: Yes, most Sheriff's offices in the smaller jurisdictions do not have somebody dedicated doing investigations and the police department don't have somebody to do the investigations. So if they get tied up on an investigation, it takes them off from doing their

normal routine calls and stuff like this. And they just don't have a lot of time to spend on it, not that they don't want to, it's just ah...financially they just don't have the people to do it. And so that's where we come in, in rural areas I think we've been real beneficial. We can go over there and take a case. But you still relay on your local officials...officers, because they know a lot of people in the community you don't know.

TONY HILL: Exactly.

DON MORRIS: They know people that...how to get in touch with people and you depend on them to get you in there, talk to people, interview them. And I always tried to keep the officers abreast of what was going on, if we wereif I had to carry evidence to Austin, I'd always invite them, if they wanted to go fine, we'd go down there together. But I always kept them abreast of what was happening on there, but it's part of their investigation too. And a lot of counties and cities and especially that rural area up there where I'm at, at Company A, the Sheriff's office has not been real good about writing reports. You know, if there's any documented item that went on in the investigation it's going to have to come from the Rangers. There's not much documentation from the Sheriff's office, they used to write me little old fast reports and send it off and forget about it you know.

TONY HILL: Here in Lufkin what counties did you cover while you were a Ranger here?

DON MORRIS: When I first come to Lufkin I had Angelina County, then I had Sabine County and San Augustine County. Later on they did some rearrangements and I had Angelina County, Trinity County and San Augustine County.

TONY HILL: Was Bill up here in Nacogdoches when you came up here?

DON MORRIS: Bill Walk was in Nacogdoches when I came and he had...also we shared San Augustine County and he had Shelby County.

TONY HILL: Do you remember the first case you had as a Ranger, what was it?

DON MORRIS: Well the first case I had in Houston, I guess that's when you're speaking about was down there, it was a missing persons case, it had been with the PD for a long time. We were not successful in finding...it's one of them cases where you think ...where you know what happened but you can't ever prove it and we never did recover the body, because the individual that did it knew where the body was, but would not give it up, don't know how you'd ever get it out of them. And it was real frustrating, because it just, you know, just hit a dead end there because all the information's got to come from the individual. And if he keeps his mouth shut you'll never get it solved.

TONY HILL: Do you have a case that stands out in your mind as your most satisfying case that you really think that it...that it worked out well and you were proud of how it worked out and you're most satisfying case in your career?

DON MORRIS: We have a rural county over there at Sabine County at Hemphill, in Pineland over there. Back in ah...I guess it was May 1st of '91 I opened a missing persons case over there. There was a young lady named Renna Rogers over there and her two twenty fourtwenty two month old daughter were missing. Her husband come home from work that afternoon and the car was gone...no the car was there, her purse was there, they were just missing from the house, they were gone. Of course he reported it to the Sheriff's office and we went over there and interviewed him and you know, right off the bat, well she'll show up, you know, they'd been having problems. Come next week she hadn't showed, the baby hadn't showed, nobody had heard anything, they've checked all their relatives, friends, just missing. Didn't know where they was at. So we started looking around at neighbors around there and started talking to individuals. And there was one old boy that just stood out, just stood out, Buddy Heizelbeck's his name and

he had another name besides Buddy, that's what everybody called him. And Buddy said...that was a Saturday that she actually went missing you know, Buddy said that he was gone all day long, said he hitchhiked over to Madisonville looking for a job and come back and said he was gone all day long. So we go looking some more and then later we go back and we check out his story on the thing. What had happened, the husband and the wife had been out of town and so he went to work and she dropped him off at work and then she drove home and he was going to come home later. Well he never seen her again. Of course we had to get the husband cleared, got him all cleared and you know, he seemed to be telling the truth, genuine, we just had people missing, a women and daughter missing. And for a month we didn't find the body nowhere. And Buddy's story did not check out, we checked out with Madisonville over there, did not check out, he said he hitchhiked over there, of course that's uncheckable. But where he said he was going was not there. And we even loaded Buddy up in a car, before the body was found, and carried him over there, tell him, show us where you went. He couldn't find the location he went. We carried him down to Houston and gave him a polygraph test, he did not pass the polygraph test, he was obviously being deceptive on the thing. Buddy was really a person of interest on this thing, as the (inaudible)...these days. But it was obvious that he had done something, something had occurred, the woman and the baby was missing, he knew where they was at and he just wasn't giving it up. Well we kept interviewing him over there during this period of time of a month there and finally he couldn't stand it no longer, he left town, he went...left Pinelands and moved up to Marshall where the sister lives up there, him and his wife loaded up and went up there. And Buddy is one of these guys, you know I have children and most people have children, been around children, they're going to run around and act up and be fun you know and stuff like this. Buddy....we went out to visit him one day to interview him, me and Billy Don Sparks was

the Deputy Sheriff over there at Sabine County at the time, we're waiting for his wife to get home from school so he could go with us and talk to us. And he didn't mind talking to us, he voluntarily wanted to go talk to us. So we're there and Buddy had been out there moving a vehicle around in the yard with a manual come-along, and he was all hot and sweaty and tired you know where he'd been pulling on that come-along. And them kids was running around there in the yard, you know, like kids do, I didn't think anything of it, cause I've had kids, everybody's had kids. And all of a sudden Buddy called out that oldest boys name and them kids just froze in their tracks, they didn't move, they looked at him and walked over there and said, "yes". He said, "Go get me some water". They didn't hesitate, they turned and went towards the house, got him some water and brought it back to him and stood there, and he said, "okay", and they leFort Me and Billy Don Sparks were just amazed, you know, kids don't act that way, it's got to be out of fright or something like this. And so we...well we knew we had something when this occurred, this was something that was ...just don't happen with kids on the thing. And so we talked to the wife some more and she wouldn't give us a whole lot of information, cause she was scared, obviously there's some type of abuse or something had been going on in the family. And so there's been a problem. And we found out from talking to the husband of the woman that over a period of time they had, had little things missing from their house like hamburger meat and stuff like this, they didn't see fit to report it, just thought maybe they, you know, had misplaced it or something like that. Didn't seem fit to report it, but they had a lot of stuff missing and then they had a phone bill came in during this time from an 800 number. It's one of them scratch off things where you call in, you may be a big winner, but it's actually a sales campaign, they're trying to sell you something. But they said, we never called that number, you know, and Buddy didn't have a phone by the way. Buddy didn't have a phone, sometimes they didn't have electricity,

sometimes they didn't have food, I mean they were real poor, you know, barely striving down there. And so our contention is Buddy made this phone call. Well I don't remember the exact day, but about a month later before....about the end of June there, Tyler County called, which is outside of Woodville, Tyler County. And they had found some skeletal remains of a young baby and a woman....ah...they didn't know if it was a woman, but another skeletal remains, two small skeletal remains. So man we run over there and we look at them and we get them off to the autopsy, we get them to Dr. Bruce here in Lufkin, he looks them over and he says it's a real possibility these are the ones on the thing, which we couldn't get actual...it was just decomposed on there. Well we were sure, we ain't got no more bodies missing nowhere around here at all. But we still don't have enough to make the case on Buddy you know. We don't have anything else other than the bodies have been found, you know, he hadn't gave us nothing, he's cried and moaned and you know, it's not (unintelligible)...but he ain't never gave you up nothing you know. And he done left the County, I mean he's been gone about two or three days from Pineland over there, he's done gone to Marshall. So Tyler, Sheriff Hennigan down there, and his Chief Deputy named Bible, we load up and go to Hemphill, we get a hold of the Sheriff's office and Billy Don Sparks was working on his own work so he couldn't go, so we go to Marshall. And this is like in 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon, we go to Marshall up there. And Buddy don't know about the bodies been found you know. So we go up there and we contact the Sheriff's office up there, and I can't remember the Chief Deputy's name, but a nice guy, and I told them what we'd like to do, we'd like to get a hold...we knew where Buddy was living at, go out there let's pick him up, bring him to the Sheriff's office, let's see if he'll talk to us, he's done it in the past. If he says no then we won't talk to him, you know. So the Sheriff said well....Chief Deputy said "well we can do that". So we go out there to this house and I knock on the door and his

sister comes to the door and I said, "Is Buddy there". And she says, "Yes". Buddy comes to the door and you see him and you see the old, you know, the white leave his face, you know, he's just white. And he says, "Yes, what's going on". I said, "Buddy we need to talk". And this Chief Deputy he said, "Mr. Heizelbeck would you mind coming down to the Sheriff's office and talk with us and these gentlemen". And Buddy said, "No I don't mind at all". He said, "Well do you want to ride with us or do you want to come down on your own, however you want to do it". "No, I'll ride with ya'll". So he gets in the Sheriff's car and they come on down to the Sheriff's office. And luckily they had a viewing room where you could interview somebody, you could view them and stuff like this. So I talked to Buddy first and he just don't know, or he starts this moaning and groaning and crying and don't know nothing. And then the Sheriff talked to him, he starts this moaning and groaning and crying and don't know nothing. And so old Bible talks to him, now Bible is a real interesting old boy, he is a....used to work narcotics and he's a...he can....he really can get down and talk stuff like that and I thought it was real interesting, so he goes in there and talks to him. And old Buddy finally said...he said, "I'm going to tell you about this one time and one time only". He said, "If you've got something to record you better get a recorder in here". Man I'm outside hearing that and I'm running for my car getting my recorder out and stuff like this and when I did Buddy.... I done told Buddy when we first arrived I read him his rights, that's on the recorder and stuff like this you know, I mean....well not on the recorder but I read him his rights and he signed everything like that. And old Bible...old Sam Bible in there and Sam come out and I said, "Sam", I said, "Listen to me, you got to go in there and you got to read him his rights, we got the tape here, we got to get this legal, we got to get this legal, the tape, read him his rights and then say, Buddy tell me what happened". So Sam said, "I got it". So he goes back in there, sits down with Buddy, and old Buddy you know, he's crying

and stuff like this. He said, “All right Buddy”, he said, “You know what your rights are don’t you”, he said, “Yeah”. He said, “Well tell me about it”. And I’m in that back room and I said, “Oh my God, no, no, no”. And old Buddy starts telling some stories and ...and I’m thinking, my God how we going....this...this....you know, we ain’t got the rights on the damn tape you know, but I ain’t going to stop him you know. And Buddy tells a story about this gal coming down to his house and they get in a argument and he accuses her of something, gets in an argument and then he’s walking back to the house and this gal is supposedly shoots him or something like this, with a .22 and he comes back out there and chokes her down. But then he don’t go much further, don’t tell about the baby or anything like that. Cause you know.....and so....we....we....well you know, that’s good but we ain’t got the legal confession then, but we got enough to get a warrant. We’ve got enough to get a warrant. And so we call his wife down there and his wife comes down there and they sit out....and I say, “Buddy”, I said, “You need to tell her what happened you know”. And so he comes in there and tells his wife all this stuff and they sit out there and cry and holler. And all this time we’re calling Hemphill, get a hold of Billy Don Sparks, getting us a warrant. Excuse me, we went to Tyler County, course you can get a warrant from either County, we got a warrant from Tyler County, we get a warrant for Capital Murder for Buddy and he’s sitting out there crying with his wife and he’s free to leave. But he decides not to and stuff like this. And me and Sam we discuss it, we don’t know what we’re going to do, but we gotwe’re going to have to get another statement from him is what it boiled down to. And so we get through with that, we get our warrant up there and me and Sheriff Hennigan and we all load up and Hennigan loads him up in the car and they go back to Tyler County, and I go back to Lufkin. The very next morning, I think this was even a Saturday, we load up, and I mean I load up and I

go to Tyler County. I said, "We got to get this straight". We get over to the District Attorney's down there, Charles Mitchell over there out of Sabine...ah...San Augustine County.

TONY HILL: San Augustine.

DON MORRIS: And get Charles over there and said, "Charles this is what we got". He said, "Well we got to get another statement". I said, "I know that". I said, "Well let's tell you what let's do, let's get it on a written statement form, with the right Miranda warnings on it and get a gal to transcript that entire tape on there, get it transcribe on there and get old Sam back in there and say, Buddy let's go over what you told me the other day you know, get him to sign them rights and stuff like that, initial them and said, now read that, if that's what you told me the other day, sign it". And that's what Sam did, he went back there with that old boy and put that in front of Buddy and Buddy...he initialed them, you know, he read it to him and stuff like that, which he did and then he went through it and said, "Yeah, that's what I told you". He said, "Well sign it Buddy". And Buddy signed the damn thing. And we're sitting out there going Whew. You know, and so of course it wasn't a true story, I mean...but it did give us something to work on. And so the next day they got a hold of Buddy again and Buddy said, you know, she's gotthere's some items missing from the house, like a I told you awhile ago, there was a purse, but there was a purse missing. I said, "Buddy we need to find that purse". He said, "Well I threw it in a pond out there". So we the Pineland Volunteer Fire Department out there, we hooked the hose up....this is a small stock pond, and we hooked the hose up to the thing and we drained that pond. And when they got out there, that old ...(inaudible)...they found that he'd wrapped it around a big rock and thrown it out there, had some pennies and some other stuff that he threw away out there, we gathered that stuff up and of course that helped tremendously you know. And so we did some more back ground investigation and we still have got him, you know, we think

that he came....she came home and he was in the house and he killed her and the baby was crying and he had no other means to get rid of her, explain it, so he just strangled the baby too. I don't know how you do that to a baby, but he did. And that's how she died, she died of asphyxiation and the baby you couldn't tell because the bone had not developed there. So now I'm in the process of ...we have towe got a Capital Murder case, but we don't know if we're going to get the death penalty. Because you got to have ...show that he's a continuing threat to society, not that he just committed a crime, he is a continuing treat to society, you know. So me and Charles Mitchell get a plan together, we're going to go ahead and do complete background on Buddy and see what he's got in his past, he's got no criminal history, but there's got to be some things with his personality, that he did some stuff back there. Of course we talked to the wife and she finally...well he is abusive, he has abused me, he beat me up, he does this and stuff and he whips the kids real hard, you know. I mean, well that's good, but that ain'tthat isn't enough to get a Capital Murder.

TONY HILL: Must be a continuing threat.

DON MORRIS: So we go back and he's from down there at Lumberton, and I do all kind of ...talk to everybody he knew back down there and that thing. And then I found out he had an ex-wife in California. And Buddy is a....he's a torturer, he likes to shoot live chicken and kill 'em and dogs, he likes to kill dogs and skin them and he likes, you know, he'd done a lot of weird things like that. But still that ain't....that don't make him ayou know, it tells about his personality, but he is not....he's a real strange duck you know. So we go find his ex-wife in California and I talk to her and she tells me they got a divorce and after their divorce, said Buddy broke his way into the house there in Lumberton, forced her, raped her and then beat her up and left and she never reported it. She said, "I'm getting away because he's going to kill me". And I

said, "Would you come back and testify to that". She said, "I surely will, if you'll promise he can't get a hold of me". I said, "Well he ain't going to get a hold of you, he ain't getting out of jail". So we was able to get her, we couldn't find no criminal offense but we found some people that he was...had been mean to, I mean, you know, testify and stuff like that. And we was able to get a conviction, we was able to get the death penalty on thing from Sabine County and it was less than 10 years later after that, that he got executed over there.

TONY HILL: Oh really.

DON MORRIS: I went to his execution. Buddy Heizelbeck, he is a character and a half, now he needed to be executed on the thing. But I just don't see how anybody can strangle a two year old. Charles Mitchell did a real interesting deal on that and I never thought about it, but he thought about this over there, he's a good prosecutor. You know a lot of times in murder cases, murder investigations, you know, they always got the deal where they can claim self defense, which would lowerif...whether it's true or not, they can claim self defense, you know. Well when they do two or more deaths in the same event, you got a choice of listing any of them first. Well the first one you can't claim self defense, so Charles listed the baby as first, so Buddy could not claim self defense on that. And so....and that really hurt the defense on the thing, but it was something Charles planned before we got to trial on the thing. And that thing went through the appeals court, no problem, he set there about 10 years and then executed on the thing. And we had a real interesting thing happen during the trial, the Sabine County jail sits on one corner from the courthouse, and you got to walk across the street to get to the courthouse where they're having the trial. Well the family in Pineland, where this little girl was from, and the grandfather, he was a school principal there at the high school in Pineland. Well this man is well respected in the community, the whole family well respected in the community and theythis was just

tearing them up, I mean the old man you could tell, he was just tore up over this thing. This is his only daughter, grandchild you know. And so we just expected somebody to kill Buddy during the trial. I figured one day somebody would walk him over to the courtroom, somebody's going to shoot from one of them buildings, something like that, or the old man is going to jump up in the courtroom and cut his throat or something like that. But it never happened, but I'm surprised it didn't on the thing. But Buddy is a ...he was bad, he needed to be executed, he got what he deserved I think.

TONY HILL: What about your most frustrating case, you talk about your first case not being able to solve it, was there any more that was more frustrating than that?

DON MORRIS: Well there is a case and it's still pending today, it's Bill Roland. I think you're familiar with that case.

TONY HILL: That was one on the.....

DON MORRIS: On the lake over here.

TONY HILL:on the lake.

DON MORRIS: In San Augustine County. We had a case involving a missing person again. You know a lot of times people don't realize but a lot of missing person case aren't missing person but they're actually murder cases. And whether you can ever find the body or nor they're still probably murder cases. And so Bill Roland, of course he went over there one ...I guess it was Sunday night is when it was....Monday....one Monday to his lake house and he was never seen again. His pickup was found later on burned, his trailer that he pulled over there, that pontoon boat was found, we had no witnesses to anything, he just wasn't found. And so we do our normal investigation, interviews and there was another old boy in that same cul-de-sac he lived in that's a strange duck. And I mean...and him and Bill had so many problems over the last

year or so. And I feel certain that he killed Bill and dumped him in that lake. Now we ain't going to be able to find him, because if Bill's in the bottom of that lake, you know, he's going to be covered with ...(inaudible). You'll never find him, I don't care what machine...unless that lake gets completely down, you ain't going to have nothing. But still even if you find Bill out there, it ain't going to tie it to that old boy. So you really got problems with that case and it's been real frustrating on the thing. We did everything we could, we even brought some real scientific equipment in on ...ah....we call it high scan sonar, I never heard of it in my life til we got that. But it gives you actual pictures of what's on the bottom of the lake. And what we was looking for, there's a ladder missing that Bill would have been attached to. Because when his boat was foundokay....Rayburn....Lake Rayburn does not have any boat ramps or anything like that, so people pull their boats, pontoon boats up on the bank there to them from washing back out. Well when you do that it's going to make the front of that pontoon boat pretty high and Bill....the seats on the front of that pontoonthere's two bass seats sitting on the front of that pontoon boat. But when we found the boat they were moved back out of the way, made room for something up there. Well Bill had a 16 Foot ladder, fiberglass ladder in his pickup when he came over there that morning, it was never found. And if you attach Bill to that fiberglass ladder either by rope or plastic or whatever, however you want to attach him to it, and pick up one end and put him up there and slide him like that, one man could do it. Cause Bill was 250 pounds, but he wouldn't be able to lift that dead weight up that high to put him up, but if you attach him to that ladder you could. And then he dumped him out there in the lake and we'll never find him, but he's still there, out there in that lake somewhere out there. But ah...

TONY HILL: Where did you find the pontoon boat?

DON MORRIS: The pontoon boat was found ah....as you go out from Bill's lake house you go towards 147 bridge and make that turn there and back into an old slough back in there hid underneath the willow trees. And it was about a month before we found that out there. It was hid pretty well in there.

TONY HILL: Do you think it was hid rather than just floated?

DON MORRIS: Oh it was just hid, it was tied off, it was hid.

TONY HILL: Oh it was tied off.

DON MORRIS: And it had a shotgun shell, 12 gauge shotgun shells in the pontoon. But they're also filled with fiberglass....not fiberglass, Styrofoam, so they do not sink, had plenty of water in there, but it did not sink. And we didn't find any blood or anything like this, but Bill was one of them guys that he's not scared of anything, but he'd fight you if you had a knife, I mean, and so this old boy I think he caught him away from his pickup where he couldn't get to his vehicle and killed him somehow or another. And old Bill didn't back down from nothing, well that may have been the cause of his death.

TONY HILL: What about a difficult case that you had?

DON MORRIS: Well there's....there's a lot of difficulty involved....a lot of times it's involved getting the information or results from the lab, something like this. One of the difficult cases we had is when you're dealing with banks, getting bank records. Sometimes that's easy, sometimes it not, it just depends on where your at and how much records you want get. We had a case involving a lady up here that stole \$300,000 from a man. Well the bank records from the company were good, we get that, but when you go back to the bank to see how they actuallyhow the checks were altered, that took like six weeks to do that, you talk about a pain, you had to go through each one of them microfilms and look at everything like that. And the bank

charged a large amount of money to do this and it was real frustrating, everybody said, where we going to get the money to pay for this. But we did, we had to put all them records together then, you have to go back and put all them records together, combine them and then you see how much money she stole and how she did it on the thing. It's just a time consuming deal more than anything else. But it was real frustrating on that bank records. I hate dealing with bank records.

TONY HILL: Yeah I do too. What was the last case you remember working before you left the Rangers?

DON MORRIS: We had a case over here involving a man out of ah....ah....69 north out here before you get to Wells, incidentally it was Morris Lane, he lived off Morris Lane out there. He was missing and his house was burnt down, he was just gone and his house was burned down. Well, you know, the Sheriff's officers responded here went out there and I knew about it, I didn't go out there because it was arson, they didn't know ...(inaudible).....showed 'em somewhere else, you know he....you know not unusual, but I knew it was a house burned down, no body or anything in the house. So I'm at the office one day, within a day after that, and the Sheriff in Trinity County called me, Brent Phillips called me. Sheriff Phillips said we got a body dumped in a creek over here, need you to come on over. So man I load up and I go over there. But I still hadn't hit on, you know, the connection there. And so we got a body dumped in a shallow part of the creek over there been shot several times, tied up, weighted down, but he didn't sink, he sit a sand bar out there, so it didn't so in the water all the way. So we got it recovered, went and got it back there and got it to the funeral home up there. Looking at the guys possessions and on his belt it said Fant, FANT. And the guys that's missing over here was a guy named Fant Smart. And so we recovered a body and got a hold of Angelina County and then we started doing the whole investigation and we started doing that, we got a suspect developed and eventually we got

a case....after I left, retired from the Rangers, they got a conviction on the case and everything. But it was one of the last ones I worked on.

TONY HILL: Well what made you decide to retire?

DON MORRIS: When I retired last day of August 2002, my retirement I was at 100% and I could not convince myself to work past 100%. That's one....in my opinion that's what a fella works for all his life, is retirement. And I wasn't going to be able to add any....as far as other than pay raises or something like that come along, but as far as added percentage to my retirement, it wasn't going to happen, I mean I was at 100%. And so I decided at that time to just go ahead and retire. I enjoyed the Rangers, I was still doing the work and knew a lot of people, could still do the work, but I could not convince myself to work past 100%. If you take off the 16....or the 5 or 8%, whatever we pay to retirement off there, I'd be taking home more money than I'm making, you know.

TONY HILL: Right, right.

DON MORRIS: I'd lose a state car, now that's something you got to consider too, but no Ithat's the reason I did, I wasn't mad or nothing, nobody or anything like that, wasn't tired of the work, but ah....see I was 53 years old when I retired, you know. And I had 34 of....

TONY HILL: 34 years.

DON MORRIS:34 years with the State. But I had over 2 years of sick leave backed up, so I got credit for 2 more years, which gave me 36 years, that made me 100%.

TONY HILL: Yeah, yeah.

DON MORRIS: So, you know, I just couldn't convince myself....

TONY HILL: No reason to go to work if you can make as much staying at home.

DON MORRIS: Well, I felt like if I could, you know, after I retired and if I wanted to I could find any kind of job to do something and make a little extra money if I wanted to, to keep myself busy, you know.

TONY HILL: Did you....you kept your Special Ranger commission?

DON MORRIS: Yes I did.

TONY HILL: And since retiring you've done a couple of things.

DON MORRIS: Yes, when I first retired I was doing some part time work for the District Attorney's office as an investigator, he had some special projects he wanted me to do and I did that for a few times and then ah....then I went to work for Ed Jones the County Attorney's office three days a week and we're doing misdemeanors on felony thefts and stuff like that. And then I'm working now for DETCOG, which is Deep East Texas Council of Governments, I'm in the Homeland Security part of DETCOG. We do the Homeland Security grants that come in from the Federal Government to the State, to the local jurisdictions here, manage that and help them get equipment that they need for this Homeland Security. It's a full time job, but I was ready to go back to work, I needed more things to do than just sit around the house, you can only do that so much around the house.

TONY HILL: What about ah....other humorous stories about any other Rangers you worked or anything like that you'd like to relate.

DON MORRIS: Well I tell you what, I worked with a lot of cast of characters in my time with the Rangers over the years, from Rangers to Deputy Sheriff's, city police officers. And we had an old boy one time here with the city, we were....one time we were going....we had a capital murder case here the city was working on and the old boythe suspect was out of town, I mean he hadwe found a little girl that carried him to Houston, dropped him off on Jenson Drive

inside the loop. Now that area still is I think, prominently black, and this is a black guy we're looking for, a young black guy. All we had was a name and a picture. And the chances are of finding a young black guy on Jenson Drive down there is pretty remote. She had no idea where he was going to down there. But I called my I knew a few friends at the homicide division down there at the Houston PD and I called them and tell them what I had, had some pictures. I said, "Would you mind if we come down there and show the pictures around like that". He said, "Don't mind at all". He said, "I don't think it's going to do much good but we'll give it a shot you know". So we load up with B.C. Bridwell, Stinger Wallace, which was PD investigators at that time, and we run down there and we move to the homicide and we go over on Jenson Drive. Well Jenson Drive is a long....it's got all kinds of businesses up and down there, got pool halls, got beer joints, whatever you want down there. So we get out there at the pool hall, on Jenson Drive, and we go in there and start showing this guys picture, "Do you know this guy, do you know this guy". You know, and so we finally run across somebody said, "Yeah", said, "I seen him". He said, "Yeah I seen him". He said, "He's staying with his Aunt right over here", and gave us a street over from this....(inaudible). Well that's good, we'll run over there and see if he's there. We go over there and talk to his Aunt and the Aunt says, "Well he was here but he's gone, I don't where he went, he just left one morning and he's gone". I thought well okay. And I think she was being honest and she was a nice lady. So we go back over there on Jenson Drive again and start showing pictures on this thing again and we're out there busy doing that and I look up and there's a little old car coming by me. And me and this homicide detective looked at this car coming by real slow, we look at the passenger in that thing, and look at the picture, and it looked like him. And now he said, "Well that's him right there in that car". I said, "Well it looks like him". He said, "Well lets go stop it". And so we all jump in our cars and we run down

just....this car takes off running, I mean it's runningthere's several streets it just runs a stop sign like that and we ain't got no red lights or anything, and all we got to....so wethe homicide guys call in for the local you know and help us to stop this old boy. And finally we get him over there and we get up beside him and one of them old side....they got them old deep ditches and we just run him off in the ditch like that and of course we jump out, police you know and all this stuff and we get both the passengers out and it ain't him, it ain't him at all, you know. But what we find out it's a stolen car and they had pockets full of money, I mean we're talking about wadded up bills and stuff like this, just pockets full of money you know. And we're about the only white guys in this area you know. And the local bull or policeman you know comes around there like that and we tell him what we got and what they got and everything. Of course they arrest them on the thing and the crowd forms, you know, the brothers start forming around there. And so we start I start asking them you know, we're about 12 blocks from where we started on the thing. I said, "Do ya'll know this guy", just kind of showing the picture around like that and nobody says anything, nobody....no....nobody or nothing. So we get through, well we'll go back up to Jenson Drive up there. So we go back up to Jenson Drive up there and this local policeman that came down there, he'd been there a long time, he knows that area, worked out there a long time. He called that homicide detective on the radio and said, "Ya'll need to come on back down here". So we go on back down there and he said...there's a young lady that walking down the sidewalk, he pointed her out and said, "You see her", said "Yeah". Said, "She knows where he's at and she's fixing to go over there and show you where he's at". Oh man, so we go trail her over there and she goes in this house. And I said, "Well do we get out and go up to the house". I mean she didn't come over to the car or anything like that. And so we're trying to decide and we finally get out of the car, stand outside the car and look up and here comes this

old boy out of that house. And we're thinking, my god, he comes out of the house, comes over and says, "Ya'll looking for me". And you know, we're just astonished, we're just sitting there you know. And so we said, "Yes". He gave me his name and he said "Yeah that's my name". We tell him, well you know, we handcuff him and say, "You're under arrest". And this old homicide detective, he is laughing, he just said, "I don't believe it". He said, "I just don't believe it". I told him, I said, "Listen, what we need to do is, we need to let you handle this old prisoner here on our warrant and me and this detective we need to run over to Louisiana and buy one of them lottery tickets". I said, "Cause if we're that lucky....", I said, "If we're that lucky we going to win the jackpot". But they just laughed, we laughed about that cause it's always a deal...of course you find one young black guy on Jenson Drive in Harris...in Houston down there, the odds are just astronomical on the thing. But we found him, brought him back and he was convicted on the thing. But that's always just hilarious.

TONY HILL: Who was that homicide detective?

DON MORRIS: I'm trying to think of his name, he'd been there a long time.

TONY HILL: The one I know down there is Jim Benford.

DON MORRIS: No, it wasn't Jim it was ah....he's got a brother that's a homicide investigator too, he just recently retired down there. Gosh I can't think of his name, it's been too many years. We worked several deals. When I was stationed in Houston to start with, me and him worked a lot of cases together, I was with him on a lot of cases we was working down there. We had a lot of cases involving Highway Patrolmen getting shot down there or assaulted, working off duty jobs at different places you know. And so I got to know most of them guys down there pretty well on the thing. And ah....as a matter of fact he even come up here one time. They had a case involving a robbery and a stolen vehicle up here, we was able to help on the thing. I tell you, the

best thing you do in law enforcement, as well you know is contacts. If you've got good contacts around you can get things done, you can cut down a lot of paperwork on the thing. You know something we did over here, you probably know about this ah.... oh it was early '85, '84 or something like that. Me and the Sheriff out of Manny, Louisiana, I don't know whether you know him or not, ever met him over there. But he hadn't been Sheriff, he is not Sheriff now, but he was the Sheriff. And me and him got together over there on that Louisiana border, I was looking for a guy over there in Manny and he's always looking for people over in Texas and you know, right there at the border you always have those people go back and forth. And I said, "Sheriff you know what we ought to do, we ought to have a meeting over here with the Louisiana Sheriffs and the Texas Sheriffs somewhere and discuss this thing, you know, pass information back and forth like that". He said, "You know that sounds like a good idea". So we organized that.

TONY HILL: Oh really.

DON MORRIS: And we started thattalk aboutthey had one up there out of ah....Marshall, they had one down south, but they never had none in the central part there like that. So we organized that and we invite....sent some invites out and got some people to attend. And it was real successful, we exchanged information back and forth and the same old crooks did there side, our side. And it's still going on today as a matter of fact.

TONY HILL: I have attended several, even after I was down in Beaumont I attended several meetings.

DON MORRIS: Yes. There's some good information passed back and forth, better....that information is good and you need to pass information, but more than anything else you're

making contact with them people over there. If you have something happen over you call them over there and they'll help you.

TONY HILL: Yeah, you can't ever have too much information with somebody you can call and say I need to locate so and so over there in your jurisdiction.

DON MORRIS: You know I've had them people over there to call me, they might not know....they need something from the State of Texas, they don't know nobody else, they call me and if I can't do it, I can't help them, I can put them in touch with somebody that can. And that's always a benefit of that, you know, you just have tremendous relationships over there with them different Sheriff's office over there.

TONY HILL: That's the only way you can get your job done.

DON MORRIS: Sure, that's the only way over there. And it just....it just helps your job so much easier on the thing.

TONY HILL: Was Charlie Neal still....Charlie Neal was still alive when youwhen you moved to Lufkin?

DON MORRIS: When I came to Lufkin yeah, Charlie was still alive, Charlie was living out of ah....down towards Beaumont down there, he was working for that lumber company then.

TONY HILL: Kirby Lumber.

DON MORRIS: Yeah. And then he came back later on to live and work for Temple. And ah....yeah, I knew Charlie up here well on the thing.

TONY HILL: What about any other older Rangers that you ran across in your career? Who was....ah... well Bill was working ...that was after they moved that Ranger station from San Augustine over to Nacogdoches.

DON MORRIS: Right.

TONY HILL: So you didn't work with anybody over in San Augustine station, they'd already closed it down.

DON MORRIS: Yeah, Bill was the only one there. But I met some Rangers since then that have been real interesting on the thing you know and around the state you know, you know....in '81 when I started, you know, Joaquin was still around ah....ah....all them Rangers down in south Texas that you know, Bill Mitchell....ah....Bob Mitchell was still around. I mean there was a lot of Rangers like that. It was a real interesting group ah...Ronnie Brownlow you know. If you ain't sit around down there at the academy and listened to Brownlow and Joaquin and Joe Harrelson and some of them others....Bennie Krueger, tell stories you ain't sit around.

TONY HILL: Well let's see ah....when you came intowhen you ah...ah...first came down here, let's see ah...was ah....Haskel was....Haskel was

DON MORRIS: Haskel was over at Beaumont.

TONY HILL: And ah....ah....was Wesley Stiles still...

DON MORRIS: Wesley Stiles was over at Huntsville, yes. Tony Walker was in Livingston.

TONY HILL: Walker was in Livingston. Ah....Roscoe Davis?

DON MORRIS: Roscoe was in Jasper.

TONY HILL: Jasper. Ah....let's see ah....Milton Wright was down at Richman...

DON MORRIS: Fort Bend County, yes.

TONY HILL: Fort Bend County. Ah....let's see, and you said Jim Gant was

DON MORRIS: Well when I first come in he wasn't, but he came later on.

TONY HILL: Later on....

DON MORRIS: And Dan made Captain.

TONY HILL:Dan made Captain. Ah...let's see....

DON MORRIS: Bill Quinn.

TONY HILL: Bill Quinn was still....was still...

DON MORRIS: Ray Nutt.

TONY HILL: Ray Nutt.

DON MORRIS: Ah...I was trying to think down....oh ah...Carl Weathers.

TONY HILL: Carl was ...yeah he

DON MORRIS: Down at Bay City.

TONY HILL: That's right he was in Bay City and he moved to Lubbock after that.

DON MORRIS: And Joe Harrelson was down at Galveston.

TONY HILL: Yeah.

DON MORRIS: And ah....that was about it in the Company. Yeah, that was about it. You know, they didn't have anybody at Liberty at that time. Of course ah....Cook was in Houston at that time. When I went to Houston ah....ah...the Ranger here in Lufkin was after Charlie ah...

TONY HILL: Chuck Arthur.

DON MORRIS: Chuck Arthur, Chuck was here on the thing. And then ah....me and Cook were in Houston, then later Stan Odom came in down there before I leFort So that put three of us down there.

TONY HILL: Chuck I knew when he was here at narcotics and then he went to San Antonio and then he went to Dallas for awhile and came back down here when Charlie retired.

DON MORRIS: Yeah. Oh Chuck, I remember Chuck well. I knew him as a Ranger you know, when he was there ...stationed here and I was in Houston. Of course you know, when this vacancy come open I told Dan, I said, "Dan I got to get out of Houston". And of course he was fortunate enough to get it, nobody else wanted it I assume at that time. But Dan knew I was

going to leave Houston if a vacancy came open somewhere else I was going to go to it, you know. At that point and time there wasn't many vacancies around that occurred.

TONY HILL: How was Dan to work for?

DON MORRIS: Dan was a good Captain, Dan was real organized, if he gave you something he especially wanted you to do, he'd tell you exactly how he wanted it done and stuff like this, well organized, you know, no problem with Dan. The hardest thing in the Ranger service to learn how to do is write detailed reports. You've got to write detailed reports to tell what you did, you know and not in a book fashion, just precise, detailed reports that the DA ain't got to read through a lot of fluff just to get to what happened on there. And that's hard to do. Of course a lot times you....when you're in the traffic law enforcement you don't write a lot of.... I mean you write reports, but you don't write detailed reports, you just generally state what happened on the thing. And that's where the big problem is, is writing detailed reports.

TONY HILL: When you came in, in '81 where there....computers were....were something in the future at that point and time, I suppose they were all hand written reports or typed reports at that time.

DON MORRIS: They were hand written reports or Marlene King at that time was our secretary down there, you could sit and record the reports. I never hadBill Quinn did that, he could send a recorded investigation in on that damn tape and they would have it, I mean it would be just as precise as it could be. I never could do that, I always had to hand write mine out and then try to read it back. But she found some way to read my reports on the thing, it looked a whole lot better once I seen her type it out on the thing. But we didn't get any computers I bet you until 19....oh '91, '92, '93 somewhere along in there. My first reportof keeping reports was in '93,

as far as on the computer. So I mean we were not behind, we just didn't have them, the whole department didn't have them at that time.

TONY HILL: Did you ah...encourage or discourage your children.... I know you've got one child in law enforcement ah....did you want them to follow you in law enforcement or want them to make up their own mind, or discourage them from doing it or what?

DON MORRIS: Well that oldest boy, he had no desire to be in law enforcement what so ever. The other one, I tried to get him to attend college and get as much college as he can, you know, didn't want to discourage him, but I didn't want him....I wanted him to get as much education as he could, cause I knew like me, once he got into it he would not finish up any more college than he had to, you know.

TONY HILL: Right, right.

DON MORRIS: So ah....yeah I encouraged him, I think he's doing a good job down there.

TONY HILL: Ah....is there any particular thing you asin thinking about your law enforcement career that you want to be remembered for? Is there any particular thing that you want people to remember about Don Morris in Lufkin, Texas?

DON MORRIS: Well I think the most important thing would be integrity, you want....if you told somebody you're going to do something you do it. If you....if you....you know you can't solve every case, but if you tell somebody hey I'm going to do this, do this, do what you say you're going to do. And treat everybody nice, the way you want to be treated.

TONY HILL: Any special people that you worked with in the Rangers that you ah...ah...that stands out that you liked working with, that you ah...ah....consider real close friend now because of the relationships you built in the Rangers?

DON MORRIS: Of course I have a special relationship with most of the Rangers around that I work with, I got along with everybody real well and I think they got along with me real well. Kenneth Hammack, which is a Ranger south of here, we get along real well, we see each other on a regular basis. Ronnie McBride over at Jasper, he's the Sheriff over there now, he used to be the Ranger over there.

TONY HILL: And Ken'sKen's Sheriff down there

DON MORRIS: Ken's the Sheriff in Livingston, Polk County.

TONY HILL:in Polk County.

DON MORRIS: And then of course Tom Davis up there, me and Tom has always....ever since he came up here as Ranger in Nacogdoches we get along fine over there. When you share counties or work next to some other county you develop a special relationship. Most of the cases, if they're tied up or if I'm tied up they're going to cover for you and vice versa on the thing. So you develop a relationship there that goes beyond work sometimes.

TONY HILL: When somebody in the future, several years, maybe 20 or 30 years from now looks at this tape, what do you want them to know about the Rangers during the time you were in it?

DON MORRIS: The Rangers is the greatest experience in the world, there's nothing you can compare it with. They have the legend, the history, they have the people in it and they do get the best people in the DPS in there. It was that way when I came in it and I think it's that way today. There is some....you know, you're going to be awed at first when you get in the Rangers, being around some of these guys, cause they are great. They talk about cases you only imagined, you know, that they're working on and some of the things that they get done on there. But it's ah...

it's.... I would encourage anybody if they have an opportunity to get into the Rangers, if they can contribute to it, to get into the Rangers, cause it is one fantastic organization.

TONY HILL: That's the end of it, unless you got anything else you want to say.

DON MORRIS: No Tony, I appreciate this, thank you a lot.