

Interview with

JACK MORTON
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Jack Morton's Home
Granbury, Texas
Friday—September 26, 2008

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Jack Morton, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



Introduction

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JACK MORTON
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

NANCY RAY: My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Jack Morton of Granbury, Texas. We are at uh Ranger Morton's home. Eddie Ray is here with me uh and with Ranger Morton. Today is Friday, September 26th, 2008. And the purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Morton' career as a Texas Ranger. Mr. Morton, do I have your permission to record this interview?

JACK MORTON: Yes, you do.

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

JACK MORTON: Yes, I do.

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

JACK MORTON: Yes, you do.

NANCY RAY: OK, let's start with hearing what is your first name and where do you currently live?

JACK MORTON: My name is Jack, and I live at 601 Neri Road in Granbury, Texas.

NANCY RAY: Now, you have a middle initial, B, what does the B stand for?

JACK MORTON: Stands for Bradford.

NANCY RAY: Bradford. OK. And where were you born?

JACK MORTON: In Morgan Mill, Texas, which is Erath County.

NANCY RAY: Erath, you pronounce it Erath County. And what is your birthdate?

JACK MORTON: March 10, 1936.

NANCY RAY: OK, and who were your parents?

JACK MORTON: My dad was George Lee Morton, my mother was Mamie, maiden name was Vandiver.

NANCY RAY: OK, MAMIE?

JACK MORTON: MAYME.

NANCY RAY: MAYME, OK. Did you have brothers or sisters?

JACK MORTON: I had a, I came from a big family, there was eight children, four boys, four girls. I was number 6.

NANCY RAY: Number 6, can you name them?

JACK MORTON: Sure. My oldest sister is, was named Fern, and she is, she passed away in '95 I believe it was. Next sister was Starr and she lives in Oklahoma, she is about 85 years old. And next sister is Myrna who lives on uh, in Aledo. Uh, my brother, Bill, uh that's his picture right there. He uh passed away in '83 and the next brother was Norman and uh... Norman was a, retired as a Highway Patrol sergeant and then I was next. Younger sister named Linda and a brother named James Rudy.

NANCY RAY: OK, big family, you're right. OK, and uh where did you go to school?

JACK MORTON: I started school in Morgan Mill, just First Grade, and we moved to uh Aledo which is out on the west side of Fort Worth. And my dad was employed by General Dynamics in Fort Worth and uh from there on I finished the rest of my school in Aledo.

NANCY RAY: So you graduated high school in Aledo.

JACK MORTON: Yes, I did.

NANCY RAY: What about school, did you have any subjects that you liked?

JACK MORTON: Oh, I was more inclined... I liked math, nearly all kinds of math and everything. Uh I didn't care too much for science or algebra, some of the things like that. Uh and I guess uh vocational agriculture was one of my favorites.

NANCY RAY: That probably is the reason you have the place, right?

JACK MORTON: Yeah, sure is.

NANCY RAY: You enjoy it, it is very nice. OK what about uh any other things like sports or band. Were you in anything like that?

JACK MORTON: Not in band or anything. I played all kinds of sports and uh basically my, the one I enjoyed the most was football.

NANCY RAY: Football, what position?

JACK MORTON: I played halfback, running back.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. OK, when you graduated from high school, what did you do then?

JACK MORTON: Uh, well I worked a summer down on the coast for a seismograph company and then uh I, I graduated a half year early and I went to uh down there and spent nine months down on the coast and uh...

NANCY RAY: Now what were you doing?

JACK MORTON: With a seismograph company, we were exploring for oil and we worked from Galveston all the way to Corpus Christi, up and down the coast. And uh then when the school year started, well I returned home and uh started going to Weatherford College, went a year there.

NANCY RAY: OK, and what were you studying there?

JACK MORTON: Uh, just getting my basics out of the way. I later went on to uh Cooke County Junior College and got my associate's degree in law enforcement.

NANCY RAY: OK, very good. Were you ever in the military?

JACK MORTON: No, I wasn't. Uh I married young and the lady I married had two children and so basically I was just kind of put on hold. All three of my brothers were in the military. My dad was a military man but I never was.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right, well did you have children?

JACK MORTON: Yes, besides her two children, we had another son and his name is Mark. And Mark lives right around corner and up the road here from me about a half a mile and he's pastor of the uh Harvest Community Church here in Granbury.

NANCY RAY: Well, that's good, all right.

JACK MORTON: He's married to a young lady named Cindy, her last name was Bolton. They have two children. Josh is 24 and Lauren is 22 , I believe, and Greet Grandson Caden 3.

NANCY RAY: OK, and what was your wife's name?

JACK MORTON: Willadean Brock.

NANCY RAY: OK, Willadean Brock. When did you marry?

JACK MORTON: In 1958.

NANCY RAY: 1958, OK. Well, when you were in school, did you have any uh, any teachers or anyone who had a big influence on your life? Anyone stand out in your mind?

JACK MORTON: Well, our vocational ag teacher was a great guy and uh a war hero, and uh...

NANCY RAY: What was his name?

JACK MORTON: Uh, give me just a second...

NANCY RAY: Uh... you'll think of it in a minute.

JACK MORTON: Barber. Mr. Barber was a great man. He came to teach vocational ag out at

Aledo and then after I graduated, well he was made superintendent and then went from there to the Texas State Education, I forgot what they're, what they're called, but he served a long time down there with the state.

NANCY RAY: And what did you learn, what made him special to you?

JACK MORTON: Oh I think just being an all around good guy and could present everything where you could understand it. Didn't ever get real technical or anything you know.

NANCY RAY: OK, well after you finished at... you have your associate's degree, what did you do then?

JACK MORTON: Well, I didn't get the associate's degree right away. I, over through the years, you know.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right, so you went to Weatherford College for a year.

JACK MORTON: Yeah, from there I went to work at General Dynamics and uh they were real prone to have layoffs and uh, I worked probably six or eight months and was laid off. So I went to work on a ranch out in West Texas and stayed two or three months and got called back and... That happened two or three times and finally I just said no, I'm not going back you know. And I went to work full time on a ranch there in Aledo and uh then shortly thereafter, well they were hiring, the DPS was hiring, and so I applied and was accepted to the Highway Patrol school in Austin in 1960.

NANCY RAY: OK, so when you went to, to the school uh, do you remember who your monitors were?

JACK MORTON: Yes. One of them was Homer Spellman and some of them I can't remember exactly where they were stationed but uh he was stationed... Gonzales, or somewhere in that area. And the other, another one was Frank Jircik, he was a THP Sergeant at Haskell, Texas,

and Tom Bryant a License and Weight Sgt. from Dallas.

NANCY RAY: So you had three. OK.

NANCY RAY: Well, what about the school? First of all you had to go through the interview board, is that correct?

JACK MORTON: Yes.

NANCY RAY: OK, can you remember anything about that, anything that stands out in your mind?

JACK MORTON: Well, no, I'm not sure we had an interview board. Uh, don't much believe we did. Back then they, they would send out a sergeant in the area where you lived and he would just conduct an interview with you. And uh I don't think we ever had interview boards then like we do now.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. What about... I'm not sure when Camp Mabry ended.

JACK MORTON: No.

NANCY RAY: You went to the next, newer one.

JACK MORTON: Yeah. I think probably in the mid '50s was when they stopped there. The Academy hadn't, it was still relatively new when I was there.

NANCY RAY: OK. Do you remember any of the people who went through it, the school with you? Close friends?

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah.

NANCY RAY: Oh yeah. Who were they? (laughter)

JACK MORTON: Well, I uh, I was thinking about them this morning and uh... Some of them you know got killed and they're the ones that stand out in my mind. One of them was Travis

Locker and he was from Fort Worth and we uh, we rode back and forth on weekends to home you know from patrol school. And uh he was stationed in Del Rio for a few years, probably five or six years, and then uh was stationed at I think Corsicana and had stopped a car over on Interstate 45 and uh uh they got a kind of a drop on him and one of them shot him in the back. And they were in a stolen car ... I believe that was probably about 1966 or something like that, '67.

NANCY RAY: Was he alone when that happened?

JACK MORTON: Yes. Another one was Holly Tull.

NANCY RAY: How do you spell that last name?

JACK MORTON: TULL. Holly was an all around good guy and one of the oldest ones in our class. And was just an all around nice guy. And I believe he was stationed at Killeen and uh he uh... was washing his patrol car and heard them make a report on a bank robbery there somewhere around close to where he lived. He jumped in his patrol car, he was off duty, and found the guys and when he got out, well they shot and killed him. Oh, if you could give me a second I could name off a bunch of the guys.

NANCY RAY: Oh, that's OK. Let's go back to the school because uh if they were both shot you know when they were making stops, what were some of the things you learned in school to prepare you to make those stops?

JACK MORTON: Oh, well, they you know they showed us how to approach a car, and take safety precautions and, and be in control of the situation at all times you know.

NANCY RAY: And how would you do that? If you stopped me, how would you approach my car?

JACK MORTON: Well, basically I would walk to the back of your car and I would be

observing your car all the time and all the driver's actions and the, the passengers and everything you know and watch for any sudden moves or anything.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well, it's, it's dangerous. It was dangerous then but...

JACK MORTON: It's more dangerous now.

NANCY RAY: More dangerous now, right. I've heard that the school is very similar to going through basic training in the military. Was it hard?

JACK MORTON: Oh, it was, it wasn't real hard. I'd been working, doing a lot of physical work on this ranch I was working on and I was basically in good shape and uh I didn't have any problems with the physical parts of it and the uh, the other parts weren't real hard. We had several uh military people who had gone to uh Marine boot camps and Naval boot camps and what have you. All of them said it was harder than those boot camps was.

NANCY RAY: Really, oh goodness.

JACK MORTON: I don't know. I didn't have anything to compare it to. But it wasn't, it wasn't all that... of course we lost a lot. We had a lot of those guys who weren't in shape and, and they couldn't handle it you know and... We started out with about 95 recruits and we only graduated like 50 something. But everything worked into that. Some of them you know had different circumstances that, reasons they left. A lot of them just couldn't take the physical. Very few of them couldn't take the book work and what have you. One or two couldn't.

NANCY RAY: Well, uh the physical, did that involve fighting and boxing and things like that?

JACK MORTON: Yeah, just a general, basically everything that you needed. Uh more or less they got you in shape to start with... the running, and doing calisthenics you know. And then we had uh boxing, we had Judo. I don't think they, I don't think they do either one now. But uh, I can't think of anything else besides that.

NANCY RAY: On the, the book study that you did. What was that on, on laws? Or what was that about?

JACK MORTON: Yeah. Quite a bit of it was. A lot of it was traffic laws and some of it was criminal laws and then the code of criminal procedure and then just some basic stuff you know that everybody ought to know.

NANCY RAY: Ought to.

JACK MORTON: (laughter) Yeah.

NANCY RAY: What about driving, did you have a lot of driving?

JACK MORTON: Yes we did, we had to drive.

NANCY RAY: We interviewed one Ranger who talked about motorcycles and I'm not sure, did they still have motorcycles when...

JACK MORTON: No, and uh they probably, they probably about the same time that they left Camp Mabry stopped motorcycles. I'm glad I didn't have to. I've never liked motorcycles.

NANCY RAY: Well, on the driving part, uh was it for a high speed chase? What did they teach you there?

JACK MORTON: A little bit, how to make turn arounds, and they uh they set up obstacle courses for you, you know, like cones. They'll start out wide and bring them in and you've gotta drive between them without hitting them and all these kinds of things. And you'll go out at night and drive and you always have a monitor with you, one of the monitors or a supervisor from Highway Patrol or somewhere.

NANCY RAY: OK, about the school. What stands out the most in your mind, what do you remember the most? What is the first thing that pops into your head?

JACK MORTON: (laughter) I guess just knowing, not knowing what to expect and the uh... I

don't know really, I never thought about that.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. Well when you graduated, what was your first duty station?

JACK MORTON: Panhandle, Texas.

NANCY RAY: That's the town, Panhandle?

JACK MORTON: That's a little town. It's in between uh Amarillo and Pampa, halfway in between, uh just a small, about 2,000 population there and uh, but it's a big farming community and a lot of traffic goes through it. Route 66 goes through it and so we had 66 and 60 was our main highways. And 16 was all out of state people you know, they was either going or coming across our county there.

NANCY RAY: Well, if you are on the, were you on the state line, is that what you said?

JACK MORTON: No.

NANCY RAY: No, OK, so you didn't... Well, what kind of uh, were there DWIs, what kind of traffic problems did you have?

JACK MORTON: Oh, just your basic problems they have everywhere I guess. At that... we had, when I was transferred there, they brought an older patrolman in that had been stationed a couple of different places there in the panhandle. And said we want you and Jack to open a station at Panhandle.

NANCY RAY: A new station.

JACK MORTON: Uh huh, it was brand new. But I was real lucky, I got over there and the sheriff (John Nunn) who had been a Highway Patrol sergeant in Dallas in the early 1940s. And uh I guess he taught me more police work than anything else you know, than anybody else probably.

NANCY RAY: Well, who was your partner? What was his name?

JACK MORTON: Uh, his name was Bob Loving.

NANCY RAY: Bob Loving, OK, and he was the experienced one.

JACK MORTON: Yes.

NANCY RAY: So he was in the lead for how long?

JACK MORTON: Oh, I would say probably four or five weeks.

NANCY RAY: OK, so what did Bob teach you?

JACK MORTON: Oh, I guess a lot of things. Nothing that comes to mind in particular but uh, he just taught me how they worked you know, and gave me several pointers. We didn't work together long until... what I started to say, the reason that they opened that station up, they had so many fatalities there the year before. And uh but he was good patrolman, good officer. Like I say though, we didn't work together too awfully long until we split and each one of us had a car. He'd work days or nights and I'd work the opposite shift you know.

NANCY RAY: What about the fatalities, were you able to bring that total down?

JACK MORTON: Well, not really. Well, it was due to the circumstances. I got a call one morning about 4 o'clock in the morning and uh it was at Groom, which was down on US Highway 66 and just a little community too. And they had an all-night coffee shop and I arrived down there and uh there was a truck parked in Groom there. The roadway was six lanes and he had stopped over in the parking lane on the north side of the road and gone across to the coffee shop, left his blinkers running and everything. And this station wagon was going toward California and he run up under the back of that truck and had, there was nine people in the car and they were a family from Arkansas and seven of them were killed. So see our, we didn't go down any in fatalities. I think the next year we brought it down quite a bit.

NANCY RAY: Well, how did you, how did you deal with walking up on an accident of that,

like that? I mean...

JACK MORTON: Well, everything was kind of a new experience for me you know. I hadn't been around very much of anything like that and uh... but you learn pretty fast you know. Just take your time and do what, do the things that need to be done in order you know. Of course it was pretty horrific uh, they were just, they were still in the car when I got there. They were just kind of stacked up on top of each other and they got the... There was an elderly lady, probably up in her 70s, and she was a grandmother, and a little boy, probably about four years old. And they were the only two survivors.

NANCY RAY: Uh uh... that's the days before seat belts too, isn't it.

JACK MORTON: Yeah. Probably was.

NANCY RAY: Probably wasn't enough seat belts...

JACK MORTON: We had them in our patrol cars but most of the general public didn't have seat belts. They had started out in two cars out of Mena, Arkansas, and was traveling... they was headed for California and one of the cars broke down so they all piled in the station wagon.

NANCY RAY: Well, let's go back and let's talk about the uh sheriff. You said he taught you more about police work, what did he teach you? (laughter)

JACK MORTON: Oh...

NANCY RAY: What was his name again?

JACK MORTON: John Nunn. NUNN. I really can't think of anything specific, he was just a good, all around law enforcement officer.

NANCY RAY: Well now you're supposed to be working traffic but were you slipping off working criminal work too?

JACK MORTON: I did quite a bit with him. He only had the, he had three, four deputies and so we'd have to help him quite a bit. I helped him with transportation of prisoners on my days off. I'd go with him

like to Leavenworth or somewhere to pick up or deliver prisoners you know. But I helped him quite a bit because I was wanting to learn you know.

NANCY RAY: Sure. Well do you remember any cases or anything that you helped him on?

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah. Uh I hadn't been working probably three or four months and uh got a call from the dispatcher and she says uh, she called him Johnny. She said Johnny wants you to meet him so and so and it was only about two streets over from my house and I said what's going on. Well they, they're having, they've had a big fight down there or something, said I don't know what all is happening but Johnny's in route and she said I think somebody may be dead (laughter) and boy my heart just jumped up you know. I didn't know how to treat a homicide scene or anything. And we walked in this little shotgun house and uh it had uh linoleum on the floors, kitchen floors and everything, and blood was all over it. And uh this guy was laying in the floor dead. And this lady was standing there, she was all haggard looking and had a... she you know, he made me do it, he made me do it. And John was there, which really settled me down but uh come to find out, he worked for the county, this guy did that got killed, and he came in and his supper wasn't ready and so he give her a little bit of trouble over it and she pulled up a butcher knife and just started stabbing him you know. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: Oh goodness. Makes you wonder what's gone on before then.

JACK MORTON: And right after that, we uh, he called me and he said... I was out patrolling and he said, he said come to the courthouse, we need your, we need some assistance. And boy I come rolling in there you know. I was young and energetic. I rolled up there and I roll up and I see their, our local ambulance backed up and it was a little '56 Ford station wagon. And I thought what in the world is going on and about that time... the jail was up on top of the courthouse and uh some guy were coming out of the courthouse and had a gurney and they had this great big guy on it. And I had never seen him before and didn't know who he was or anything but they put him up in the ambulance. And then I saw, we just had one doctor in town and I saw him up in there and he was... this guy's wrists were bandaged up and I saw the Doc up there and he was injecting him with some morphine or something like that and uh... So finally I got the scoop on what was going on and he said this, said this guy's gone loco and he tried to

commit suicide in jail. And what he'd done he'd ripped, he'd tried to rip his arms open you know. Whenever they uh, they'd caught, he was down at this little town of Groom where the fatal accident was and he was running around hollering they're killing me and all this stuff you know. He'd gotten a hamburger or something there in town and he kept screaming and so finally the sheriff went down and arrested him and put him in jail. And apparently they didn't shake him down good and he had a little knife, had big old boots on that, he was a miner from Pennsylvania. And uh they said can you uh, can you ride with the ambulance down to Groom? We didn't have a hospital in Panhandle. And I said yeah, I guess so. And there was a game warden that happened to be there at the time too and they said he'll go with you. And then we had the ambulance driver. Well, they were both, the ambulance driver was driving and the game warden was in the right hand side and they said well, about the only place we got for you to sit is on this little seat right beside this gurney you know. I said OK and I heard the doctor say this, this'll hold him until you get to uh Groom which was about 20 miles, 25. And the direction we went out of Panhandle to go to Groom was kind of a back road and, farm road, uh and all there was just wheat fields out there. And I don't believe we'd gotten three miles out of town and before this guy started hollering and screaming and kicking... (laughter) and he kicked all the back windows out of this ambulance and I didn't know what to do so I just jumped right up on top of him (laughter) and grabbed him and then grabbed underneath that gurney and tried to hold him and... Well the game warden come over the front seat and he said you got any handcuffs? And I said yeah, but I can't get them. So he grabbed them off, out of my pocket here and he got hold of one hand, and this guy was real strong, and I had one hand and uh I said do something with it just, you know just connect it to something. So he put it around one wrist and secured it to the gurney and I held the other one all the way to Groom you know (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Long ride!

JACK MORTON: But we finally got him on down there and they had called ahead and told the hospital we was coming and they ran out and gave him some more morphine and knocked him out you know. And I wound up having to help take him to Wichita Falls, they committed him to Wichita Falls State Hospital and he, he did the same thing all the way down there. Well, let me take that back. He'd, he'd be all right

as long as we was just driving down the road but anytime we'd get in a little town or anything, well he'd start screaming and hollering and kicking you know. Well he tried to kick but we had him in a straight jacket and all he could do was just move his feet back and forth a little bit you know (laughter), couldn't move them very far.

NANCY RAY: You took care of things that time, didn't you?

JACK MORTON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: Well, that doesn't sound like regular Highway Patrol work, does it? (laughter)

JACK MORTON: Oh you do a little of everything when you're out in those little small towns you know. You're more or less on deputy sheriff half of the time... work traffic when you, other times.

NANCY RAY: Well, how did you get, you had to work on the relationship with the sheriff. I mean you didn't know him when you went there, right? So how did you get to know him?

JACK MORTON: They just took us in like we was uh part family or something. And uh got acquainted and we'd have dinner at each other's houses and things like that. Just got well acquainted and stayed loyal friends from then until the time he passed away.

NANCY RAY: My goodness. Well how long did you stay in the Panhandle?

JACK MORTON: Only two years.

NANCY RAY: And then where did you go?

JACK MORTON: To Henrietta, Texas.

NANCY RAY: OK. What about Henrietta, anything stand out?

JACK MORTON: Well, Henrietta was a little different, quite different. I enjoyed the Plains out there because the people are so friendly and everything. And they love law enforcement people, makes your job a lot easier that way. And uh I got down to Henrietta and it was a clannish little town and my partner down there was Billy Ray Nobles, and a super, just a super model-looking Highway Patrolman. And his dad had been sheriff at Decatur for years and when Billy came out, he went to Henrietta and never left. And he'd been there about eight to ten years and so he... you know everybody liked him and knew him and loved him and I, I was kind of the outsider you know, and it took me a little while for me to get... but

I got involved in you know several different things there and got acquainted and begin to like it and everything real well and I stayed there six years and then decided to move, to transfer to Weatherford.

NANCY RAY: OK, and what about Weatherford.

JACK MORTON: Oh, Weatherford. That is a hot spot. Uh busy, busy, busy. I went there when there was three other patrolmen and I was the fourth one. And uh we all worked separate in one-man cars you know. And I, it, there was something going on all the time, it was a busy, busy place.

NANCY RAY: Now there are several highways that come in there. Is that why it was so busy or...

JACK MORTON: Well that and the proximity to Fort Worth. It's only 25 miles to Fort Worth and uh it is just a busy, busy place.

NANCY RAY: So it was busy with traffic, traffic law enforcement?

JACK MORTON: Uh huh.

NANCY RAY: OK. Anything stand out in your mind about Weatherford?

JACK MORTON: Well, I grew up there and knew quite a few people around there you know. I grew up in between Fort Worth and Weatherford and uh, uh... I liked working there pretty well uh, I had a... later on we started getting more troopers in and we got a young man in by the name of Doug, Douglas Thompson. And Douglas was a big old boy that enjoyed life and fishing and hunting and everything that goes with it you know. And just energetic as could be... and so we didn't have enough patrol cars to go around so I'd work a shift and then uh Doug would work a shift and we'd share the patrol car you know. So I picked him up, I worked the shift one day and then uh went and took him the patrol car, he was gonna work that evening you know. And about four or five hours later, I got a call, he'd been in an accident out east of Weatherford and uh to illustrate how busy a place this is, he was uh, he was working out east in between Fort Worth and Weatherford and he had stopped a guy that was DWI and had him under arrest and uh he uh, before he, before he took, they had radars in their cars and he looked down and the radar machine, the needle went over to about 80 or 90 and this car went by. So he takes off after him and catches him and pulls him over. Well when he pulls him over, he uh, he goes up to get him, Doug discovers that he is also intoxicated. Sgt. James Beggs was riding with him., Sergeant Beggs was in the

patrol car in the back seat. So he's watching the prisoner that they had arrested earlier. As Patrolman Thompson is escorting the drunken suspect to the patrol car and, he begins to search the suspect and a hit and run driver hits Patrolman Thompson and throws him onto the DWI suspects rear window killing him instantly.

NANCY RAY: Oh man.

JACK MORTON: And... me and another patrolman (Patrolman Robert Andrews) were assigned to work the hit-and-run accident. We collected all the evidence we could find there and, and oh I'm not sure how long, how many months we worked on it but uh the driver ran you know. And uh that guy was drunk too, the speeder was drunk. And seems like there was another one involved, I can't remember how it went. But anyways, we uh collected a lot of glass and debris and what was needed there at the scene and one piece of evidence we got was a little emblem that was on the front of the Ford, I think it was a 1960 Ford, either a '60 or '62 Ford. And said Fairlane 500 on it. So we kind of zeroed in on that and trying to find it and uh there was quite a bit of pressure to try to find the violator you know and... so the only thing we could figure out to do was go to the county tax offices and pull out all the 1960 Ford Fairlanes. And we did this with our county, Tarrant County, and all the surrounding counties. And I think there was like 1500 of them. And the uh other Highway Patrol, *pardon me*, the other Highway Patrol sergeant areas, they helped us quite a bit on it, they loaned us troopers and we'd take ten or twelve and go in and go through these and pull out the '60 Fairlanes you know. They were, they weren't, you just had to go through one at a time to find them. But we found them all and inspected all of them except just a very few. Some had already been crushed or gone through the, you know or... and some had gone into Mexico and different things like that. And uh the Department even authorized an Intelligence agent to go into Mexico and check cars down there that had gotten down there to see if they could possibly have been the one. And had no luck... and uh so we worked, continued to work on that thing for probably five or six months and you know leads were just kind of dwindling... and I'd taken a few days off, I'd been working day and night for several days. And my sister lived in Oklahoma, I went up to visit them and do a little fishing and what have you. And I got a phone call and says uh we need you to return back home, said we

found that Ford. So I jumped in the car and came home and sure enough, it was over on the north side of Fort Worth. And uh let me back up just a little bit. After we'd gone through and exhausted the search for those '60 model Fairlanes and didn't find it, we decided well, there's a chance that it might have been a Galaxy, a Ford Galaxy, and Galaxies were a lot more popular than the Fairlanes you know. (laughter) And boy I was dreading it but anyway, before we got to that point, we found the car and it was over on the north side of Fort Worth, over there on Exchange Street if you're familiar with that. And what had happened, this guy had, he had two boys, probably teenagers or maybe a little bit older. And they lived in an old boarding house there on Exchange Street. He uh pulled that car up in the parking lot where they lived and then the boys moved out shortly thereafter and the landlord went by and this old car was sitting there and so he just stuck it out on the street and pointed it the wrong direction where the police would find it. And all the policemen in that area was looking for it you know so we found it. And then found out who it belonged to and eventually made the arrest of this guy.

NANCY RAY: Um mmm. That had to be pretty tough though to lose your partner like that.

JACK MORTON: Yeah, it was, it sure was. He was a good guy.

NANCY RAY: Uh, I think, what I've heard is that when something like that happens, the troopers or Highway Patrol really rally and support and that was one of the things someone pointed out.

JACK MORTON: They really do.

NANCY RAY: Uh, can you describe that, what it was like to see all of those, the people there supporting?

JACK MORTON: Well, you know, it makes you feel good to have all the support and everything you know and it makes the families feel good, uh, as good as they can, you know, at a time like that. I was, I was thinking about that this morning and... about the number of officers that I've been close to, friends you know, I've lost seven. (*emotional moment*)

NANCY RAY: Oh wow, that's hard. Well, let's, let's change the topic just a bit. Did you ever train anybody, uh a new partner... somebody who just came out of the school and uh you're the, you're the experienced person now.

JACK MORTON: Not really that much. I kind of feel fortunate, I never did really want to be a training officer you know, I uh... everywhere I was stationed, I was usually the youngest one there you know.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. Well uh, did you go anywhere from Weatherford or was that where...

JACK MORTON: No, I went from there to uh, I applied for Intelligence and was promoted to Intelligence agent and moved to Fort Worth... that was in 1971. And I remained there for about nine years in Intelligence.

NANCY RAY: OK, talk to us a little bit about being in Intelligence, that's new.

JACK MORTON: It was new to me.

NANCY RAY: Was it?

JACK MORTON: It was really new to me. I didn't know... I didn't even know for sure what they did. When I first became interested in it, they had an organized crime unit set up. And that's basically what they were, what the purpose was... they took a bunch of agents and, and uh they were just working organized crime like gambling and things like that. And anyway my, my son was, was uh about eleven years old and I didn't, I didn't want to take him to Dallas or Houston or anywheres so I declined to take it. I think I would probably have made it all right if I had wanted to but I declined and uh the next year well they allotted some more agents in criminal intelligence. And after I got in it, I wasn't real sure I liked it because there was a bunch of report writing, you know. And you write a tremendous amount of reports uh, uh you worked informants a lot and no matter whether they're telling you a lie or telling you the truth, you write it down and evaluate it and send it on in to Austin you know. They have an extensive file down there on nearly all the criminals in Texas you know and... A lot of people don't know it but they can get a lot of information on criminals if they'll just check with the Criminal Intelligence service down there.

NANCY RAY: Well, uh, did you have to have some special training?

JACK MORTON: No, just Highway Patrol training... And of course I went to several schools after I got in there and went to some specialized schools you know.

NANCY RAY: And so when you went to those schools, what, what was the objective when you came out, to be able to investigate or...

JACK MORTON: Well, to gather intelligence, basically. I attended the John F. Kennedy University in California and most of it was using uh tools like learning how to pick locks, and videos, and audio and recording devices and things like that you know. I enjoyed Intelligence. Intelligence was a good job uh... about that... along about that time we had some pretty liberal senators in the state and they, they uh kindly curtailed our activities a lot you know. They thought we was gathering too too much intelligence on certain people.. But later on they changed the name of it to uh Special Crimes I think and was not quite as restricted as it used to be. I didn't like the restricted part of it. They didn't want us, they didn't want us to get involved in anything that would cause publicity or anything like that you know.

NANCY RAY: OK, so now you're called Special Crimes.

JACK MORTON: Yeah, the same service.

NANCY RAY: Same service, and, does anything stand out... did you work on anything just really special?

JACK MORTON: Well, I worked several...

NANCY RAY: That you could talk about?

JACK MORTON: Yeah. I worked several cases or got involved, and I hadn't been there very long. And our office was out on the east side of Fort Worth and uh of course I didn't know what I was supposed to do or anything. They said well, said just get in the files over there and start reading about these people and try keeping up with them and keep current on what they're doing and where they are, and what they're doing you know. Well this one character, he was a thief, and he was real handy, he was in between me and my office. So I'd check him morning and night, his house you know, to see what was going on. And then I, I located some vehicles there that belonged to some people that I knew over at Weatherford, you know. And I said I don't know what's happening here, you know. And I didn't know that much about them. One of them I played football with in high school out at Aledo. But I kept watching them and watching them and then one day I was sitting up there, just watching the street to see who was coming and going, and uh saw this new Buick sitting down there. And uh I got, I called the office and got some help up there and said come out here and help me, I said there's a lot of activity down at that house, we

might want to follow somebody. So, when another Agent arrived , Two individuals that I knew got into a new Buick, so we followed them to a Beer Joint. . And when we did, well I pulled up and I told my partner I said, jump out and get that VIN number off of that car. It was a brand new Buick, this was about '71. And he got it and he jumped back in the car and kind of ran around and hid out of the way. The Buick was a stolen out of Oklahoma City. So I'd seen who was driving, it was that old boy that I played football with. And I said, I don't want him seeing me, I want to keep working on them you know. We just... we're just getting one hen here right now. And uh so we called Fort Worth and they sent a unit out there and when this guy left the beer joint, they busted him . Well the next morning I was talking to the Sheriff over at Weatherford, we'd become close friends and he said uh what's going on? I said nothing and he said why don't you come over here and stir something up. I guess I had a reputation of stirring things up. And I said hey, you know old so and so? He said, yeah. And uh I said you better watch him, I said he's hanging around an old thief's house over here and we caught his buddy yesterday in a stolen Buick out of Oklahoma. And I said he, he's gonna be doing something too. I said try to keep your eye on him and let me know what he's doing. He said I saw him yesterday, said he was driving a brand new Buick. And I said, are you serious? And I knew it couldn't be the same one because we got him, seized his car, the one the day before you know. And I said go find that Buick and then let me know what it is. About 30 minutes he called and they had the Buick and had this guy under arrest. Well they put him in jail and they started singing like polly parrots you know. They was wanting to tell everything they'd done. And they'd stole from Weatherford to Lubbock, I mean stock trailers, tractors, trailers, cars, trucks, boats and uh of course they were trying to get their feet, you know get their foot in the door and uh try to help themselves. And it wound up we eventually made a case on this guy at the house where I was watching and about four more, four or five more cohorts, they were, they were taking uh stuff into New Mexico... stolen property they had. They'd rent a U-Haul truck and go to a warehouse where they had appliances and just fill that truck up and take off carrying to New Mexico you know. And they carried a bunch of this stolen cars and trucks and things out to a tractor dealer in Hereford, Texas, that uh... I'll never forget it, they got warrants for these guys out of Fort Worth and, and I carried one or two of them up there for them

and uh they called down there, some lawyers called down there wanting to make bonds for them. And uh the old district attorney up there, I heard him on the, whenever he was talking... ah no, we're not reducing those bonds, said this is the biggest thing that ever happened to Hereford, Texas. Fact is, where, where they were selling them was to a tractor dealer and the tractor dealer had sold one of the tractors to the city of Hereford... we had to go to the dump ground to recover it. (laughter) But it just continued on and we wound up recovering, me and everybody else in the world working on it. But a couple of agents out of Lubbock and Amarillo helped me quite a bit on it because they didn't have any agents stationed in Hereford but... uh was it and then we got the FBI involved whenever the stuff crossed the state line. But we recovered over \$250,000 worth of stolen property.

NANCY RAY: Oh wow, ummm. Well that, that had to feel good.

JACK MORTON: Yeah, well, it was... you know I was brand new

NANCY RAY: Oh yeah.

JACK MORTON: And uh the captain out there, he wrote a commendation letter on us and it really made me feel good to recover that much stolen property you know and arrest that many people. I, I don't know... one time I knew the statistics on it but uh, seems like it was about nine or ten arrests we made and like I say, \$250,000 worth of stolen property. It was... it was a pretty big deal for me.

NANCY RAY: Did it make the papers?

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah. Oh up there you know. It didn't in Fort Worth too much you know.

NANCY RAY: Did you get your picture on the front page?

JACK MORTON: No, I, I was running down and hiding from... It was kind of funny. Just before we arrested these guys, I was out there, this was all happening right there close to our office. I happened to be in a coffee shop up there and uh this one guy that the sheriff over at Weatherford arrested, I seen him and his girlfriend and this old big boy I played football with. And they were over there in another booth and I kind of hid back there because, well, both of them knew me. But anyway, I, I got another couple of agents from the office to come out and meet me and uh, I said they're up to something, I don't know what it is but let's, let's play with them for a little bit. And in a little bit they got up and left and got in a car and

they took off north. And we began to follow them and kept skip-scooting each other so they wouldn't see the same car behind them all the time. We finally wound up going to the little town of Marietta Oklahoma just across the Red River you know and they drove all over that town. And we finally decided well to suspend the surveillance; I called the city of Marietta Police Department and told them that some our thieves were in their City and they're looking for something to steal and they're gonna probably steal it tonight. But I said we're getting off, I said we're going back to Fort Worth. If you have something missing, well holler and we'll, we'll arrest these guys and recover it for you. And nothing ever happened, never got a call. And so later on after we got them under arrest and they begin to talk and sing and point out different stuff they had stolen, I said well I got another question. What's that? I said well you went to Marietta, Oklahoma, one night. You drove all over it, back and forth, up and down every street. I said what was going on? They started laughing, I had both of them in the car with me. They said oh man, that... that was a nightmare. I said what happened? Well, we spotted this trailer we was gonna steal. And said, this big guy his name was Henry. Said Henry, he went to get everything ready where we could back under it and take off real quick and when he got back there, it was full of hogs and they started... (laughter) making a lot of noise and he left. He said we wound up not getting nothing. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: They didn't want hogs either. Oh goodness. Well, if you're a thief, you just never know what you're gonna get.

JACK MORTON: Oh me...

NANCY RAY: Well, you mentioned working with informants. How did you, how did you get your informants?

JACK MORTON: Oh, they come in all kinds of ways. The best ones are the ones that, they're not any good ones. If they'll inform for you, they'll inform on you, you know. But uh most of the time you either file a case or fixing to file a case on them. And you have a few, just bleeding hearts that just want to do good you know but they usually don't know too much because they don't run in the culture, you know. But most, most of them are people that you arrest or you're fixing to arrest.

NANCY RAY: OK, so maybe they're thinking they'll get a lighter... they'll get a deal or something.

JACK MORTON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: OK, all right. Now did you finish up in Fort Worth or in Intelligence before you went to the Rangers? Or did you go somewhere else?

JACK MORTON: Well, in 1977, I was still in Intelligence and they formed a task force in McAllen and Laredo, Texas. It was a narcotics, they called it Southwest Texas Stepped Up Law Enforce Program. But they wanted some help down there trying to stop some, the drug trafficking you know. So the Department got together and uh sent down about 25 to 30 Highway, young Highway Patrolman, uh, young, energetic, uh good troopers. And they sent uh me to McAllen and another Intelligence agent to Laredo. They sent a Ranger to McAllen and one to Laredo and then they had about five undercover Narcotics officers. And I worked down there two years on the border task force.

NANCY RAY: And what did you do? How did you, how did you approach it?

JACK MORTON: Well, you know I had never worked Narcotics or anything and didn't know that much about it. But uh, and my job was basically was to gather intelligence on narcotics traffickers you know... but I done a little of everything. I went on raids with them and uh wrote search warrants and raided these drug dealer places you know. Uh we worked and we worked car thefts too you know. We worked on a, we had a... I forgot about it. We had uh an agent with the Motor Vehicle Theft bureau stationed with us too. And he asked me to assist him one day and he'd, he'd gotten some information on a, a guy that had some stolen vehicles up by Victoria, Texas. And uh so I went with him and we went up there and... on kind of a little farm or ranch up there and just drove up. Uh it was a politician's brother and the politician had informed on his brother you know. And said I think my brother's doing some bad stuff down there and of course we got a hold of the Department heads and told them so they assigned us to go and check it out. And he happened to be there. He didn't live there but he just happened to be there you know. And whether he had brought a stolen vehicle or not I can't remember, it's been almost 30 years ago. But he uh he lived down on the coast and we caught him, and he had two stolen vehicles up there. We caught him and we got him to talking and he had a business down there and we went down to his business and he started pointing out stolen property that he had gotten out of, out of Houston. I said

well where'd you get it from? Well, this old boy's got a junkyard over there on the north side of Houston. Said man, he can get anything you want. I said can you introduce some people to him? He said, yeah, I sure can if it'll help me. I said well, it won't hurt you any. And uh I said I can't promise you anything but it ain't gonna hurt you. So he took us up and introduced us to this guy, me another Intelligence agent out of Corpus Christi name Bob Alford, who is sheriff in Cleburne now. And Bob and I went up there and spent a Saturday out at this guy's junkyard and he, he wasn't real talkative or anything, this guy wasn't. But we ate barbeque and drank beer with him all day long and right at the end of the day, he wanted to know if I could use a lawnmower. And I said what kind? And he said a riding lawnmower. And I said yeah, I've been needing one. He said well I've got one at my house. So, he said why don't you follow me out to my house. We went out there and he didn't have one, he had three sitting in there in crates you know. And I said what do you want for it? And he said \$250 or \$300 or something like that, about a third of what they was worth you know. So I said yeah, I want that thing. Said it'll be a little bit, let me go get a trailer or pickup or something and I'll come back and get it. So I came back and paid him for it and got all the information I needed and took it and stored it. Well it jumped from there, I never did give him my phone number but I kept calling him and I, I'd gone back to McAllen. And he said, man, can you, could you use a dump truck? I told him, I said that's my business. And he said, he said I can get you two real good dump trucks worth the money. I said how much? He said now listen, these are good trucks. Said one is brand new and the other one just got about 5,000 miles on it. I said how many dollars? Fifty five hundred dollars. I said sure, I'll take them. So, I said will you deliver them? No, he said I'll bring them part way but I can't come all the way down to where you're at. So we made a plan and we met him up at Bay City, up close to Bay City. And we went out there to meet him and I'd been talking to theft detectives in Houston and they said well, whatever you do, stay in with this guy because he, our word is that he's got a warehouse full of stolen oilfield valves and things worth a lots of money. And I didn't know anything about oilfield equipment or anything but I said I'll do what I can. So I told these guys that night we was making the deal, I said this guy's gonna deliver me two stolen trucks and we'll arrest all three of them, him and the two drivers too. But I don't, I don't, we don't want to get arrested. Usually, a lot of

times the officer will get arrested. They'll put him in jail just to make it look good. And they said oh, OK, said we'll get around this intersection wherever they stop, said uh you just go up there and kind of lead them into that thing and said we'll fall out of the grass and everything and we'll capture them, you know. So I said OK. Well it was me, an Intelligence agent from Corpus, and a Narcotics agent in this pickup. We borrowed an old junky pickup and waited on the suspect, Pretty soon after arriving at the agreed location and the theft arrives Cadillac and he left the two trucks down pretty close to where all the officers were hid. And he said you got the money? And I said yeah, I got the money. He said I got the trucks, that's them right down there. I said let's go look at them and he said let me see the money. I showed \$5,500 and he said now let me have \$500 of that off the top, that's mine. (laughter) So I give him \$500 and we drove on down there and I said let's go look at the trucks. You know my idea was take him down there into the Officers trap and let them capture him. We were wanting to get away. Well, here officers come out from everywhere, must have had ten officers there you know, local officers. And we started off and I, the Intelligence agent out of Corpus was driving and the big Narcotics officer sitting in the middle and I was on the right hand side. And there was an officer that had gone up with us from Corpus Christi that I knew but didn't know well and he was just hamming it up. He was the Narcotics officer and he knew how to do it. And he just pulled his gun out and they were hollering halt, halt... trying to make us stop. Well that wasn't the game plan. The plan was for us to go . And I said go Bobby, go Bobby! So Bobby was trying to go and uh when he stuck that gun in there it scared me and I kind of leaned down and tried to get down as much as I could but we had the cab so full of people I couldn't get down much. And uh I don't know why but the driver, he kind of leaned over that way and this guy in the middle he was wearing my Western hat on and he was wearing it for some reason or other. And about that time, *bloooooey!* (laughter) One of the officers who hadn't paid attention at the meeting and the planning, fired a shotgun at our truck hitting the back window of our truck; the pellets came through the back, and struck all three of us and my hat. The glass and everything went down our neck, whelps on the side of our neck and the pellets went out through the windshield on the front. But uh, it looked pretty much like a wreck you know and so after... we went down and hid behind the beer joint down there and

kind of cleaned the glass and pellets off of us. And somebody said well, said uh what about this truck? What do you want to do with that truck? Boy, you know all of a sudden I happened to think, it'd make me cool if he, if that crook can see that, you know. He'd, he won't think I'm the cops you know. So I said set it up at there back of the courthouse door, back of the jailhouse door... nobody, why you know? And I said I want him to see that thing. And so that's what happened and he uh made bond. Well Houston kept on, well, what are you doing? I said well I don't know what... said I told them about we got into and I don't know what kind of shape we're in right now but I'll go back and get with him and see what, see how we're doing you know. (laughter) So I called him up and he didn't want to talk much over the phone you know, but he wanted me to come to Houston and see him. I went up there and seen him and uh I got an agent there in Houston, Tommy Davis, (a Criminal Intelligence Agent at the time and later the DPS Director who recently retired. He went with me and we went out and met this guy and... *(pause to change discs)*)

NANCY RAY: OK, we're back from our break and you went to Houston.

JACK MORTON: Yes, we went up to meet with the thief because he was concerned about what caused him to get arrested and everything. And uh so I decided well, best defense was a good offense and so I just jumped on him when we went into the Restaurant And I said, I'm pretty well ticked off at you and he said why's that? I said you brought all the police in Houston with you down there and they tried to to kill us... He said man, that's what I said. I looked at that pickup... he said (laughter), , how did that man get out of there alive? And he said, I know he ain't no police! (laughter) And uh so I got back with the Houston Police Department and I told them well, I may still be with him, I don't know. I said... He's still trying to figure out what all happened. It was about a week or two they called me back and said well, forget about Thompson. I said what happened? Said he got arrested down on the ship channel stealing. And he was an ex-con anyway, I mean a parolee, so they revoked his parole and sent him back to the penitentiary. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: So he was out of your hair by that time then? Well, when did you become a Ranger? Was that your last duty station before you went to become a Ranger?

JACK MORTON: Uh, I came back to Fort Worth. I was down there like I say on T, like I say TDY, and uh I came back in '79 and the next year I applied for the Rangers and went into the Rangers.

NANCY RAY: And you took the test, written test, and you had to go to the interview board for that?

JACK MORTON: Yes ma'am.

NANCY RAY: And how did that go?

JACK MORTON: Pretty good. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: Pretty good? Is there a story behind that?

JACK MORTON: Well, yeah, but I'm not sure I ought to tell it. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: OK, we'll move right along, how's that?

JACK MORTON: Well, I'll go ahead and tell it, it doesn't matter, the statute of limitations run out. Uh, I'd been involved in a situation around Fort Worth in uh an arrest one night. And uh you'd have to kind of know my captain, the captain that was over Dallas at the time to appreciate the story.

NANCY RAY: And who was that?

JACK MORTON: G. W. Burks. G. W. was kind of flamboyant and everything and he, he didn't dress like the typical Ranger. He had diamonds all over him and gold chains and gold bracelets and necklaces... and uh I had gotten acquainted with him earlier. Let me back up just a little bit. I had gotten acquainted with him whenever uh Trooper Thompson got killed in Weatherford and the time went on and we weren't making much progress. Colonel Speirs... Captain Burks was a sergeant in the Rangers in Austin at the time and he'd, he had worked Fort Worth as a Ranger and as a Highway Patrol sergeant. And so Colonel Speirs said you go up there and help those guys, see if you can clear that case up, I want that guy caught. And so G. W. came up and assisted us on that deal. And uh anyway we eventually got him caught and what have you so we got pretty well acquainted you know. And then he and I had a personal friend there in the district attorney's office there in Fort Worth. And uh an old friend of mine, a Highway Patrol friend of mine, uh was working there and he'd been a Ranger there and I kind of followed along in his footsteps. But he uh, when I took the test and got called to go to the interview board, Captain Burks goes over and contacts John Hogg, who was the Ranger that I replaced in Fort Worth. And he says... I'd gone to the

interview board once before, the year before, and I knew it wasn't my time so I just made an appearance to kind of get some experience. And he said uh, apparently he'd heard about it because he wasn't there, he was uh, he had had surgery or something. Anyway, he called me up and said, he said how come you didn't come see me before you went down there? He was over at this sister's house in Fort Worth and I said I didn't want to bother you, I knew... I'd heard that he didn't want any visitors you know, he'd lost a lot of weight and didn't look good, and didn't feel good. I just didn't bother him and knew it wasn't my time so I wasn't gonna put out a lot of effort. Well anyway, I got called to the interview board for this, the second time, and he said, I hear that Jack gets a little bit drove up after those interview boards and a little nervous. Said have you got anything you can loosen him up with? Well, this friend of mine, the Ranger, he said yeah, said I'll tell you a little story about him. Says, said uh had this old thief that was stealing cars and he had an undercover guy in with him who was a policeman and said this one old thief, said he kept saying, well there better not be any policeman around here... if there are, they're gonna get whacked you know, they're gonna kill them. And first one thing and another and when it came down to it, well, he uh, he took a swing at me or something and I took a swing at him and I had a DPS ring on and uh it was raining and cold and that ring left my hand, went flying off (laughter) out there in the brush. And uh so I get down at the interview board. There he is sitting down at that table all propped back you know, relaxed, they'd been having somebody before I get there and so now they got me coming in you know. Hey, Jack, says how you doing? I said fine. He said uh, do you wear much jewelry? I said no, I didn't have any on at the time. I said no sir. I thought what's he getting at? I looked over and he's got a little diamond stick pin in here, a necklace around his neck, all that gold hanging on him. I said I don't have anything against it though... (laughter) tried to butter him up a little bit. He said, how's your temper? I said ah I use to have a pretty bad temper when I was a young man but I said time and maturity and age has taken care of it. He said, yeah, what happened to your DPS ring? (laughter) He caught me in two places... I lost my temper and threw my jewelry away. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: So that was the end of both of those then.

JACK MORTON: But for the most part, it went well.

NANCY RAY: Good, you still made it, where was your first duty station?

JACK MORTON: I didn't have to leave, I stayed right there. I just changed offices.

NANCY RAY: Oh, you didn't have to move at all?

JACK MORTON: No.

NANCY RAY: Well that's kind of unusual isn't it?

JACK MORTON: Yeah it is. But h wanted, Captain Burks wanted me in his uh, in his company and I wanted to be there you know, so it worked out great for me.

NANCY RAY: All right, so how long did you stay there?

JACK MORTON: The rest of my career.

NANCY RAY: The whole time?

JACK MORTON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well your family was fortunate, they didn't have to move around then did they? OK. Well all right, here we are, now you're a Ranger, what's going on? Do you remember your first case?

JACK MORTON: Oh no.

NANCY RAY: Here's your paper (*information about his career*). Well you didn't have to start your relationship, you already had the relationship built with everybody there, didn't you. So you were ahead of the game, yeah.

JACK MORTON: Yeah. I did. You know, I'd been there nine years and so you know I knew all the local officials and everything.

NANCY RAY: Well if you don't remember your first one...

JACK MORTON: Oh I, I was just trying to get them in order here. I'll go ahead and tell you a little bit about the Ma and, the Ma and Pa bank robberies. Uh I'd been hearing about these bank robberies out in the outlying communities for several years but uh we weren't getting much information on them and some of them would be over at this company's territory and some down in Waco's and some down in East Texas. And so the next thing I know, well Captain Burks said why don't you and Ranger Wadsworth

just set you up an office and get all those reports in and go over them. Well, this has been going on for sixteen years and we had about sixteen robberies that hadn't been solved. And usually it was a man and woman team, you could tell by the photos of them. And uh so Ralph and I got all the reports from all sixteen bank robberies you know and put them up and did a timeline on them and all the information we could glean out of them, we gleaned, we tried to you know. And there was another guy who was an Intelligence agent stationed there, in fact I had broke him in as an Intelligence agent and he uh later made Ranger but at this time, he, he was interested in this case. And, and our office was right next to the Intelligence area and he'd come in and visit with us and, and got interested and... One day we were reading some of those reports and I think it was a bank maybe down below here at Meridian or somewheres had gotten robbed. And uh the Ranger responded to it, which he was probably 20 or 30 minutes away you know but on his way down there, he met a vehicle that caught his eye and he just wrote down the license number and, didn't write down the license number, he just noted that it was a blue Bronco Ford you know. And from that, of course there was a lot of other leads that fell through that we didn't follow up, I mean that we tried to follow up on, but this one eventually panned out. This uh Intelligence agent was driving around the east side of Fort Worth one day on the loop and this blue Bronco, a blue Bronco went around him. And he jotted down the license number and ran it and uh he uh got to running, we got to running on down on the family that owned it. Well, turned up the family that owned it, the guy had been in the penitentiary for bank robbery. So we figured ah hah, we're onto something you know. So we get several different officers in from all over East Texas and they come in and we start following these people with an airplane up and everything. And uh we discovered that he had a little farm up by Springtown which is out northwest of uh of Fort Worth. And uh we followed them up there and we found that it was kind of a hog farm. He just had some hogs up there just for a cover. He had a little barn down on it and late one night, we went up and checked that barn and there's a stolen car in there. And uh in this car, behind the seats, was some plate steel about this thick, just as a shield, right behind the front seat you know. We're getting... he's getting ready to do something you know, that's their normal MO, they go steal a car and use it and then they abandon the car and they get in their

getaway car you know. So another week or so rocks by and the next... most all of these robberies occurred on a Friday. So one Friday they take off, him and his wife, and they take off northwest up toward Jacksboro direction. And we follow them up there and uh they go outside of a little town of Bryson and Captain Burks had gotten in touch with Captain Moore out of Lubbock so they had Bryson surrounded with Rangers. And uh we uh, we uh sat there on them all day long and they sat out there at that church all day long. And this was a little old county road where they sat. The plane was telling us all this you know, where they're at. Well they're around behind this church just sitting there. Of course we couldn't figure out, we thought we were gonna prevent a bank robbery or capture them in a bank robbery you know. Turned up, they get in their car and they come back to Fort Worth. And we follow them back to Fort Worth, put them to bed. The next Friday, they take off the same direction. It'll surely go down this time, you know. So and Ranger Wadsworth an FBI agent, and Motor Vehicle Theft Agent Ken Henson hid in the Cemetery behind tombstones and waited for the suspect, we were planning to arrest them if possible. And our game plan is just... we was just gonna go ahead and capture them, we had enough information we could get a federal warrant on them you. And so we go up there and hide out however they never arrived they went the opposite direction... out on an oil lease and they stay all day.. And then later on in the evening they take off back Fort Worth.. Captain Burks and the FBI supervisor make a decision to arrest the suspects and search their residence . And so whenever they got home, we arrested them there at their house and we went in and searched,, and searched their home and got all their guns and shields other evidence. But we stopped uh sixteen years of bank robberies.

NANCY RAY: Sixteen years, and they got, they were convicted?

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah.

NANCY RAY: And they did time? Are they still there?

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah. He got a lot of time. I don't recall how much... his wife I think got 25 years. But he either got life or 50, The male had been arrested and convicted for Bank Robbery and was sent to the Pen several years before, and I think that He thought He had perfected the art of Bank robbery.

NANCY RAY: Good gracious. Well, did you ever have a case that you didn't solve? That just really

stays on your mind, you wish you could solve it? One that really aggravates you?

JACK MORTON: Yeah, yeah. I guess everybody does you know. But those kind eats you up you know. Uh... (*emotional moment*)

NANCY RAY: Is there anything you want to talk about or do you want to go to another one?

JACK MORTON: Well, let's go to another one and come back to that later or something.

NANCY RAY: OK. Do you have any that are humorous?

JACK MORTON: (laughter) Oh...

NANCY RAY: You pick one and tell us about it... or about any homicides. Did you work some homicides?

JACK MORTON: Yeah. I worked a few. Uh we worked, I worked closely with the Major Case Division in Fort Worth and a good friend of mine named George Hudson. And he asked me to assist him on a case and we uh, we became involved in it and it was a guy, a drug trafficker. He was originally from the Valley, down around McAllen. And uh I knew some of the family down there you know and... but this guy, he was wanted as a fugitive out of Chicago. And we didn't know for sure who he was, he was using an alias name but we kept gathering intelligence on him and discovered his true identity. George kept getting information about first one thing and then another that happened. And uh so we began to work on that and we wound up arresting this guy and about six cohorts and they were into cocaine trafficking also but we cleared seven homicides out of that investigation. They were kind of scattered from here to there but uh we uh... one of them we dug up the body down at Madisonville where they'd killed a guy and took him up there on a ranch and buried him. And they were pretty mean people, you know, somebody done something they didn't like, they would would just kill them you know. And they killed a young man and young woman up there who were narcotics dealers. And I don't know, I guess it was a dispute over narcotics or something and they killed them. Those two uh and there was a guy... they had some beer joints in Fort Worth and there was a guy that kept harassing the waitress or something, they just got three or four more guys, went over to his house... thought they were killing him but they didn't kill him, they killed uh an illegal alien that was staying there instead of him you know.

And things like that. And they killed another one out there in a beer joint out on the north side of town over, oh just over a pool game you know. They were just mean individuals. It was him and his two brothers. That was kind of humorous. One of the brothers that killed the guy out in Samson Park in the beer joint over the pool game, he fled to Mexico. And I'd established some contacts with, we'd worked another case with DEA agents and retired, another Ranger that'd gone to work for DEA and I was telling them about these guys. And they had an investigation going on too in San Antonio and down in that area. And uh, so when, about the time the investigation was coming to a halt or we was getting everything just about ready to arrest everybody, well uh this agent from DEA called. He said you still have an arrest warrant for Roberto? I said yeah. He says uh, can you have somebody at the border in a little while? I said what are you talking about? He said, well, they caught him in Reynosa. I said I'll find somebody to get to the border and they uh, they uh brought him to the border and there was a storm coming in down there. And uh let me back up just a little bit. A few days before that, he was living, before he took off on the run and went to Mexico, he was living out northwest of Fort Worth. And one Sunday I got a call that he was home and I assembled some local officers and we went up there and his wife was standing out on the porch and there was a young man there a young man and... I was pretty sure it wasn't the guy I was after. But anyway, I, when I... we started, we was gonna go through the house and his wife was, was about nine months pregnant and she was standing there, this guy's wife was, the one that I had a warrant for. Well this young man, I just grabbed him and kind of used him as a shield as I went through the house looking for this guy I was wanting. (laughter) So, anyway, he wasn't there, didn't pan out. So they brought that guy to McAllen and I got the Ranger in McAllen to pick him up and uh he uh put him in jail in Edinburg and then they, they got him from Edinburg up to Corpus Christi some way or another. Then the mail plane picked him up and brought him to Austin and I had to go to Austin to pick him up. I walked up to him and I said, told him... introduced myself. He said I know who you are. I said I well never have met you. But he said yeah, I know who you are. And he was a pretty likable guy, really. I said well, we've got a long ways to go, I said I'm gonna put these handcuffs on front of you and you can talk about whatever you want to. He kind of relaxed a little bit and he looked over there. He said uh, he said

you scared two babies out of my wife. (laughter) She had twins. Well I'm sorry.

NANCY RAY: Well, I don't think a Ranger has ever said that was the effect they had on people. But I was gonna ask you, when you put your badge on, when somebody like Roberto uh, what did that badge... what did it do?

JACK MORTON: You know, I probably shouldn't be saying this, but I very seldom wore my badge.

NANCY RAY: Really? Huh.

JACK MORTON: It just created too many problems. People wanting to you know come up and start yakking and you know bring up you know who they knew and what have you. So I always just... I dressed semi-western but I never did carry a gun outside or a badge unless it was a...

NANCY RAY: So you were an undercover Ranger.

JACK MORTON: Well, I just didn't dress the part. Probably received some criticism for it but I just, it was more comfortable for me not to dress the part.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well, that's, that's good to know. I feel like you're probably a pretty humble man, so I'm gonna ask you this. Did you have any honors or any commendations that we could hear about?

JACK MORTON: Oh.

NANCY RAY: Any letters that were related to what you've done?

JACK MORTON: Well, I think I showed you that letter from Governor White and that was for the work in a homicide investigation in Fannin County which I just played a very small part in. Except that I delivered, we arrested the guy in Arlington and I delivered him back to Sherman that night. And uh didn't have much of a role in it but uh... Also received a Congressional Medal of Merit for just years of work in police work from Congressman Pete Guerin (*spelling*).

NANCY RAY: And this information, is it in the Museum now?

JACK MORTON: Yes, it is.

NANCY RAY: OK, so it's available for everyone to enjoy.

JACK MORTON: Yeah, it's pretty small print so it's kind of hard to read.

NANCY RAY: There you go. It's still an important thing. Well, let's go back to some of your cases.

Um, the, what about the... there was a thief in Bay City?

JACK MORTON: That as the one I was telling you about, that was the truck deal.

NANCY RAY: That was the truck deal, OK. What about the uh the Amy McNeil kidnapping?

JACK MORTON: OK, that, that's gonna touch on two things you was asking me about... a case that kind of haunted me and everything. I was working on a major case of an influential woman out in the northeast part of Tarrant County, and was really busy. But I got a call from Co. F Sgt. Bobby Prince (later Captain) , of Rangers in Waco. And Bobby and I had been partners on Highway Patrol one time at Weatherford, whenever he reinstated, he came over and rode with me for a week or two. But we, we'd been good friends ever since. And he knew my background and what I'd been working and he knew what I did in Intelligence in Fort Worth pretty well because he was stationed in Fort Worth as... he left Weatherford and went to Fort Worth as a trooper and he kind of, we'd come in an visit and find out what we was doing and everything and... Uh he knew that I knew a lot of the old-time gangsters and characters in Fort Worth you know and so he enlightened me on what was going on. He said we just information, there's a kidnapping going on in uh Alvarado. Said I know that's not your country, just across the line over in Johnson County but said we need some help. And said we've got some recordings where this guy has been making demands, that they had this, the little girl uh kidnapped and said thought you might just recognize the voice, you know might just get lucky and you could recognize the voice. And I said sure, I... thought well, this'll take me 30 minutes to drive down there to where they're at and listen to those things and tell them whether I do or don't recognize the voice. Well, then things started happening (laughter) and... are ya'll familiar with this?

NANCY RAY: No.

JACK MORTON: Oh you're not? Anyway, I believe this was '84 if I'm not mistaken, 1984. Uh started getting phone calls about this time. The little girl that they kidnapped, her daddy was a guy named Don McNeil, and he had... the year before he had ran for U.S. Congress but was not elected. And he was a self-made millionaire and he had made his money out of hand-held calculators and from there, whenever that played out, he started building Little Pal barbeque grills. So anyway, what had happened, uh this

carload of thugs had uh, they lived in a house that looked about like that one, but anyway... there was a house on TV. They uh they caught this little girl and her two brothers in route to school one morning. And uh they pulled them over, pulled over Amy, her name was Amy McNeil, and they pulled over her brother Mark (who later became a Highway Patrol Trooper) and stuck a gun in his face , and then grabbed Amy and said you're going with us, then they put Amy in their car and left. . And I believe there were four guys and a girl who committed the kidnapping

NANCY RAY: And how old was Amy?

JACK MORTON: Amy was uh about twelve or thirteen, I can't remember exactly. I've got the information here somewheres. So anyway, uh the calls start coming in that we're gonna do this and we're gonna do that and so Sergeant Prince said you got time to go with us and help us? And of course what had happened when the call came into Waco for some assistance from the Rangers, they were in, they were having the company meeting in Waco and Captain Mitchell just said all you guys get your stuff, or get what you got... most of them didn't have anything with them, but said ya'll, let's go to Alvarado. So they just converged on Alvarado, about ten of them you know. So they had plenty of help you know. And we got a plane up in the air and we wired uh the car up, they said you're gonna be doing lots of traveling, prepare to take a journey. And so some of the Intelligence agents I think out of Dallas came over and placed a following device on McNeil's car. The following device makes a beeping noise and also lets you know the direction the car is travelling. The receiver was mounted in the airplane, and Ranger Ralph Wdsworth was selected as the observer... And so we took off from the McNeil home and they tell us to go to Dallas and go to a service station and I'm riding with Sergeant Prince and uh we go to Dallas and tell us to go by the phone booth, said you'll receive another call. We go there and we get a call ; Mr. McNeil talks to the suspect who directs him to go to . So we go to Longview and says uh wait so-and-so and you'll get another call. So here we go to Longview and we get, stop there and we get another call. And the kidnapper gets a little more specific and told Mr. McNeil, OK, we're going to Mount Pleasant and we'll make the transfer there, we'll give you the girl and you have the money, it's \$250,000. OK. So when I get that information, I called ahead to Ranger Foster and asked him to get with someone

and go to the Service Station . Foster was joined by Ranger Aycock this was in the cold winter time and snow was on the ground. . , When Mr. McNeil talks to the kidnapers in Longview; He was instructed to go to the old abandoned service station and wait by the phone booth for a call.. Mr. McNeill does as instructed, and after waiting for sometime the phone rings and Mr. McNeil answers it.comes... says we're not coming. He said what do you mean you're not coming? I've got your money, you've got my baby... bring my baby to me and I'll give you the money. No, there's too many cops... it's about two or three o'clock in the morning. Said no, we're not coming, that road out there is full of cops and he said it ain't like that on a normal night.... it's not normal you know for it to have that many cars on it. And so next thing I know, the Captain called and said well it's all off. They're not coming, said everybody return to, back to your home.. Oh I was disappointed. And uh when Bobby Prince and I had gone by this service station and gotten our position, we got on a one-way feeder road and it didn't come back out onto the interstate, back toward Dallas you know. And just as we was cranking up and about ready to leave, Ranger Foster advised , there's a great big old car came in here and just cut a doughnut and took off and headed back toward the interstate. Ralph picked him up from the air, he was on him then . And so, the plane follows him and he goes across the interstate back toward Mount Pleasant and goes out into some farm country and stops. Ralph directs some Rangers out there where he's at and Bobby and I discussed and we said well, we'll just stay here on this road and we'll go on down this road and we'll run into I-30 you know but it didn't work out that way. But anyway, Ranger Ray and Joe Willie .drove up behind the kidnapers car and they encountered shotgun blasts when they rolled up. These guys leaned out of their car shot , the radiator out. . And then they took off. They jumped in their car, well I don't think they ever left their car but they took off and they came back and hit I-30 and headed back in toward Dallas. Well, Bobby Prince and I, we was up there on this deadend road (laughter) and we couldn't get off so we have to make a u-turn. So we were about five to ten miles out of the race then but... like that guy said we're full of cops and things in there. I didn't know we had as many cops with us as we had, we must have had fifteen cars of FBI agents. And these guys were, you know, in and out of traffic, three or four o'clock in the morning. We get to a little town there close to Sulphur Springs called Slaton I believe it

was. . . And they said they're turning off and going up in this little town, it's just a small little community you know. And the next thing I know, someone said we're under fire. What had happened, they were in a '98 Oldsmobile and when they turned off in this little town,, they were running out of gas. (laughter) And they ran out of gas and they just wheeled it into a driveway and of there was an FBI agent car right on their tail and there were two or three Ranger cars right behind them. And this FBI car ran right up behind them in the driveway of a residence of an elderly Lady. The kidnapper suspects they jumped out with shotguns and what have you and were shooting at the Rangers and FBI Agents , Rangers Johns Dendy, Howard Alfred and Johnny Waldrip started returning fire, with , mini-14 rifles which is a pretty small bullet, a .223 I think. And uh so the gunfight was on. And they uh, by the time Bobby and I got there, (, we were about five minutes out of the race, well they had already recovered Amy, she was in the car.) And Ranger Slick Alfred had retrieved her from Johnson Co. Deputy Sheriff Moulder and took her to Father. Sergeant Prince and I got all the culprits out of the car and got their guns, laid them out there on the ground .

NANCY RAY: Oh, yeah. Well, that brings up a question I have for you. What case or what thing in your career gave you the most satisfaction that you can think of? I mean you had to be, even this, I mean seeing Amy alive, had to be satisfying.

JACK MORTON: Oh yeah, yeah. That, anything like, anything that's got some emotion attached to it like that friend of mine you know getting killed and then catching his killer you know. Seems like the things that you're close to give more...

NANCY RAY: Most satisfaction? OK.

JACK MORTON: Some of them you just let them slide off, you know roll off.

NANCY RAY: Well, let's capture for the uh, for history, the years you were Ranger, from what year to what year?

JACK MORTON: OK. 1980 to 1985. Only five years.

NANCY RAY: Five years, OK. And who were your captains and sergeants?

JACK MORTON: My Captain was G. W. Burks. My first. Sergeant was Charlie Moore and he had

just made sergeant and came to Dallas. Sgt. Wright followed Sgt. Moore who promoted to Captain and moved to Lubbock.

NANCY RAY: OK, very good. Well uh, you mentioned narcotics a couple of times. What were the main narcotics that ya'll had to deal with?

JACK MORTON: Oh when I was in the Valley? Mainly marijuana. Some cocaine and some methamphetamines but it was basically marijuana trafficking you know. They bring it across by the tons. We, I had an informant to come in one night and tell me there was some, a stash of marijuana right down on the banks of the river up at Rio Grande City which is the marijuana capital of Texas, you know. And I wrote up a search warrant and went down there and we got some DEAs that went with us and uh we rolled in and didn't know what to expect. They just said it was in this old shack and run down, enough information to get a search warrant on. And a little old, said it's just a little old ramshackle building. When we rolled up there we, a guy stepped out of the house, a big steady... had a deputy sheriff's uniform on. And uh he said what ya'll want? We said who are you? He said I'm so-and-so. Well, you in charge here? Yeah. And he, his father who was an old, old fellow was laying in there in bed and, incapacitated, and uh we said what's in this room over here? I don't know. It had a little 35 cent lock on it and we knocked it over and there's fifteen hundred pounds of marijuana stashed in there. They'd deliver it across at night and stashed it that morning you know.

NANCY RAY: Well, you ran into some really mean people. How did you deal with that on a personal level?

JACK MORTON: Oh that never bothered me much. It just, the unknown you know. You just gotta be careful you know. Try to stay out of harm's way the best you can.

NANCY RAY: Yeah, OK. How did you do that?

JACK MORTON: (laughter) Outrun them! (laughter)

NANCY RAY: Out run them? OK. Do you remember any of the other Rangers who made it with you at the same time?

JACK MORTON: Yeah. Uh, that's kind of a funny story.

NANCY RAY: What's that?

JACK MORTON: Uh, when they gave the test, I had just came back from the Valley as I think I told you while ago. Had been down there two years without a day off hardly. And uh my sister, Myrna, was living in Holland, her and her husband. Her husband's in the Air Force. I was talking to her on the phone and she said why don't you jump, catch a flight and come over? So I got to checking around and the fares weren't all that expensive so I jumped on a plane and took off over there. But the Ranger test was coming up right away and I didn't carry, you know I didn't want to carry books and things so I just basically didn't study at all. And you really need to because the test is pretty important. So anyway, came on back and when I come back, well I got notification that I had uh was going to the interview board and my brother was going also. And uh so when it all came down, there was the, they took five of us and created an eligibility list. And my brother was the next one under me. It's kind of ironic, uh, let me, I can't think right now... I can't remember the two to start off with but they made two, they had two openings. And then they put three of us on the list and it was Phil Ryan, the Ranger at Decatur, and Bob Steele, myself... Bob Steele was the, he was the New York policeman who come to Texas and went to work for the Department and made Ranger. They called him the Yankee Ranger. Uh let's see, there was another one from down in your country, uh oh boy...

NANCY RAY: That's OK, you'll think of it in a little while. You'll probably think of it after we leave.

JACK MORTON: Black, Steve Black.

NANCY RAY: Steve Black, OK. Is he in Tyler?

JACK MORTON: Yeah he was, yeah that's where he lives. I think he was originally from a little town up northwest of there by the name of Winnsboro.

NANCY RAY: Well, can you think of a time that, of all of the incidents, whether it was as a Ranger or before... the time that you were the most scared.

JACK MORTON: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: What was that?

JACK MORTON: That's probably in 1974 at the hostage takeover in uh Huntsville. Do you want me to

tell you about that?

NANCY RAY: I do, I surely do.

JACK MORTON: That, uh I'd been working about three years in Intelligence and, relatively doing nothing a whole lot except writing reports you know, sitting in the office. But anyway, I was on vacation and had gone to uh, had gone down to the Smoky Mountains and was down in there and then I started hearing about this hostage situation in Huntsville you know. I said man, I'm glad I'm on vacation you know, because I knew they was bringing people in from different parts of the state you know on that thing. And uh I got on back home and I guess uh, I guess on Monday or something like that, and I went to work and I was talking about it and I said well, maybe it'll all end before I have to go you know. And some of the other guys down there I was working with, they'd already been down there and they was telling me what kind, what it was like you know, terrible conditions. And next thing I know, they said this... I get a call that said pack your bags and take off to Huntsville, and this was on a Friday, on a Friday. So me and another guy named Ted Court (*spelling*), we jumped in the car and head off down there, and upon arrival we meet with Capt. Burks and Capt. Rogers who were heading up the operation and they said OK, ya'll will be on the assault team in the morning. And they were set up in the laundry room there behind the library, where the hostage situation was taking place. They told us to be back at 6 AM and, that's when your shift will start you'll work until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. Well, all you could do was just sit back there and tell stories and what have you, you know, waiting for something to happen. And all the negotiations were taking place between the hos... the characters up there, the abductors, and the prison director and Captain Burks and Captain Rogers out of Houston and... I thought man, this is gonna be long and boring you know. And we were sitting around there twiddling our thumbs and then all of a sudden well Captain Burks and Captain Rogers comes out to where we're at and said well, they're wanting to, they're wanting to come out this evening. OK. The original plan that they'd come up with was to blow holes in the wall. The library was on the third floor of the building there, the library's up there and of course the walls are about that thick, about 14, 16 inches thick. And uh they were gonna have an explosive company to come in there and blow holes in those walls and they told us, said

dress with climbing loose... with loose climbing clothes with soft tennis shoes on, where you can climb, you're gonna have to cross over some ladders and first one thing another and we're gonna blow those holes in the walls, go in and grab the victims and get them out of the way you know.

NANCY RAY: Now, who all had been...

JACK MORTON: I said that don't sound good. Sorry?

NANCY RAY: Who did they take hostage?

JACK MORTON: They took the workers in the library and the uh most of them were just civilian employees.

NANCY RAY: OK. Keep going.

JACK MORTON: I don't think they had any guards, I think they were all just civilian employees.

NANCY RAY: OK.

JACK MORTON: Most of them were ladies, teachers and what have you, you know. And uh so I wasn't looking forward to that at all. And then the change, the whole plan changes and he starts making demands he wants this and he wants that and he wants an armored car and he wants helmets to put over them, to protect them. And so they have the shop build them some helmets and uh then just before... and so we, they tell us to get in place. Well, our place was over in the cafeteria which is on the second floor, just below the library. And these ramps, these staircases going up to the third floor, they, they're smooth, they don't have any steps or anything on them where they can pull carts and things up and down you know. So his plan was, and we found this out later, it, he released one of the hostages and she came down and told us what they were building and what they'd done. They'd taken blackboards in the library and kind of set them like this, and lined them with law books, taped law books all they way around them you know, so the bullets wouldn't go through them. And then he uh, he placed a hostage there and one of those bad guys here and then a hostage and that's the way they lined up, that's the way they got inside the shield. They called it the Trojan horse. Well they get inside this Trojan horse and and their other demand was to have an armored car waiting for them there at the bottom of the ramp and they were gonna get in that armored car and take off you know, go somewhere, I don't know where they was going. But the

powers to be there said they're not leaving the yard, . And so ya'lls job is to catch them when they get to the second floor. And we didn't know for sure what, how everything, how they were gonna maneuver this thing and all that stuff. But the way it all turned it out, he handcuffed all these ladies to the outside of that shield and they, with them inside, and they maneuvered this, they had to make 90 degree curves just like this. Well our job and our plan was, and we got the Huntsville Fire Department to come in there with pumper trucks and to increase the pressure on the water hoses that we were going to use, we planned hit the shield and knock it over.that shield off of them, And then do whatever was necessary to rescue the hostages Well, so we get over there early and we have to get in place early and we have to be quiet, we can't say a word. And it's about 125 degrees in this cafeteria. The electricity had been off for ten days. And this all happened right at lunch time, about 11 o'clock or so one day and a lot of food was setting there and a lot of food was left. And they just evacuated that building and the food had spoiled and was smellin... They furnished us, they didn't have the little light flak vests like they do nowadays you know. The flak vests were what they used in the military and they were made out of acrylic stuff and it was about 35 pounds in weight. They had that strapped to us, . All we had, we had some old helmets and they were the old iron ones like they used in World War I (laughter)... the National Guard or somebody furnished us, and two pistols. And that's the way we's, we were standing there wet and we had these water hoses... We were in a little hallway, the prisoners would come through these doors, there were about six doors here and they'd come through these doors and pick up their trays of food and go back in there in the cafeteria and sit down and eat it. And uh, let me catch my thoughts here...

NANCY RAY: OK, that's fine.

JACK MORTON: Well, anyway uh, we uh, we had those pumper trucks outside and they have that pressure revved up and whenever they start, whenever they'd start down that's when we'd give them the signal to put the pressure on you know. And uh these hoses are laying in there and the hoses are about 3 or 4 inches in diameter they must have been about two or three of them laying there. And they were leaking and water was everywhere, and so about that time, here they come down. And as they come down the ramp. They get to this curve right in front of us. Captain Rogers and Captain Burks are the first

two out the door. And they run out and holler for them to surrender, and all they were answered with was the gunfire. And gunfighting was going on and we kept, we could just file out one at a time. We just used one door to exit the cafeteria; we kept the other doors locked. And there was ten or twelve of us on this assault team. And Captain Burks and I don't remember who all followed him but there was FBI agent there and he was right in front of me. And I was preparing to exit. out and they'd run out and get behind these big pillars you know and shield and try to figure them out a shot where they could hit somebody without hitting a hostage you know. And uh, uh, firing was going on you know, going everywhere, and he stepped through and I said, well I better get ready you know. And I was trying to find me out a place you know where I could go and about that time, he comes barreling by me, just a flying right beside me, and he lands against this wall over here. And I glance at him you know. I'm kind of trying to keep my eye on what's going on out there and I'm watching him and I looked over at him and he was drawing a breath like that... and he'd showed us earlier he had this little, the government had them this little light protective vest you know and he's over there trying to get his breath you know. And I didn't see any blood so I said he just got the air knocked out of him, but I need to get him out from in front of that door, he's gonna get killed laying there you know, they'll hit him right in the head. And directly I woke up and I was laying down in water. And I'm standing there at that door just fixing to step out and when all this happens. And I wake up and I'm laying down there looking up at the ceiling you know. With that... deal and apparently I was just out for a few minutes, or just a short amount of time and I had those guns up here keeping them out of the water like that and I looked over and that guy was crawling out of the way, you know. And I never thought too much about it and I got up and then all the shooting and everything kind of subsided for a little bit. We found an extension ladder and they were close enough to the windows in this cafeteria that we could take that extension ladder out there and we could shove that thing off and... a lot of guns shooting, a lot of shots had been fired. And a major with the uh Texas Department of Corrections, they uh, they were over there behind the closed doors. But, when all the shooting and everything subsided, he came up in there with a handcuff key and released all those hostages. And uh so they scooted down the ramp and took off and they put them in a room in there. And uh me and an agent

and some more guys, all of us was out there kind of surveying and seeing who we had and who was dead and who wasn't. We walk out and uh we're looking here and looking there, trying to identify all the actors and who the actors are and who the hostages are. Most all the hostages had gotten out and uh we could see three dead people laying there, three or four, three I believe. And one of them was the main actor which, you know, relieved us a little bit. We were trying to figure out where the other two were, there were three of them. And uh there was a Priest inside that uh shield with them, he was one of the hostages. And the, the priest happened to know the Agent standing beside me back. And he hollered, Winston, he's got a gun. and he was referring to Dominquez i he was laying there with a gun in his hand and it looked like He was preparing to use it on us . But Agent Winston Padgett dispatd him before he was able too..

NANCY RAY: Tough times, tough times. Well, let's change...

JACK MORTON: Oh, let me finish...

NANCY RAY: Oh, go right ahead.

JACK MORTON: It'll just take a second. As I was telling you about waking up in that water down there and uh... me and everything's pretty... a lot of the TDC employees come out and start cleaning up everything and everything and... So they, they decided for all of us to come in and drink some coffee. We'd, we'd been standing out there in that heat all day. In fact, two or three of them had fainted out there from being 125, 130 degrees, getting out in that water and everything, just the change in temperature. But anyway, they put us in there and we was sitting there talking about it and what have you and my foot began to ache. And I thought well what's wrong with my foot? And finally, I reached down to, and I hadn't even felt it. I guess 20 or 30 minutes has taken place since I fell in that water. So I pulled my shoe off and all my toenail had been ripped off my left toe and all I could ever figure out was one of those hoses whenever they put that pressure on it, was popping like that, and it knocked my feet out from under me and knocked me down in there. Because I looked at my chest protector and I didn't have any holes or anything in it and I was pretty sure I didn't get by a bullet you know. (laughter) But it was just another little old...

NANCY RAY: OK. Well, when you retired, what did you decide to do?

JACK MORTON: Well, it was temporary. I didn't really retire, I didn't even change offices, I stayed right there and went to work for the district attorney's office.

NANCY RAY: Did you... that's three times.

JACK MORTON: (laughter) But I stayed there and was uh, he made me the assistant chief over investigations and uh I supervised them for ten years. And uh then I decided well I'm tired of this you know. I've been doing it for 36 years and uh I'd already started putting me some, a cattle herd together up in Oklahoma where my sister lived. My brother-in-law had about five or six hundred acres up there and he was getting up in age where he wanted to, to stop raising cattle. So I stocked it with cattle and ran it, and went up and stayed, we're getting up into '95 then and I stayed three years. And I don't like it up there and came back down to visit my kids and found this little place and so I moved down here.

NANCY RAY: And here you are. OK. Well if you were giving advice to uh a person just going in, just becoming a Ranger, what would you tell that person? What advice would you give a new Ranger?

JACK MORTON: Well, not to let it go to his head. Get with, get with the ones that's got experience, and get you and education.

NANCY RAY: That's good advice.

JACK MORTON: And treat everybody you know kind of like you'd like to be treated, except the ones that need otherwise.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well one other question. What do you want to be remembered for?

JACK MORTON: Oh, kind of like George Jones, just that I was an honest person and that I was a worker and that I enjoyed and appreciated the trust put in me to be a Texas Ranger, I loved it.

NANCY RAY: And it shows. Well I want to thank you for the time that you, for this interview, and thank you for your service to the state.

JACK MORTON: You're certainly welcome, nice talking to both of you. Sure.

NANCY RAY: Anything else that you'd like to say?

JACK MORTON: Oh, I can't think of anything.

NANCY RAY: Thank you very much.

JACK MORTON: I'll probably think of a lot of it shortly after you leave. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: You probably will. Thank you.

JACK MORTON: You're certainly welcome.