

Interview With

**MAX WOMACK**  
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project:  
Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted At Home Of  
Sonny Spradlin  
Kilgore, Texas  
Wednesday—October 26, 1995

Interviewed By:  
Robert Nieman & Dennis Read  
Longview, Texas

Present At Interview: Max Womack, Robert Nieman, & Dennis Read

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## Introduction

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**Max Womack**  
Texas Ranger, Retired

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** My name is Robert Nieman. We are at the home of Sonny Spradlin of Kilgore, Texas. The purpose of this interview is to discuss the Texas Rangers in general and the career of Ranger Max Womack in particular. Ranger Womack, do I have your permission to record this interview?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ranger Womack you understand that this video tape will belong to you, the Texas Ranger Research Library in Waco, Texas and to me.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And finally Ranger Womack, in addition to the Texas Ranger Research Library in Waco, do I have permission to present copies of this tape to other various historical organizations such as museums, libraries and etc.?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ranger Womack, what is your full name?

**MAX WOMACK:** My name is Max Vernon Womack.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And when and where were you born?

**MAX WOMACK:** I born October 1, 1929 in Big Spring, Texas.

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

**MAX WOMACK:** My daddy's name was Ray Algustus Womack and my mother was Louise McDavid Womack.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And your wife's name?

**MAX WOMACK:** Wanda Kemp Womack.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And where is she from?

**MAX WOMACK:** Wanda was raised in Paris, Texas.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And do you have any brothers or sisters?

**MAX WOMACK:** Have one sister, Dorothy Box who lives in Henderson, Texas.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Just the two of ya'll?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you have another one that died at....

**MAX WOMACK:** Had a brother, Edwin, that died ah...as an infant, he died before I was born.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Do you have any children?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes, I have two living children. Ah...had ah...ah...one son died when he was 30 years old.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Okay, what's your children's names?

**MAX WOMACK:** Have a daughter, Margaret McWilliams who lives in Longview and daughter Diane Womack who lives in ah...is a student at Texas A&M, she's a senior.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And what was your sons name?

**MAX WOMACK:** Brian.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...where did you go to...go to school Max?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well I grew up in ah...you might say I grew up in Talco ah...we moved to Talco in 1936 when the oil boom came on there and I went to high school in Talco, Texas.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you graduate from Talco?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you go to college?

**MAX WOMACK:** Went to ah...I graduated from high school in 1946, I started to school when I was 5 years old and back then we just went to school 11 years and ah...therefore I graduated from high school when I was 16 and I had to wait until the day I was 17 to join the Army. And so I joined the Army the day I was 17 and went to Japan, stayed a year and a half, came back and went to college a couple of years and worked in the oil field.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What were you in, in the Army?

**MAX WOMACK:** In the Army.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** I mean, infantry or....

**MAX WOMACK:** No, I was in the engineer outfit.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you go to New London school?

**MAX WOMACK:** I went there ah...the first two years of my ah...the start...they had first and second grade. I had moved to Talco at mid term when I was in the second grade.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Max you had a sis...your sister Dorothy was a survivor of the 1937 New London school explosion, ah...being a survivor this must have made your parents very grateful obviously but since she did survive this, did you parents treat you differently as far as your schooling and what not went?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well I...you know I never did notice ah...we had a lot of friends you know that were killed in that school and...but I just don't...looking back I don't ah...you know I don't ever ah...think my parents ever...I know they were concerned, but I don't...I nev...I didn't realize it you know.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did it ah...did it have a bad...or what kind of effect if any or...did it have on your sister?

**MAX WOMACK:** I never noticed it ah...she would...she would talk freely about it.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What about your....

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...I think in the recent years though she has become a little bit more ah...she doesn't ah...seem to want to talk about it as much. But I don't know, that may just be my feelings though.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What about your parents?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did they talk about it?

**MAX WOMACK:** My father died a couple years after the explosion, he died in 1939 and ah...like I say, we ah... my mother was raised in East Texas and we went back and forth there a lot through the years and ... and knew a lot of families that lost children.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what inspired you to get into the law business?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well I don't...you know like a lot of kids, I always wanted to be a policeman. And ah...I had a good that was a Highway Patrolman down in Henderson, Arrett Hale, Arrett was a Highway Patrolman there for many, many years. In fact he worked for my daddy there in Old London, mother and daddy ran a little old grocery store and when Arrett was a young man he worked for them there at that grocery store in Old London. And then ah...after I had gotten older, it was when I was going to college and working there in the oil field, well I'd go down to visit my sister and ride with Arrett Hale and at that time his partner was Pat Spear, who was later the Director of the department. And I got, you know, interested in it and ...and ah...that's...decided to get on the Highway Patrol.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And what year was this?

**MAX WOMACK:** In 1951.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And what, had you been working in the oil field directly before that?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, and then going to school. I went to school at North Texas Agricultural College which is...now they call it the University of Texas at Arlington.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And..and...

**MAX WOMACK:** It was a Jr. College then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** ....which oil company did you work for?

**MAX WOMACK:** For the Humble Oil Company.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you ever get into the history of the Rangers, I mean thoughts of the ah...night...when you....well let me back up, when you joined the police department, the Highway Patrol, did you ever have thoughts then of becoming a Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh yeah, after I got on the Highway Patrol well you know I'd see the Rangers ah...work around the different ones. I've...my first duty station was Corpus Christi and Captain Allee was down there a lot and....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Duty station...as a Highway Patrol or Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** Highway Patrol. And I became acquainted with Captain Allee and his son was a radio dispatcher there and he rode with me some and got to knowing Captain Allee some through him and...and ah...knew Wylie Williamson there in Corpus and ah...just got to knowing the Rangers and decided I wanted to be one too. But ah...you know you had to have a good bit law...law enforcement experience and when I became eligible to be considered well I started trying to get on.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** When was you able to get on to the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** I think you had to have 10 years experience I think back then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And when did you become a Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** In 1969, I'd been on the Highway Patrol 18 years.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Was the ah...did you have to take a lot of tests or special training or....

**MAX WOMACK:** Back when I went on the Rangers you kind of more or less had ah...someone recommended you.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And who recommended you?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, Frank Kemp, the Ranger there in Paris was a good friend of mine and ah...he...he kind of spoke a good word for me I guess. And Captain Crowder who was the Captain there in ah...in Company B came up to Paris a lot and we played golf and poker together and good friends and ....and ah...at one time I decided I...I was just wanting to get off the road. I tried to...decided I'd go into narcotics, so they agreed to transfer me into narcotics and was going to send me to Houston. I guess that's the only ever time I ever saw my wife cry, when I came home and told her that I was going ... we was going to move to Houston. And so ah...we thought about it...my children did have asthma and thought well I just better not do it. So I didn't...didn't go into the narcotics. And then about a year later well the vacancy in the Rangers came open and Captain Crowder spoke up for me he said, 'Well I told him not to go in narcotics, this Ranger vacancy is going to come open'. So I always appreciated that. And Frank Kemp there in Paris was a...is a...he was a good friend of mine and I imagine him knowing Colonel Garrison pretty well, he might of hit me a little bit. Jim Ray always said he did.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what was...what was it like when you first became a Ranger to be a Ranger. You know the one right, one Ranger, the Captain McDonald thing and...and just to be, I'm a Texas Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well I always felt like I never could fulfill all those stories I'd heard about things, but I just wanted to do the best I could. And ah...just everyday work, the Rangers is...is...is just a lot of hard work sometimes trying to run the information down on people or conducting surveillance's and ah...it was..you know it was a great heritage and it's ah...it opens a lot of doors for you. People...oh you don't...you tell 'em your a Texas Ranger well boy they really want to get to knowing you or find out about your life. Ah...

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you ever find it ah...an honor or a hindrance or....

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh I...you know I always felt honored, kind of...I felt humbled ah...that ah...you know to be considered a Ranger, but ah...never felt like I was any kind of hero or anything.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...before we get down into some of your specific cases, I'd like to just run some names by. Ah...some of these people you may have known, some of them you may not of and how they may or may not have influenced your life as a Ranger. Ah...name such as Homer Garrison.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well of course Homer Garrison was the Director when I went to work in 1951 and when I get to thinking back sometime, this department wasn't but 16 years old when I went to work though. Cause it was created in 1935. And ah...it was kind of a...you might say a fairly new organization. And ah...I...back then you know the Colonel knew most of us by name and ah...of course the Chief of the Highway Patrol was W. J. Elliott and knew us all. Back

ah...ah...there in ah...in Paris when I first went up there, there was only about, oh I guess ten Highway Patrolmen in all of northeast Texas. There was two in Paris, two in Clarksville, and two in Texarkana and two in Mt. Pleasant and two in Kilgore and two in Longview, some in Sulphur Springs and Greenville and that's all the Highway Patrolmen there were in this part of the country.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what about ah...Frank...or ah...did you know Hammer, Frank Hammer, who was....

**MAX WOMACK:** I did not, I just...you know I've just heard of him.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...Lewis Rigler?

**MAX WOMACK:** Known Lewis ever since I went on the Rangers. I always respected Lewis, he's ah...ah...Lewis is a very smart man and ah...ah...I always respected Lewis.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Gonzauillas, Lone Wolf Gonzauillas?

**MAX WOMACK:** I met Captain Gonzauillas ah...more after I got on the Rangers, he was retired then but he'd come to our meetings and he was very interesting to talk to, very gracious, real nice man.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** You mentioned briefly Bob Crowder.

**MAX WOMACK:** Bob Crowder, he had ah...in my estimation he was the best Ranger Captain I ever knew. Of course I didn't work for him but, he retired the day I went to work. But he is a man that's respected , I've never heard not one soul ever say anything derogatory about that man.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...Bob Goss?

**MAX WOMACK:** I didn't know him, I just heard of him.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Charlie Miller?

**MAX WOMACK:** I've heard of Mr. Miller ah...ah...he had ah...I didn't know him personally though.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Okay. Glenn Elliott?

**MAX WOMACK:** Glenn and I are, I guess, as close to be being brothers as anybody I know.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...Captain Allee and the allegations, there was some serious allegations of him in south Texas ah...running this with a...maybe an iron hand and mistreating people, and of course other people swear that he's the greatest thing since, you know, sliced bread, did you know Captain Allee?

**MAX WOMACK:** I knew him ah...ah...he just did a job ah...I did...I never did know him to...to ah...do anything that a lot of other people didn't do.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Are you familiar with the old Ferguson Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, I've heard of...heard 'em talking about....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you ever know any of the old guys?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, I didn't.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...I'd like to get down into some of your cases now. I'll just have to let you lead, let's just start with your Highway Patrol days. I know Glenn Elliott for instance said he's had about as many intriguing cases on the Highway Patrol as he did with the Rangers.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, and you know it's hard to remember back. I..like I say, I spent 3 years in Corpus Christ.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you ride a motorcycle or drive a car?

**MAX WOMACK:** We ah...I drove a car, we rode motorcycles in..in patrol school, but we ah...the only time I ever rode one of them was in a parade or two after I transferred to Paris I

think and we went to Dallas and got 'em and rode 'em in a parade a time or two. But ah...that's the first encounter I ever had with a Ranger, Wylie Williamson was the Ranger in Corpus and he got me to go over on the north beach and get into a club where they was shooting dice. He wanted me to go in undercover and I think Wylie gave me about ten dollars to gamble with. And I got in there and I lost that pretty quick. And I didn't know how I was going to hold 'em and I had my old pistol on and Wylie was going to come at a certain time. Well I kept hem-hawing around there and finally just before he came in well I went broke and they started folding the table up. And ah...I ah...pulled that old pistol out, cause I didn't know, I was just a young rookie officer, and I backed 'em up against the wall, I guess they thought I was probably trying to rob 'em, I don't know. Anyway Wylie came in there and he said, 'Put that damn pistol up'. And ah...we arrested the folks. But I think back sometimes, that was a little foolish of me a pulling that pistol on 'em. But I didn't know what else to do.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well while we're on undercover, let's just continue along that vein, all the way through your career you did quite a bit of undercover work didn't you?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah I guess it's cause I love to play poker so much, Captain and them did, they always sent me off on the gambling stuff, undercover jobs.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Could you discuss some of those?

**MAX WOMACK:** I enjoyed it. Yeah, there's been...ah...been a lot of them ah...right before I retired went to one up close to Denton. I went up there, I poised...told 'em that I was going to put in a motel up there. And ah...went around town there for a couple of days talking to people about what they thought about a motel and even talked to an old woman about buying some...leasing some land from her. Got the word out that I was trying to put a motel in and then I got in with

these people...ah...they'd told me some of the people was gambling there, what places they hung out at and I got to talking to them and finally got the game and went back another...another night or two and they come in and arrested 'em. And there was one old boy in there, he kept telling somebody, he said, 'I believe that guys a Ranger'. And I don't know why cause I didn't look like a Ranger I didn't think. But ah...anyway we got 'em. Gamblers though was always kind of a lot of fun, there wasn't really danger working with them because they was just out there to gamble and I never did wear a gun or anything when you'd go in those places. Because a lot of times they want to search you because they had ah...afraid you'd ....somebody might be going to stick the game up if they let them in there with a gun on 'em, so you couldn't hardly wear a pistol in a...under...wearing a...you know undercover. I remember one time they was going to get me in a game up at Terrell, an old boy was. He knocked on the door and a guy inside hollered, 'Who is it'. And he said, 'It's the law, open up, let us in'. Well you could hear 'em scrambling around in there and in a minute the old boy that running the place looked out there and recognized this guy that was bringing me in. He cussed him, said 'You like to scared us to death'. So we went on in then and gambled there. Liked that deal because I won two or three hundred dollars up there that night and...and ah...G. W., he was the Captain then...

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** G. W.?

**MAX WOMACK:** G. W. Burkes. Told him I needed to back a little bit cause I couldn't remember all those names that I was getting. Cause I wanted to go back and try to win some more money. But he had ah...we had a lot of fun.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** He didn't let you go back?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, we...I think they finally in another day or two raided 'em.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well did they...any comments when they found out the guy was telling the truth, you was the law?

**MAX WOMACK:** I...I never did ah...go back to that...because this was at...up close to Denton that place up there. I think they all finally pled guilty.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** In Captain Clint People's book, he talks about ah...going undercover down at Galveston, out on one of the piers.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And the tremendous difficulty they had because the gambling establishments back in the pier by time the Rangers or the police could get down there they'd have it...everything gone.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you get into any type cases that was really particularly tough like that or....

**MAX WOMACK:** No, most of the places were just ah...oh just kind of a bunch of locals, no big time operations. Usually some woman would get to complaining about her husband losing his paycheck you know. And then they'd have a little old dice game going or a poker game or ah...ah...going and we'd just get in there and mix with 'em and bust it in a day or two.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any particular other cases that you remember that's particularly memorial to the good or to the bad?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, there's ....you know there's been so many on along that I just can't remember all of them.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well when you'd do these undercover's, would you take ah...would you take in marked money or anything or....

**MAX WOMACK:** No, because most of the time we would just go in ah...and kind of case the place and see who was running the game ah...who was taking the money and who was run...if it was a dice game, who the stick man was and where...kind of try to see where they was putting the money when they got it. And then you'd come back later on and then you'd raid 'em. Ah...ah...as far as marked money we'd use theirs, so you'd just ah...wasn't in need for having marked money.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Lewis Rigler talks about....you worked Texarkana, and he talks about it in his book, it was like working the whorehouses and undercover.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, Lewis was real fond of that duty, saying that as a joke, Lewis hated to come up there. Lewis is the only one good at that though. We had one whorehouse up there, the...the women ah...catered to a lot of car dealers. And ah...I guess Lewis, he came up there and he had him a little snap brim hat on and..and ah...some of the other Rangers had tried to get in there but I guess she didn't like their looks, she wouldn't let them in. But Lewis, he was successful of getting in there. And ah...of course all you'd do is go in and all you had to do was just ah...make the date and ah...offer the money to the women, if she started to take the money well then you'd just say, 'I'm with the Rangers and you're under arrest'. And then the other officers would come in. There you never had any trouble with them, they all knew that they was going to get busted once in awhile. But ah.... Lewis ah...I do remember this particular one cause we had a trial down at the Justice of the Peace court there in Texarkana. They tried this old girl for running this cat house and found her not guilty, it didn't take 'em ten minutes to do it, but the

jury...I mean everybody in the courtroom applauded when the jury...when the verdict came back. And it was a waste of time kind of, but ah...we just ah ....they had some pressure from somebody, from somewhere that wanted them to stop the whorehouses.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What other type undercover besides gambling did you work?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh, that's...that's the only type, gambling, prostitution. Oh a time or two I've worked ah.... went ah...went with a little old thief one time over in Dallas under the guise that we had stolen a bulldozer ....no it was a...it was a tractor and we was going to sell it to a guy over there that was buying hot stuff and we sold it to him, him thinking that I was a thief with this other boy.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And what was the outcome of that?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh, I know he got some pen time, I've forgotten what it was.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you work any cases where...concerning a bulldozer? I'm referring to one I think you may have worked with Glenn Elliott?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Could you describe that case and the outcome?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well that was one though where Red and Glenn and....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Red Arnold?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, Red Arnold and Glenn and Bob and myself.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Bob Mitchell?

**MAX WOMACK:** Bob Mitchell. And ah...this old boy had been stealing in Northeast Texas for a long, long time. Stolen several thousands and thousands of dollars worth of property and we had some information that he was going to ah...ah...burglarize a place in Dallas. And he had ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** We've had a short pause here, we've been joined by Dennis Read to assist us from LeTourneau College. Anyway we were talking about this robbery case concerning equipment and I think ya'll had followed him or.....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, we'd had information he was going to burglarize this place and steal a bulldozer.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And ya'll did catch him?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...let's go back now to...that...that pretty well covers this on our undercover. Ah...let's go back now, when you joined the police depart....the Highway Patrol, what kind of equipment were you issued, on the Highway Patrol?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, back then ah...they...of course they furnished you a pistol, a .38 revolver. Ah...you didn't...didn't have...didn't furnish handcuffs, didn't furnish hand...ah...flashlights, just gave you uniforms and a Sam Brown belt and a pistol. We drove cars ah....they were plain vanilla, they ah... didn't have sun visors, didn't have heaters ah...didn't have armrest, they just came more or less naked from the ....from the plant.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did they have two-way radios?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, we had two-way radios. They had what they called an AM radio then, we had a pole on the back of 'em and you'd ah...but the radios got a ....pretty quick after I came on we went to FM radios or I guess that's what they call 'em. But anyway, the radio system got a little bit better shortly after I came on.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Was you as concerned then as you would be today, being a Highway Patrolman you never know what kind of nut is going to be sitting in that car, especially today, was that as big a concern back in the '50's as it is today?

**MAX WOMACK:** You know I don't suppose ah...of course you know you're cautious but ah...you don't...you just don't think about that every time you stop somebody. Of course at night if you're...especially if you're working by yourself, and you stop a car load of folks well...or just one for that matter, you... you know, you watch 'em close. You don't who you're stopping ever. I've worked in a...well like I say Corpus 3 years and then in Paris for 15 years and ah...a lot of that work up there we worked by ourselves and ah...worked the Oklahoma border. And it was wet in Oklahoma, you could buy beer over there and none of Northeast Texas was wet. So on the weekend a lot of people came over there and would get drunk in Oklahoma. Made a lot of wrecks, had to just...you had to stay up all night Saturday night, you just couldn't go to bed.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you develop profiles ah...I know ah...a lot of police on the drug runners today, they kind of have a profile, you know what's his car, you know that kind of fits the profile, so you had bootleggers then?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, that was...like they chase dope now a days, we chased bootleggers then. I knew ah...two or three that lived over in Hugo, Oklahoma that ah...hailed whiskey out of East Texas, they'd come down to Gladewater and Longview, get whiskey and carry it back Oklahoma. And I remember one old boy, I know his name but I...I wouldn't want to call it, but wore a big black hat and always drove a Mercury car. And he had ah...I'd see him Paris, and he say, 'I'm going to be coming back through here one of these nights'. He was kind of friendly with us, but we did chase him a time or two and caught him one time. But he was ah...his wife

would run with him and she'd ah...either run in front or behind and if they'd see the patrolman or meet....see that the officers was after them well she'd let him get in front and then she'd swerve out in front of you if you tried to get around her and ah.. they had a pretty good team.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well did ah....did you have a profile up on a certain type...other than a person whom you didn't know, say that's suspicious looking, that kind of fits a profile of a kind of a bootlegger.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, back then car....they'd ah...put heavy duty springs on cars and when they didn't have the load in there it would sit up high in the rear end, and when it was down well you could ah...you'd...you'd notice that.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...you said when you....they issued you your uniform, when you....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** .....how many uniforms did they issue? Did they issue summer and winter uniforms or both?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, well no, I think when I first went on we wore a wool shirt year round. Cause I know down there in Corpus it was hot as the blazes. And you had to wear tie and then a Sam Brown belt with that strap across it. And it seemed like that was the hottest thing about it. But you'd.....say you worked at night well you'd take a bath and put that thing on in the hot summer time, you'd be wringing wet with sweat by the time you had it on til a minute.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Then the itching would start.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What ah....

**MAX WOMACK:** But those....you know our uniforms I think then were the prettiest uniforms they ever had. They were blue and the pants were gray and had a pinstripe....or strip down the side of them and we wore caps then and ah....had a big shield on it. I never....the thing about that shield, I'll tell a little story on myself, I lived there at Talco and.... and ah....after I got up old enough to run around well we ah....three of us went down to....came down here to Gladewater one night Honky Tonking. Going back well...I had....I was working in the oil field then, I was laying down in the back seat asleep and the old boy driving was driving too fast, Jay Mayes up at Mt. Pleasant stopped us. And ah....I was asleep and he came around there and...and shook me and I thought these boys was trying to wake me up, they'd been hitting the brakes and making me roll off in the floor, and I thought it was them playing with me and I said....and Jay was shaking my leg and he said....and I said ah....'If you don't quit that I'm going to knock the what out of you'. And he said, 'I'll be the last time you do'. And I looked up and all I could see was that badge on that shield on his head. And it got my attention pretty quick. I got out and Jay used to laugh about that when I'd see him. Also I got this ear cut off in a car wreck, Jay made the wreck. In fact ah...ah...they'd covered me up for dead and old Jay come out there and saw my chest moving under the blanket and ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How'd the car wreck happen?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...driving too fast, I was going to school over there at Arlington then, coming home for the Easter holidays. And ah...I turned a '39 Ford over and fortunately it didn't kill anybody, hurt a bunch of us, but it cut this ear off. I've told a lot of stories about that ear though, about different things that happened to me.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well I've talked....to be quite honest with you, I've talked to four or five different people and they've got four or five different stories. I said, 'What's he doing a Dizzy Dean, giving everybody an exclusive', you know. Ah.... when...when....as a patrolman, to get on the Highway Patrol, did you have to take certain tests, did you have to do ....qualify....how often did you have to qualify on the....say the pistol like we're doing here today, pistol range and things?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...you had to take a test ah....there was a lot of folks trying to get on then. I remember going over to Tyler and gosh there was I guess a couple hundred people over there taking the test to get on the Highway Patrol. You had to take a written test. And if you passed that well then they came out and investigated you. This same Jay Mayes I was talking about, he and Charles Farecloth came to Talco and the day that he came to interview me, we'd just pulled a wet string of tubing and that's when you ....when the tubing ....the well....the oil comes out, gushes around you and I had oil all over me and he said ah....wanted to know why I wanted to get on the Highway Patrol. And I said, 'Well this is one of the reasons'. Cause....but you know it was a good paying job. I've al....I've looked back, I wished I'd of stayed with Humble or sometimes I did think I'd been better monetarily. But I've enjoyed this life though.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What....when you joined the Highway Patrol, what was your pay?

**MAX WOMACK:** I believe it was ah....believe it was \$265.00 a month.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And did you get any extra pay for ah....like you worked some undercover and what not, did that pay extra?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, that didn't pay anything extra. No and back then we worked six days a week too. We didn't start getting two days a week off until I'm kind of thinking maybe it was in

the '60's, might of been, I'm not for sure. But I think it was ah....when we....when we worked on the Highway Patrol it was six days a week. And you worked a substation, during the week you work ah...worked days. Of course you was on call at night if something happened. And then on the weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday well you worked at night. When I first went to Paris there was another fella there with me, Murray Chapman, and he and I worked together about a year and then he quit and went into the trucking business and then I worked about a year by myself. And ah....then another fella, James Ray, came and we worked there for I guess ten years together.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Is that Jim Ray?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, it was James Ray, he was no kin to Jim. And then I think now they've got a Sergeant and four or five men up there. But it was...it was....ah...you worked a lot by yourself then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Were you ever involved in any of the Hollywood type high speed chases?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, there in Oklahoma, chasing those people coming back from Oklahoma, had a lot of...of....had to wreck several cars, run in to them purposely to get 'em to stop, they'd you know, be driving so that you was afraid they'd hit somebody head on, you have to force 'em off the road. They'd be so drunk they wouldn't know what they was doing.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any....

**MAX WOMACK:** Or trying to get away from you too.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any notable chases?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, I just remember a lot of them. I remember this Murray Chapman, the last night that he worked, we got after an old boy and we had finally....I ran into the side of him

and turned him over there in town in Paris. And Murray said, 'Thank God this is the night I'll have to do this'.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Anything else while you was in the Highway Patrol that we should ah....record for history?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh you know, I don't know the....back then there wasn't ah....I...all the time I was in Paris I think they had two armed robberies. And one of 'em an old boy from Oklahoma came down there and we got .....set up a road block and he got loose and we caught him out there on the railroad track, I never will forget. He was laying just on the side and me and another deputy was standing there talking, we'd been looking and I said, 'I don't whether we're ever going to find that old boy'. And that deputy, I noticed he was looking at the ground and he looked up at me and kind of looked back and there the old boy was laying right down beside us and we couldn't even see him. Had his hands just like that. And then another one that ah...I was playing and my brother-in-law came out to the golf course and he said....just as we was finishing up on #9 and he said, 'Max', said, 'Wanda's been hurt'. And I said, 'What happened'. And he said, 'She was in a armed robbery and the guy knocked her in the head'. So we of course took off and went to the hospital to see about her. And she had a gash in the top of her head, it's when our son was a baby. She'd gone into the store to get something and a couple of little old thugs out of Dallas came over to Paris to rob it and she was walking back toward the front of the store, well one of 'em put the pistol in her stomach and said, 'This is a robbery lay down'. And she was scared and just pushed away from him and when she did well he hit her in the head. And ah...they got caught that night.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah....what ah....what made you....what was the circumstances surrounding you becoming a Texas Ranger? How did you become a Texas Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, like I'd said earlier just I'd always wanted to be, just made an application and ....and ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well what was your rank? Did Rangers have the same rank as a Highway Patrolman?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, ah...ah...a Ranger drew kind of what a Highway Patrol Sergeant.....the same pay a Highway Patrol Sergeant. They were ah....just a step above a Private in the Highway Patrol.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** So you were a Sergeant in the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well no, I was a Private in the Rangers. I mean...I'm talking about a Highway Patrolman, a Ranger makes Sergeants pay, same as Highway Patrol Sergeant. But.....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What was that pay at that time?

**MAX WOMACK:** Gosh ah.... it was around \$600.00 a month, when I went on the Rangers I believe it was around \$600.00 a month.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And did you get furnished anything being a Ranger?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah....we....later on we got a clothing allowance, I've forgotten, it was another year or so after I went on the Rangers we got ah.....gosh I've forgotten how much it was now. We got it in....every three months I think and I've ....I've forgotten how much it was.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well did Rangers have uniforms?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, we ah....yeah one when they first started getting this Ranger allot....this clothing allowance ah....we all bought a Gabardine suit, a regular coat and pants and then a kind of a Ike looking jacket.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Was that required or .....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, everybody....we had to buy them with that first money.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And who...who was the Captain when you went....

**MAX WOMACK:** Captain Peoples was Senior Ranger.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Clint Peoples?

**MAX WOMACK:** He was the Senior Ranger Captain then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And you were part of Company B?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah and Bill Wilson was our Captain.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And ah...were you furnished a car?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, furnished a car. And your weapons ah...they furnished you a .357 Magnum, but most of us all carried a .45 pistol, it's kind of a.....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Revolver or automatic?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...automatics.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And what about....you said when you joined the Highway Patrol they didn't even furnish you your handcuffs, did the Rangers furnish the handcuffs?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, they had....by that time they'd started giving you a little bit more equipment.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What other types of armament did you have?

**MAX WOMACK:** You had a shotgun and a rifle, I believe I had a 30/30 rifle and ah...later on we got AR15's and they had 30.06's and ah....ah....I think the Rangers, I think they furnish them .45's now.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And going back I'm sure you've already said this, but what year did you join the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** In 1969.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And you retired in?

**MAX WOMACK:** '89

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah....would you describe the East Texas Merry-Go-Round.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, that was....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Of course that may have been before your time.

**MAX WOMACK:** .....just a little bit before my time....just.....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Okay.

**MAX WOMACK:** .....but I...I know about it. I've talk to some of 'em that's been on it.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Okay.

**MAX WOMACK:** But ah....it this.....they ah....get an old boy and arrested in one place and they'd just haul him around all over the country. Ah....maybe evading the lawyers or evading somebody trying to get him out of jail or let letting him clean up his business in different places.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah....when you were a Ranger, were you answerable to a Highway Patrol.....you were a Private....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** ....Ranger Private, were you answerable to a Highway Patrol Sergeant or .....

**MAX WOMACK:** No.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** .....you were answerable only to a Ranger.

**MAX WOMACK:** Rangers. We took our orders directly from the Rangers.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** So if a Highway Patrol Captain said, 'Ranger I want you to go do this'. Theoretically you could tell him to take a hike.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, if that situation ever came up, it...you know it never did, but ah....the ah....only time you might have something like that would be at a .....well I'm ....I'm thinking about maybe today, you know if they go to Houston for this flood....watching the....helping control the rioting....I mean not rioting, but looting and stuff down around the floods there well, I'm sure if a Ranger .....I mean a Highway Patrol Captain would come up to a Ranger and ask him to do something you'd probably do it, but you know....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** But the key there is ask, he couldn't order?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...you were a Private when you joined the Rangers, what rank were you when you retired?

**MAX WOMACK:** We was still Privates when I retired. They make.....they're all....all Rangers are Pri....are Sergeants now, but we....we were just all called Privates then, except one Sergeant in each company and one Captain in each company.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Lewis Rigler has very strong feelings about the Ranger Private no longer existing ah....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah cause Lewis always prided himself of being the Senior Ranger Private. And ah...that's what he was up until he retired.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...how many Ranger districts is there?

**MAX WOMACK:** Six.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And there's.....

**MAX WOMACK:** And six Ranger Company's.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And Company A, B, C, D, E and F.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah. Company A is in Houston, B in Dallas, ah...ah...well D is Waco, ah....I'm not sure San Antonio....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well the F...F.....

**MAX WOMACK:** San Antonio ah...Midland and Lubbock are the other Ranger Company's. I don't know what their numbers are.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** I think Waco is F isn't it?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, Waco's F, yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what Captains did you serve under?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, Bill Wilson ah...ah...ah...Clint Peoples was the Senior Ranger Captain and ah...Bill Wilson was the Captain. He had just made Captain, he took Bob Crowder's place, when Bob retired Bill took his place. And then ah....after Bill ah...went....he went to Austin and then ah...ah...G. W. Burkes came and then ah....James Wright.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Of those three, which was your favorite?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well ah....I always had a....Bill was real nice to me and he was the one that kind of started me out. And of course James is a good friend of mine and....and G. W....I've known G. W. for years and years, I...I....

**DENNIS READ:** When they became....moved up to Captain, was that....generally did they become Captain from Sergeant?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**DENNIS READ:** And it would have been within the same Company normally?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, usually they'd send 'em to another Company. Ah...it's according to where the vacancy was. But ah.. ah...I'm trying to think of someone that made Captain and stayed in the Company ah....unless Bob Mitchell, he was Sergeant in Austin and then he made Captain and he was a Captain in Waco, which is....Austin is in the Waco Company. Ah...ah...

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Wasn't....

**MAX WOMACK:** .....and I'm sure there's some other....but most went....when you made....say you were a Sergeant and you made Captain and you went to another Company.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** When did they introduce lieutenant?

**MAX WOMACK:** It was after I retired and I can't remember, I don't know when it was.

**DENNIS READ:** When you retired there were still Privates correct?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes. There was....

**DENNIS READ:** Ah....do you ah....from your knowledge was there any impact on the Rangers ah...when they eliminated the rank of Private?

**MAX WOMACK:** I'm not sure I even know what you mean. Do you mean did they....what they thought about it or.....

**DENNIS READ:** Did it change.....

**MAX WOMACK:** I don't....it didn't change anything ah....and it's my understanding ...I...I don't know what the organization is now of ah....the Rangers used to come under the Chief of Criminal Law Enforcement. Ah....but now they...I think they answer directly to the Governor's office, is my understanding. Ah....used to be the Rang....the Criminal Law..... Chief of Criminal Law Enforcement was over the Rangers, the Intelligence, the Narcotics, the vehicle theft and those ....those criminal investigative units. But now the Rangers are a unit themselves. I mean, I think they work under the Director, I said the Governor a while ago, under the Director, under his supervision directly.

**DENNIS READ:** The position of Lieutenant then basically just replaced the old position of Sergeant.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, just jumped everybody from a Private to a Sergeant, those that were Privates to Sergeants and the Sergeant made Lieutenant. And that's...that's basically what ah....what happened.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And then what are the duties of the Senior Captain?

**MAX WOMACK:** He just ah...supervises the six field Captains and then you have an Assistant Senior Ranger Captain too.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And speaking of the Supervisor, the Colonel, what was the ah....what was it like when you have a legend like Homer Garrison, serving under Garrison and then to Pat Spear because Garrison was obviously a legend in the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well of course I...you know, have known Pat and he was a....he was a personal friend of mine and ah...he was a very capable person. Ah....I had the privilege of

working with Leo Gossett. He ah...Leo Gossett was a Highway Patrolman when I first knew him, he was one of the later Directors too. He and I worked together in Corpus Christi and ah....and then later on he went to San Antonio and made Sergeant and then came back to Corpus and I worked for him, he was my Sergeant. And then later on he made Captain and came to Dallas and I worked for him then. And ah....you know, he was just ah....I rode in the Highway Patrol car with him, we....we were friends and ah....he was a good.....good leader too.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did ah...as a....when you joined the Rangers did you have a special Ranger badge or was it just a normal State of Texas?**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah we have the badge that everyone wears, it's just a...it's the badge that they issued us.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And you said they issued a .357 Magnum to you.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What if you wanted...and you said most of you carried .45 automatic's, could you pick your own weapon?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And did you have to qualify on a pistol range with that .357 State issue or did you just have to qualify with what you carried?

**MAX WOMACK:** It's ah....it...what you carried mostly, but we...we did...we shot the Magnum and the .45.

**DENNIS READ:** You said you applied for the Rangers ah....what was the basis that was used to select Rangers out of the Highway Patrol?

**MAX WOMACK:** As I explained a little earlier to Bobby it ah....ah....back then you...ah...when I went on you mostly ....you went on under a recommendation of someone. And they did have an oral interview. But I knew I'd got on the Rangers before I ever went down to that oral interview, so....and I'm sure some of the others did.

**DENNIS READ:** Who was your sponsor?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** We....we've already covered that Dennis. Ah....ah...were you involved in any of the...the ah...Lone Star Steel strikes?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...as a Highway Patrolman and as a Ranger ah...during the a...the '58 strike I was on the Highway Patrol in Paris and we had to come down and work on it. And then ah...then the '68 strike I was still on the Highway Patrol, but then after I went to that area working as a Ranger we still had some little wildcat strikes every once in awhile.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What was it...let's see was the '58 strike that was particularly nasty?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, that's the one that I think had more problems then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Could you explain...or discuss your involvement in that.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, of course mine was a Highway Patrolman, we just...I think I worked at night all the time. And we tried to stop people that was out late at night and find out who they were. You'd have a bombing or a shooting into a house or shooting into a car or tacks thrown on the road or....or some kind of harassment every night. Ah....you had some kind of trouble and we tried to just see who all was out at night, kind of maybe figure out who was doing some of this stuff.

**DENNIS READ:** Was the investigation primarily ah...under the auspices of the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** The Rangers did the criminal investigation, you know say you had a bombing or...or any of this other stuff they'd....they'd make....they'd follow up on it.

**DENNIS READ:** What ah...Ranger was in charge of the one in '58?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...Captain Crowder.

**DENNIS READ:** What other Rangers were involved?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh gosh, they ah...all of Company B there...was there, but then they brought Rangers in from all over the State, because they stayed down there for several months. And ah...the local Rangers ah... here local, they just stayed up there all the time, but ah...to get a little relief they'd bring in Rangers from other parts of the State.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you ah...did you work any of the...ah the Kil...ah...Kilgore slant hole?

**MAX WOMACK:** No ah...I did...I didn't, I was stationed in Paris then, but I don't think I ever came down here on any of that.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...this was before your time but it was in your territory, did ah...in your own words just describe to us the events of and the aftermath of the ah...famed Texarkana Phantom murders of 1946.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well that happened in '46, of course that was the year I graduated from high school. But I remember up there then of course us boys courting girls you couldn't hardly get a girl to go park with you anywhere cause they was afraid the Phantom killer would get you. But ah...that ah...after I went Paris there was...I mean after I went to Texarkana ah...was involved in it some. But ah...that was the deal where there was a man, I think there was actually four people killed, and maybe another girl raped. And then ah...they had another shooting over in Arkansas that some people attributed to the Phantom killer but there was a consensus up there that ah...that

ah...that really wasn't...they don't think it was the Pha....think it was more or less of a family affair. But the Phantom killer, the one they called the Phantom killer, there was four people killed and one girl raped.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** We had to make a quick stop there to turn our cassette over. Ah...well to this day there's many people...to this day no one was ever charged with the Phantom killings. Ah...you knew Lone Wolf Gonzauillas, of course that has been....was his most frustrating case, he was never able to solve it. Ah... did he ever speak of it to you?

**MAX WOMACK:** Just ah...I'm sure that we talked about it, of course he had already retired, but ah...I don't...he ....I don't think he ever really expressed to me who he...who he said he thought did it. There's been one man up there that ah...some people over on the Arkansas side ah...said that they were pretty sure he did it, but ah...in fact ah...one of the officers on that side got me after I went up there as a Ranger to interview the girlfriend or common law wife of the man that they all highly suspected about these...to find out what she knew about it. She allegedly had ah...he had allegedly confused to her that he was the Phantom killer. But I found her and talked to her and put her on a polygraph and poly...she said she didn't know any....the man never did confess anything like that to her. She said he was a petty thief but said that ah...in her opinion he didn't....he wasn't the one that did it, he didn't tell her about it if he did. And ah....through the years different ones ah...they would ah...bring a gun to you and want to run the ballistics on it, see if it might of been the one that did it, but that's about the extent of the investigation I've had with it.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Max, on a case like this where the person has never been captured or charged, is the case officially still open?

**MAX WOMACK:** I suppose any murder case, or any case that the....where there's not a statute of limitations ah...where there's...you know murder there's no statute of limitations, it's good from now on. Ah... robbery or something like that you know, no need working on that cause after 20, 30 years because if you've caught somebody you couldn't convict 'em of it. But murder you could and ah...ah.. but it's just common sense will tell you, you know this case what's close to 50 years old. The victims were probably in their late teens or early....or middle teens or maybe a little older, but ah... and probably the perpetrator would have to be at least 80 or 90 years old now, probably dead.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah....Max, I've talked to some of the other Rangers and they've just said well you might ask Max about this or ask Max about that so, I'm going to ask Max about this and that. One of them was that you were involved in a manhunt with the Louisiana police involving some killers from Minden, Louisiana, do you remember any of....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, ah.....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Could you describe the background of that case and the outcome.

**MAX WOMACK:** Those guys had ah...had been in jail over there in ah....oh it was over close to Shreveport, I've forgotten the name of the county and ah...they had broken out of jail and ah...went into a private residence and killed a man and his wife. And ah...they had gotten as far as over in our area and we got word they were in our area and we looked for 'em for several...people kept saying they was seeing 'em. And it was during the cold winter time and they were in that area for about 10...10 days. What I'm talking about cold weather. And then finally....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well when was this, what year do you remember about what year?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...it's going to probably have been 10 years ago.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Okay.

**MAX WOMACK:** And ah....then finally ah...we ah...one of...couple of Louisiana officers were with me and we got a call that some people had seen a man and a woman. One of these old boys, after he got out of jail came through Vivian and picked up his girlfriend and they had stayed in the woods there close to Par....or Atlanta all this time, those 10 days. And someone saw 'em cross the road, as it happened right out close to where I live. And ah...we went out there and I ride motorcycles some and I'd ridden those roads all around through there and knew 'em real well and we got a bunch of officers out there and got 'em circled, we got 'em stationed around this place right quick. Got 'em sealed in and then ah...got a helicopter over there and got some bloodhounds out of Louisiana and fortunately caught... caught the old boy and girl. And the other old boy he had caught a plane and they caught him in California. And both of them got...they've both been executed, they killed them in Louisiana.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And they have been executed since?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes, they've been executed since then.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you work ah...or question or work...or involved in anyway with Henry Lee Lucas, the mass killer, supposed mass killer?

**MAX WOMACK:** Had Henry Lee on one case up there, he ah...he ah...I kind of believe he probably did it because he pointed out the place. But he said that it was a...ah...ah..a ah...a black man that he killed and it was a white man that ran the store. And I don't know whether he just....but he described the...he...he knew what kind of weapon it was and ah...and he pointed the place out. But he said it was whi...a black man that he killed and it was...it was a white fella.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How many people....

**MAX WOMACK:** So we didn't....we didn't clear this case with him, we just....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How many people did Lucas claim to have killed?

**MAX WOMACK:** Gosh I don't know, I...that was my only direct conversation with him was that day.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Rangers got a lot of bad press for the way they allegedly bungled the Henry Lee Lucas case. Any comments?

**MAX WOMACK:** I don't ah...I...I...you know I didn't handle him all that...the only times I've handled him was that one time and we just got him and...and put him in the car and just started riding. And we wouldn't just drive right to a place where something happened, right try to let him guide you. And that's the way he did us up there that day, was just took us...we were in Jefferson and he carried us on back up to ah...where this...it happened on 155 and pointed out the place.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...we covered you pretty on your undercover case, there's one undercover case we didn't talk about, involved you I believe and Glenn Elliott and Jim Gant on some cockfights that has an amusing ending to it. Would you relate that stories to us.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah ah...Glenn and I had went in there to ah...be the people who was going to see who all was running the show and everything.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Where....where was this at?

**MAX WOMACK:** Somewhere over there over south of Dallas, I forgot where it was. Anyway we...we arrested these people, they was kind of ah...first cock fight I'd ever been to and they ah...didn't allow any drinking there but they ah...said ah...the guy got up and made an announcement. He said, 'Is there any of policemen in the audience'. No...of course nobody

admitted they were and then he said, 'Is there anybody here for this society for the prevention of cruelty of animals'. Nobody said anything. And he said, 'Well let's fight these chickens'. So they fought 'em for awhile there and then we had some officers came in and we announced that we were officers and arrested 'em.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How did you handle your announcement that you were an officer?

**MAX WOMACK:** Just got up, took over the mike from the guy and told 'em that this was...the fighting was over, that this is the end of the chicken fights....ah...to not run cause there was a whole bunch of folks there. But anyway another funny thing that happened with that, Glenn...Jim Gant was a new Ranger then and Glenn had...Glenn had a .380 pistol that Jim didn't know he had and Glenn came out of a rest room and had been in there and he told old Gant, showed him that .380 and said, 'Look what I found'. Said, 'Someone threw this down in there'. And Gant said, 'My lands'. Said, 'Nobody will ever claim that thing'. He just thought Glenn had found him a .380.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did anybody ever tell Gant different?

**MAX WOMACK:** I don't think so.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** So to this day he probably still thinks somebody found a .3....Glenn found a .380. Ah...tell us about some of your other cases.

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh, gosh I....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any murder cases?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, there was one that ah...a fella from Dallas, he and his wife had been off up in Arkansas on a vacation and they'd gotten into a little tiff with one another and they had a motor home. And ah...they had...they were up at Hot Springs, had a small child. And they

ah...he got mad and he just pulled off the side of the road there in Hot Springs and she walked on off down the street. And he laid down and took a nap, he and the child, and ah...after awhile he got up and started looking for her, driving around, couldn't find her. And he looked for her for several hours there and went to the police and told 'em what happened and they thought it was just, you know, a man and woman having an argument. So he did all he could to look for her, so he just went home, drove on back to Dallas. And he had...he spent the night I think on the way back home...or...I can't remember for sure. Anyway ah....the girl...the woman didn't show up, he...he went on home. The next day she did call his son, ah...he had been married previously, called his son and told him to tell him that ah...she had met some people from ah...there at Hot Springs and they were going....she was going to ride home with them to...they were coming through Dallas, and she was going to ride home with 'em. Well she didn't show up at home. And then the next day they found a purse belonging to this woman on the highway up close to New Boston. And they called me over there to...to run it down because usually that's when they'd call the Rangers when something was away from somewhere, this ah...they'd want us to work on it because we was on....we had...we traveled or could get somebody away from it to work on it. And ah...ah...I contacted these ah...this purse had the girls name and address and everything in it and I contacted her husband and he came over to New Boston and he told me what had happened. And ah...we went to Hot Springs, he and I did, and did some checking and...and ah...and found out where that she had stayed in a motel there. And ah...ah...I...I kind of...I ...no let's see, the first trip we made up there we couldn't...we did...we couldn't find out where she was, but I was kind of suspicious of him. So I had him...run him on the polygraph and he you know, cleared that he hadn't really done anything to his wife. Then we went back to Hot Springs

and that's when we found out that...where she'd checked in to this motel and...and one of them had gotten the license number of the car that...of the people that she'd been seen with. And anyway, after a bunch checking between Arkansas officers and myself we finally found out who the old boy was and he was an escaped convict from over in Tennessee and he'd killed three other women on this....I think he was one of our first serial killers. He killed three other women and he's still in the penitentiary over there, I believe in North Carolina.

**DENNIS READ:** How was he captured?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...finally he tried to kill a policeman I think up in Pennsylvania somewhere when they stopped him, but we...we'd identified who he was and ah...and ah....they ah...had a warrant out... issued for him. He had ah...initially he'd gotten out of the pen, he was a...one of these service clubs would take people out of the penitentiary and take 'em around and let them make talks to the civic groups and things to ah...tell how life in the penitentiary was or this, that and the other. And he was a con artist and he...this person that took him out, this person that belonged to this civic group, he stole his car. They'd take 'em out and keep 'em overnight and let 'em stay in a motel or something and he stole his car and then took off and killed these other women and then killed this lady, she was from Dallas. And ah...I became pretty good friends with her husband through the years and he's passed away now.

**DENNIS READ:** Where was the body found?

**MAX WOMACK:** It was found....ah...I didn't tell that, later on the bod....the....we looked all along for this....where they found this billfold there in New Boston, looked for several miles there and then about two weeks later her body was found just over in Arkansas there in Texarkana. And ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What time of year was this?

**MAX WOMACK:** It was in the summer time.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** She was in pretty bad shape.

**MAX WOMACK:** Badly decomposed. And ah...he ah...he had ah...the girl that was with him she ah...confessed to it and told that he had raped the woman and killed her, shot and killed her and threw the pistol out and they finally found the pistol later on....later years, found ....or a year or so later found it on the side of the highway.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What other cases?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh I worked, you know, a lot of murders and .....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any in particularly extremely say gruesome that ah....or revolting or .....

**MAX WOMACK:** No, you know I've worked on ones where people have done hideous things to people but....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any of them ah....humorous? It's hard to imagine sometimes crime being humorous but ah....there's sometimes humorous twists to .....

**MAX WOMACK:** No, there's been a lot....I know one time when I was on the Highway Patrol they got a call, they said they'd sent an ambulance to a mobile home out north of Paris and we went out there and the ambulance got there about the same time we did, went in the door and there was a woman sitting in a ....on a couch down to the right of the door there and ah....her husband was laying in the floor right in front of us. And the ambulance people were getting around there trying to get in, he...he wasn't....he was still conscious, he'd been shot. And I looked at the woman and I said ah...'Lady what did you shoot him with'. I said....and she said, 'A pistol'. And I said, 'Where is it'. And she said, 'It's back yonder in the back room'. And then

I was kind of stepping back to let the ambulance people get him on the stretcher and I looked back at her and she come up with the pistol and shot herself in the head and killed and herself right there in front of all of us. But ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Max did you ah....one thing we didn't cover, when you joined the Rangers and I guess this could go through to today, how were you assigned cases, or did you pick your own cases?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh when you get on the Rangers ah...in the Country Rangers, you are assigned two or three counties. Like I worked Bowie County, Cass and Marion County. And you just ah...they kind of just throw you to the dogs, you just get out and...and ah...start knowing the officers, visiting around with 'em and ....and ah...just working with 'em. There was always....you know in three counties there's something happens everyday just about. And that's where the name Ranger, you know you range around and you just ah...you just get to working with the different people and ah...ah....say they're stealing Texarkana....stealing in Texarkana well, maybe they're living in Cass County or living somewhere else and you just ah....you hear about people doing something in one place and they're doing it in another and you just try to ah...ah...work around and work with the various agencies that are involved in things.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well you worked Bowie, Marion and Cass County.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** If you had a case to ah...brought you to Gregg County ah...would you have to clear it with Glenn Elliott the Ranger assigned down here before you worked down here?

**MAX WOMACK:** You'd ah...that's just kind of ah....customary, if you're going to come into another Ranger's area you'd tell him that you're going to be down there or if you didn't

really....say you just going to come down and interview a witness or something or ah....you know it wouldn't be any need of him going but ah...you always let 'em know because if something happened when you was in his area you know, you'd just rather them know that you're there.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How was it ah....did you have your local Sheriff's and local city police departments, were they usually cooperative or were they jealous or .....

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh, most of the officers that I've always worked with you know, had a pretty good ah....get along with everybody. We always had good working conditions.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well did you have to....would you have to clear it with the Chief of Police or the Sheriff when you worked in their county?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, we didn't have to, but you'd ....you always made a point to let the Sheriff know what was going on because he had to get elected. And you know, the State pays us whether or not we clear the case or not. And ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** So you'd let.....

**MAX WOMACK:** If you worked on a case and somebody got their name in the paper it was a good idea to let the Sheriff be the one that get his name in the paper. Ah...because you know he depends on people electing him.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** So you're saying there's cases where a Ranger may have actually solved the case but the Sheriff got the credit.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, I'm not going....you know I wouldn't even want to say that, because there's....I've worked with so many good Sheriff's that ....that ah...you know you just have....sometimes you can just have good luck and catch somebody when you really hadn't done

much on the case. But ah....it's just that ah...you....I just never did want to work on a case that the Sheriff didn't know about it or the Chief of Police either one.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** You were kind of unique where you were at, Bowie, Marion and Cass, you had what, two or three Arkansas, Louisiana, maybe Oklahoma adjoining states.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did that ever create problems or create unique situations ah....I don't guess any other Ranger anywhere in the State, in fact I know there wouldn't have any other Ranger in State where you had.....maybe worked with three different states, possibly on the same case.

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah....I just, you know, I worked a lot in Arkansas and a lot in Louisiana. But ah....in fact the Chief of Police made me ah...ah....city policeman in Texarkana, Arkansas, gave me a commission over there, probably wasn't worth anything but he ah....see you know legally ah....you can't carry a gun in another state even though you're a Texas Ranger or whoever you are, you can't legally carry a gun in another state. Ah...everybody does but .....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well, let me ask you when....speaking about the state, say you had a case that required you to go to Billings, Montana or ....or Bangor, Maine or anywhere USA, did you have to get the Captain's permission to go or someone's permission?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, you ....you had to ah....let the....I believe the rule was you had to let the Director know that you were leaving the state, it might have been the Captain, I don't....you'd....you'd....you'd need to tell the Captain that you were going somewhere. A lot of times they'd say.....you'd call Bill or Captain Crowder or somebody like that and say, 'Captain I

need to go to Little Rock or something'. And he'd say, 'Well you ought to be half way back , you know, so just go on'.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well would they tell you, okay you could....you're going to have to fly to Seattle, Washington, you can't , you know, here's ....don't spend more than this, did they set dollar amounts on you?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, yeah. In fact sometimes I've been denied ah....permission to go some place, not very many times, but ah....they'd say, 'Well you know budgets a little tight and maybe let the county go ahead and do it'.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well when you were working a case would the Captain or now the Lieutenant in your....in your.....when you were a Ranger, the Sergeant, did they give you much assistance or did they direct you on cases on how to handle cases or did they ....pretty much hands off.

**MAX WOMACK:** Not....not very much ah....very seldom cause you know they....it....we was too wide spread , they couldn't get in ....only thing is if you had a particularly ah...outstanding case that was going to take a lot of people to work on it well of course the Captain would come and supervise the operation or the Sergeant. But ah....just day to day activity you know they just leave you to tend to your own business.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Would you have to submit a budget every year to your Captain and say this is how much I'm going to need in my area?

**MAX WOMACK:** No, the Captains took care of all of that.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...talking...we were mentioning criminals earlier, did you ever ah....come against a sociopath? You know, just a person that just didn't feel anything. Were they

more difficult to work with if you did ah....to work against or I don't know the right terminology maybe but.....

**MAX WOMACK:** I don't know as I've ever you know....I....I've dealt with some people that I don't think had a heart that would....that means about the thing. They just ah...ah...they didn't, you know, didn't really really bother them what they had done. But ah....I don't know as they....

**DENNIS READ:** When you went to work on a case ah....did the case responsibility revert then to the Texas Rangers or was it actually still under the auspices of the city or the county?

**MAX WOMACK:** It was still.... it was their case. We just ah...Rangers just assisted in the investigation, that's our job is to assist in the investigations. Now sometime you've got assignments from Austin on ah....say you had a...a...a state ...a....a...county official or something somebody had requested an investigation on, well you did that on your own. Ah....but ah....burglary's or rapes or murders and robberies and things like that, that was the city or the county, it was their case and all you did was....is to assist them. And you know just working with Detectives and Deputy Sheriff's, you get to be friends with 'em and they know what your job is and you know what theirs is and of course you have arguments and differences of opinion, but you know the....as to how a case may...should be handled sometime. But ....and if it comes down to, it'd probably be .....do it the way they want to do it if the....if ah...because it's....it's their book.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** If you were working with a ah....hypothetical case.....you're working with a Sheriff that you just don't like, it has nothing to do with one particular case, you just don't like this Sheriff. Now he's asked for the Rangers to come in and help and you're there and you're to help, ah....if it came down that the Sheriff is saying, in procedures, criminal procedures of an

investigation, and you totally feel the route he's taking in his investigation is completely wrong, can you say to him, I'm pulling out , the Rangers are pulling, or can you go to your Captain and say this investigation is being handled totally wrong, going down the wrong road, he's white washing , he cut....whatever reason, you just totally feel that this is wrong the way this case, for ever reason, is being handled, what is your options?

**MAX WOMACK:** I'm....I'm sure you could tell the man I am....I'm not going to get involved with it if that's the way you going to do it or you know, if you just thought it was, you know, terribly wrong.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well, would you go to your Captain first?

**MAX WOMACK:** I...yeah, you'd probably....you....you might go ahead and tell him and then tell your Captain later on, but it ....you know , it would six of one, half a dozen of another. Your Captain would support you on that.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you ah....I've talked to other Rangers who said surprisingly you sometimes develop a ah....a pleasant relationship with certain criminals ah....

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** ....that ah...I know Glenn has told me that there's criminals that he put in jail that to this day that ah...they may be out of jail now, that they'll call him up for favors sometimes.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, there.....I've got a .....I guess I'd really call 'em friends, that I've helped sent to the penitentiary that ah....that I know now. In fact there's a ....a guy in jail there in Cass County that I took him out of jail the other day and helped me go ah...ah...move some stuff out of the Ranger Cabin ah....he...he's in prison now ah...that ah....that .....he's just

a....he....his....the reason he got in the prison has always been more or less his families fault. He ah... ah....well he got in trouble when he was a young kid, he ....he ah.....he and a bunch of other kids were down at a place and an older man ah .....was getting on to 'em for making a lot of racket and ....and he ....ah....ah....somebody said, 'Well why don't you shoot at him'. And this boy shot way off some....several hundred yards up there and just happened a slug hit the old man in the chest and killed him. He was...the kid...the boy was about 18 years old. And then ah...later on his ah....his sister was living with an old boy and this boy was beating her and set a fire to her house and this and that and the other and he shot at him, or did shoot him, didn't....didn't hurt him. And he had to go to the pen for that. And ah....but I just know him and you know, he's a friend of mine cause you know he...I felt more or less, he was more or less a victim of circumstance, other than....he didn't...he wasn't a thief.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah....official reports that you have to fill out have changed dramatically, in the early years of this century reports were slim to say the least, one of my favorites happened in the early 1920's with a Ranger named Nat Kiowa Jones and his whole report consisted of ah....he was chasing a rather notorious Mexican outlaw and whole report said...was ah....ah....'Mean as hell, had to kill him'. That was the whole report. And today of course I've used the absurd to point out ....make a point, you know, you had to fill out 763 page report for somebody jaywalking. Ah....do you feel that, you know, the reports are just overdone, totally...especially since we've got this file laying behind you there on the counter on the Texarkana murder case, an extensive file, they were going to burn it when you asked them could....to have it. So do you feel like sometimes when you're filling these ungodly, lengthy

reports out, why am I doing all this when they're just going to throw it away before long anyway.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well of course...yeah...there's a...lot's of paperwork, but ah....since I've retired I've become a DA's investigator and working with the District Attorney as close as I do now I see a need for the paperwork. If we can...if in a criminal case if the officers will provide with where we can locate the witnesses, where we can locate the evidence and have a good, just a good short, clear description of what they've done, that's...that's all the report we need. But ah...but that's where we ah...and the legibility of handwriting ah...ah...a lot of officers can't write very good. But ah...if ah...most of them get their work typed now but ah...if ah...if officers would just....that's really the reports that we need now is just where the evidence is and just a brief description of how they came about doing what they did.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well do you ah...when you were a Ranger, did you have to attend special...what were some of the special courses or classes or schools or training's that you had....as you were a Ranger, like is there reports or...ah...

**MAX WOMACK:** Well of course you had to...you had courses on that ah...then you had homicide investigations ah ....I attended a ah...a ah....I think nearly all the Rangers have to go to it now, a school where they teach you how to ah...identify latent fingerprints and to classify them. And I had ah...I didn't mention earlier, right after I got out of the Army I went to Washington, DC, I went to work for the FBI up there, I was going to go to school at George Washington University and work for the FBI in their fingerprint classification division. And I learned to classify fingerprints up there back in 1948. And in later years that came along to help me. And then I went to these schools and I can classify and identify latent fingerprints. And I've

testified a lot in Courts in regard to comparing what we call the pen packet, where a person has been in the penitentiary and ah...when we would go to Court we have to prove that he's been in the pen to enhance what punishment he's going to get. Say if he's been to penitentiary before for a felony his punishment will be greater because he has been in the pen. And we have to prove that up through his pen...the fingerprint records that he had while he was in the pen and ah....ah...printing and then compare those records and I can testify that he has been in the penitentiary.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** What other special training did you have and for instance today we were out at the pistol range, Kilgore College pistol range and I know you had to qualify twice at your own pistol range. What other things did you have to do to maintain your Ranger status?

**MAX WOMACK:** Ah...they had...ah...every two years I think it is, they have ah...you have updates on the criminal laws ah....different techniques of investigation. There's always interrogation, crime scene search ah... just all aspects of criminal investigation.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did you ever ah...work against the ah...what is commonly called, organized crime, ah...you know the Mafia or..or...

**MAX WOMACK:** No, I don't think....not...the closest thing, in Texarkana there was a...had an old boy up there that financed a lot of people, criminals but ah...he wasn't I don't think what you'd call organized crime.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...which Governor, if any in your memory, would you consider had been a good friend to Rangers and conversely which one was not a good friend of the Rangers?

**MAX WOMACK:** Gosh you know I can't think of any of the....some of them were a little nicer to you when you were with them, hauling them around like we had to do a lot of times, but ah... some of them ....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well I...I'm speaking...speaking more in the terms like Ma Ferguson, I mean, she destroyed the Rangers.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** In the '30's.

**MAX WOMACK:** But ah...gosh I can't even think of the number of Rang...Governors that have been in there ah...I personally liked just about all of them.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...Glenn Elliott, go back Glenn, I think from Dwight Eisenhower through George Bush, Glenn shook the hand or met every sitting President. A lot of them were through the Sam Rayburn funeral.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah I was up there at that deal too.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** How many Presidents did you meet too?

**MAX WOMACK:** I didn't get to shake hands with any of them, saw a bunch of them, but ah...up there that day, I remember that. And then ah...I was in Dallas the day President Kennedy got killed, I was at the Trademark where he was going to make a...make the speech and I was up on the, I guess it was the second floor, they had an arch that went across here and they had the TV camera out in the middle of it. And my job, I was a Highway Patrolman then, was to keep people from coming out there where the television camera was. And I remember we were all standing around there and that guy running the television camera had a headset on and he motioned me to come over there. He said ah, 'Man they're shooting at the President'. I said,

'(unintelligible)...'. So we sat there and he was listening on this headset and ah...he said, 'I think they've shot him'. So he said, 'Gosh we better not say anything'. So we...we just sat there and oh it was a few minutes, I guess it must have been five or ten minutes, I saw somebody come down there, all the people were already there cause he was coming there to make the speech. And I saw a guy come in and he was kind of like wild fire, he told somebody and then they told somebody and it just spread there. And then of course everybody jumped up and had ...you know, milled around. And of course we was in Dallas and didn't know anything about Dallas, we just got out and rode around and didn't even have radio contact with Dallas PD, we couldn't tell what was going on. But we just hung around up there all day and then...then had to come back up there later on, Governor Connolly was of course was in the hospital there and we had to come up and stay with him. I stayed up there about a week I think, stayed in a room next to him. And ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did you become friends with Connolly?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, we'd go in there and talk to him and his wife and they was real nice.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...since you've become an investigator for the DA, you said you can understand the important of reports and so on, with your vast experience as a Highway Patrolman, and 19 years as a Texas Ranger, do the Rangers ever come to you now and say, as a senior advisor and say...to ask for advice or share experiences?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah, once in...after....the Ranger that works in our area now he comes in and he'll say what do you think about this or that or you know, maybe not...not that I'm any smarter than he is but we just you know might discuss it. Or I might tell him what I'd do or ....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...several months ago there was a ah....an explosive shall we say, or very damning article in Texas Monthly on the Texas Rangers, a very unfriendly article we'll say.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what it your thoughts on the ah..."Politically Correct" Rangers of today and the direction that the Rangers are going?

**MAX WOMACK:** Well ah...ah...maybe I don't....are you saying the..the political, getting appointed because of political....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Well, people maybe not being as qualified as they should.

**MAX WOMACK:** Qualified.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Just to meet certain politically correct or you know the....

**MAX WOMACK:** I'm not ah...I don't ah...agree with it ah...I think that a man ought to have...I say a man, now I'm not going to kick the women if they...if they can do the job they can do it, but ah...I think there's a place for a woman in the Rangers if she...I can see where she could do ah...ah...several jobs that ah... that would be beneficial to her being a woman you know. But ah...like I told you, I went on the Rangers ah...ah...Senator Akin, I imagine him saying a good word for me didn't hurt me getting on the Rangers. So I...I wouldn't to kick anybody for...I..I'd be ah...don't think I'd feel to good a saying that maybe you shouldn't use politics.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...what were the...ah...the question is, what were the qualifications that you wanted in a person and if you was coming through a door and you didn't know who was on the other side of that door, from the stand point like I've had one Ranger tell me he said, "The most important thing to me is I want to know that person without one split second hesitation

could pull a trigger if they got to'. When you go through a door would it...would it ta...for this person to become to a Ranger, just to meet quotas or ah...I don't really know how to put it.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well of course you don't know what a person will do either. You might think ah...you could have an old boy 6'6" and weigh 260 pounds and mean and he may not pull that trigger. But ah...you just don't know until the time comes. I think they just need to have experience. One thing, some practical experience arresting people and ah...I'm not going to say that most of the Rangers that they hire even today don't know one thing about criminal investigation when they come into the Ranger service. Cause they been....most of them been Highway Patrolmen. And it's throw you to...kind of throw you to the wolves and let you kind of learn by experience and that's the best way to learn. Because the Highway Patrolman deals primarily with traffic, you do get involved in some criminal investigations, but very little. And ah...it ah...but I just think a person ought to have some experience dealing with people, cause that's what this job all about, dealing with people.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Do ah...do Rangers ah...a few wrap up questions, a popular TV show today is Walker, Texas Ranger, with Chuck Norris, in this he has a partner, do Rangers have partners, on your normal everyday duties?

**MAX WOMACK:** No.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...Max as a young boy running around here ah...Mattie Castlebury, owned Mattie's, she had already sold the Ballroom by the time you were up running around but she had Mattie's Palm Isle in Longview, did you ever go to Mattie's Palm Isle?

**MAX WOMACK:** That was a little bit before my time. I've heard of it.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Dennis you got any questions?

**DENNIS READ:** Ah...what were the primary duties of the Sergeant?

**MAX WOMACK:** He ah...made your...made sure that your reports were in on time, you have to make your reports once a week and he'd go over your reports and see that they were, you know, ah...all right, check your car book, you'd have to send your car book in once a month. Ah...just make sure that you had the equipment that was necessary and that any assignments that ah...that you had that you know, that you were notified about 'em. Ah...just all kinds of duties like that.

**DENNIS READ:** Did the Sergeants ever come out and participate in an investigation?

**MAX WOMACK:** Yes ah...once in awhile they would, especially on something where you were going to...a surveillance or something like that where you needed help well they'd ah...they'd be there.

**DENNIS READ:** What was the selection process to become a Sergeant?

**MAX WOMACK:** They had ah...well back in earlier days they just...the Captain just made somebody, chose someone that he thought would...who he wanted. Then later on they started giving a written test and an oral interview.

**DENNIS READ:** Approximately when did they change to ah...testing and interviewing?

**MAX WOMACK:** I'm going to say...it's in the '50's I think.

**DENNIS READ:** Why did a Sergeant when they were promoted to Captain was it...were they moved to a...ah...different division?

**MAX WOMACK:** Mainly because that's just where the ah...vacancy would be, you know. It was...just didn't seem like it was very often that it would happen that if a...that the Captain was retiring in one Company or leaving for some reason that somebody in that Company would make Captain. There wouldn't be any...I don't guess there was any ah...regulation against it, but I just

can't....and I'm sure there were instances, but I can't think of any. Most of the time they had to move to another Company. But I don't think there was anything to keep 'em from doing it, if you know, if it was a...if it came...just came that way.

**DENNIS READ:** What special training did the Sergeants get ah...to prepare them to become Captains?

**MAX WOMACK:** Just the job, on the job training.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Did...let me inter....did the Rang....did you have to be a Sergeant before you could become a Captain or could you go straight from Private to Captain?

**MAX WOMACK:** I can't think of anybody that ever jumped from Private to Captain. Ah....I'm sure there was back in the older days, but I....not in....not in the times that I can think of. I...I...I really can't think of anyone that ever jumped from Private to Captain without being a Sergeant first.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...did...what was it like when you'd walk into a room and they'd say, 'There's a Texas Ranger'. Because as I say ah...the Governor, the Ranger and somebody else celebrity was there, I think we'd both agree that probably people would want to talk to the Ranger first.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well you know ah....

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** It's a burden to carry in a way.

**MAX WOMACK:** It ah...you know you was proud to be a Ranger and ah...and ah...you could ah...like I've said before, it opens a lot of doors for you. But ah...I always just felt like I really wasn't....really didn't....really maybe....couldn't really fulfill what was expected of me. Cause it...they.... the people do expect a lot of you and ah....it ah...just kind of humbles you.

**DENNIS READ:** Did you have any cases in which ah...as a result of being on the case you suspected or in fact later discovered that ah...that you were dealing with ah...corrupt officers?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh unfortunately I've...I've worked around in a place where we had some corrupt officials or corrupt officers, but ah...that's been very ah...very, very isolated cases.

**DENNIS READ:** Do you remember any incidents?

**MAX WOMACK:** Just that they were thieves ah...it ah...one of them finally got caught up with. Ah...I'm trying to think ah...I remember one time on the Highway Patrol they had a Chief of Police of a little town was ah...selling...back then you could go by the police station and pick up an application for renewal of a driver's license and he was selling to ah...at that time, Mexican people down there for \$2.00 and telling 'em that they had....that was their driver's license. But ah...and then later years I've worked around ah...had some people, officers, that were stealing that we've had to catch.

**DENNIS READ:** If you were in charge of the criminal part of an investigation ah...what training did you have ah... in the area of forensics and related sciences for the handling of evidence?

**MAX WOMACK:** We ah...like I said we ah...had homicide investigation schools. Nearly all the Rangers go to a homicide investigation ah...ah...thing up at the Oklahoma City, University of Oklahoma at...and...at Norman that a bunch of pathologists teach you how to handle homicides you know, what evidence you need and how to prepare it and preserve it and ah....and ah...I think they ah...probably have it in Austin now. But ah...I went through that school shortly after I became a Ranger, they tried to get you into some kind of school like that shortly after you get in the Rangers, to where you know...will know how to handle evidence that'll be submitted to a forensic lab. Used to ah...in the rural areas we did autopsies in the...I'd say at the...you know,

there locally. We'd just go to a funeral home and didn't have a pathologist there in Texarkana we had one come down, he'd come down and we'd do 'em there and you'd be in there with him when he'd do 'em. And now when you have a homicide you send 'em to Dallas to the forensic lab over there, all you do is just bundle 'em up and send 'em over there and let them do it. But we ah....it was....seemed like we learned more back then because we were right in there with him and I learned a lot about anatomy then and about how things...how your body worked and get in there and get to cutting around and ....and seeing how it all worked. (break in the tape)... He just ah...he died from that peptic ulcer and I remember being there when they opened him up and that pathologist showed me there how the ulcer had looked and that it ruptured.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Ah...in today's time could a Lone Wolf Gonzauillas or a Frank Hammer or even a Captain Allee exist?

**MAX WOMACK:** I'm afraid it might ah....from the tales I've heard now, probably wind up in a federal penitentiary if things....if they...if they did the things that they claimed that some of them did. But ah...ah...law enforcement is a whole lot different than what it was even the time that....the 43 years that I've been in it. I remember working with officers that ah...they wouldn't even allow a black person to ride on the same seat with 'em, if they arrested one they'd....instead of putting 'em up in the front with him they'd make him ride in the back seat. I remember of course the black and the white sides of the jails and ah...all of that.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Max, I don't have anything else.

**DENNIS READ:** When did the Texas Rangers ah...become integrated racially?

**MAX WOMACK:** Oh, Lee came to work in our Company before I retired ah....I'm thinking about a year, I believe he did, now I can't remember.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** About 1988 then? You retired in '89.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well I'm...I'm...I've forgotten where Lee came to work then or not ah...

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** But it's been relatively recent.

**MAX WOMACK:** Yeah he was working...he was working when I was...yeah, '87 or '88.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Any comments or anything you'd like to make in general or...I've asked all I want to ask. Dennis, you got anything else?

**DENNIS READ:** No.

**MAX WOMACK:** No, I've enjoyed talking to you.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** And as usual most of you people, whether it's Texas Rangers or New London people, you just don't know anything that you can tell us that we'd be interesting in knowing, you've told us a whole lot.

**MAX WOMACK:** Well, thank you for inviting me.

**ROBERT NIEMAN:** Max I appreciate it, thank you.