

INTERVIEW WITH

CAPTAIN JAMES WRIGHT

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PROJECT:
TEXAS RANGERS

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED AT THE FARM OF
GLENN ELLIOTT
WINDOM, TEXAS
WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 30, 1996

INTERVIEWED BY:
ROBERT NIEMAN
LONGVIEW, TEXAS

Present At Interview: Captain James Wright and Robert Nieman

Later corrections and additions by Captain Wright are in red.

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Captain James Wright
Texas Ranger – Retired

ROBERT NIEMAN: My name is Robert Nieman and this is Wednesday, October 30,1996. We are visiting with Captain James Wright of Hewett, Texas. We are at the farm of Glenn Elliott in Windom, Texas. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Captain Wright's involvement with and in the Texas Rangers. Captain Wright, do I have your permission to record this interview?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes sir.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Captain Wright you understand that this videotape will belong to you and to me?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes.

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

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And what is your full name?

JAMES WRIGHT: James Alvis Wright.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And when and where were you born?

JAMES WRIGHT: I was born August 22, 1929 in Hamilton County, Texas.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And what town is that?

JAMES WRIGHT: That's near Hamilton.

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

JAMES WRIGHT: My father's name was **Armon** Alvis Wright or they called "Red", my mother's was Estella Wright, ah....she was a White, her maiden name was White.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What kind of business was your father in?

JAMES WRIGHT: He was a farmer and ah....he did ah....farm labor and share crop farming, that type of thing most of his life and then he did some oil field work and some mill work later on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anyone in your family in law enforcement?

JAMES WRIGHT: No.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....did you have any brothers and sisters?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes I have two brothers and a sister all..... I'm the oldest of the four. Ah....brother **Jerrell** Wright and my sister is next which is **Lorain** Wright and she married a Tatum and my other brother was Elmer Thomas Wright or we called him Tommy.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....and what's your wife's name?

JAMES WRIGHT: Laura.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And her maiden name?

JAMES WRIGHT: And her maiden name was Harcrow, H A R C R O W.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And where was she raised?

JAMES WRIGHT: And she was raised in Fort Worth.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you have any.....

JAMES WRIGHT: She was actually born in Matador, but when very young baby they moved back to Tarrant County, Fort Worth where she grew up.

(James and Laura were married in 1949.)

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do have any children?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes we have two sons, William (Bill) Alvis Wright (who passed away in November 2003), he's married, lives in Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma and he has a daughter

Ann and his wife's name is Verna Beth, and our youngest son is Jim, Jimmy Wright, he lives in Huntsville, he's married and his wife's name is Phyllis, he has a son named Matthew.

(Bill's children Anne, 30, died in September 2004 and Steven (17) died in 1998)

ROBERT NIEMAN: Where did you go to school.

JAMES WRIGHT: I went to high school in Hamilton, I went to several schools, my family moved around several places while I was young, but Ibasically in Hamilton County and graduated from Hamilton High School in 1947.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you go on to college?

JAMES WRIGHT: No.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Were you in the service?

JAMES WRIGHT: No.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What did you do after you got out of school?

JAMES WRIGHT: After I got out of high school and even before I got out of high school, I started working for Lawson's implement company which is a John Deere implement company there in Hamilton. I had been working for.....Mr. Bill Lawson owned a good bit of land and was a ginner and implement dealer there in Hamilton and my father worked for him on the farms and I got started working for him before I got out of high school. And I went on working for him in the implement.....in the John Deere implement company for awhile and I left there and went to Fort Worth and did two or three different jobs and ah.....met Laura in Fort Worth and eventually came back to Hamilton where we got married in Hamilton. And in 1952 we moved to Waco and we had ah.... I worked for the John Deere implement company in Waco there for about five years. And during that period of time I decided I wasstarted looking for another career, another way to go and I made.....that's when I made application for the Highway Patrol.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When you were younger had you wanted to be a policeman?

JAMES WRIGHT: Not really, I hadn't ah..... I hadn't really thought about it that much during that time, hadn't had any real desire to. Although I I guess in thedeep down I had the admiration for 'em and kind felt like it would be something worthwhile.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Were you familiar with the Rangers, other than just the.....?

JAMES WRIGHT: Other than just the fact that I knew they existed, no I really wasn't.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....where did you.....when did you....when is your official entrance date into the DPS?

JAMES WRIGHT: In ah....January 3, 1957 was the day I went to.....started going to Highway Patrol school.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And where did you go to school?

JAMES WRIGHT: In Austin, at the DPS Academy.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was Camp Mabry already gone?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes it was after.....it was after Camp Mabry.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And how long was your DPS school?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ten and a half weeks.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anything special about school you remember?

JAMES WRIGHT: Nothing, only it was just difficult.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....who.....

JAMES WRIGHT: I kept saying every day I'd say, "Well I made yesterday, maybe I can make one more day."

ROBERT NIEMAN: You remember any of the instructors?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....there was ah....the school was run by T. C. Laws at that time and ah.....there was ah.... I can't really recall, they had different instructors for different classes. I don't remember anything particular. Ah....Major Odom taught highway law during my school. Ah....J. P. Lynch who was a Ranger taught us fire arms training at that time. Ah....a man by the name of Shaw was our.....more or less our house mother and did first aid training and some things like that for us.

(His monitors were Sergeants John McVean and Pat Burkley.)

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who were some of the men youthat we might meet later on in your career that you went through school with?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....during ah.....three or.....about three of those people I think, if I remember right, that went through that Highway Patrol school ended up in the Ranger service. One of them was Charlie Neal, ah.....try to think now which one it was, it was ah..... I can't even think of their names anymore. But I know there was three of them out of that school that came into the Ranger Service eventually. I'll think of 'em in a minute.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Where was your first duty station?

JAMES WRIGHT: My first duty station in the Highway Patrol, when I came out of the Highway Patrol, was in Marlin, in Falls County. It was a two man station, I went to work my partner was Mose Eadds, ahhe was ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: How do you spell that Eadds, for the record?

JAMES WRIGHT: E A D D S. Ah....he was ah.....about an eight year veteran at that time and I lucky really to have him as a partner because he was well adjusted and ah....taught me a whole lot when I first started out in the Highway Patrol.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Who was your first Captain?

JAMES WRIGHT: And the Captain of the Highway Patrol at that time was Captain Sam Gardner in Waco. And ah....Sergeant was John McVain and then later Leonard Hancock. I had.....in fact I had three or four Sergeants during that time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Now Captain Gardner is from right up here where we're at now.

JAMES WRIGHT: Captain Gardner was originally from the Honey Grove area.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Which is only about ten miles from where we're sitting.

JAMES WRIGHT: That's correct. And of course that's the first I ever heard of Honey Grove is when I found out he was from up here. The ah....after ah....about nearly two years in Falls County I moved, we....we were asked if I wanted.....asked the.....Captain Sam wanted to know.....wanted somebody to move to Clifton in Bosque County, it was a one man station and had been vacated and I told him I'd like to move up there. And so I was transferred to Bosque County and lived in Clifton and worked Bosque County area.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How long were you up there?

JAMES WRIGHT: And I was in Bosque County about ten years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What's some of the difficulties you'd run into working a one-man station? What would that consist of, a one-man station?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well basically it consisted of being on call twenty-four hours a day, every day. And you had to.....you were....at thatback in those days we worked six days a week and you're expected to be on call whenever necessary. And you'd get called, you know, wreck calls and different things like that anytime of the day. And it was a small county, very few law enforcement officers in the county, the Sheriff and I think one city policeman in Clifton, the Sheriff and one deputy. And not only got calls on traffic, we got calls on any type of law

violations that occurred you was likely to get called on it and you worked together with the other officers in solving the problems.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah.....is there still such a thing as one man stations?

JAMES WRIGHT: I'm not aware of any at this time and I don't really.....not intentionally, there may beat times there may be a one man station somewhere because of moves and so forth, but basically I think they're all two men or more now.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any particular incidents while you were a trooper that stand out in your mind?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well there was quite a few things. Really I enjoyed my tenure as a Highway Patrolman, it was about twelve years. And it was during that time I really got interested in the Rangers, or later on in those years. To begin with I really hadn't thought much about getting in the Rangers. But I saw the Rangers and saw their.....what they did and saw some of them that I began.....admired some of them. George Roach in Stephenville is one of 'em I think of, got acquainted with him and that's when I really become interested in getting in the Ranger Service. But prior to that there was ah..... I did.....as I said, I had toor being in a one man station I worked with the Sheriff in the county quite a bit and we did ah....worked together on criminal investigations and so forth. One incident I can remember that was unusual I thought, the ah....happenedas it happened the Sheriff was out of town that day. And early one morning, it was right at the beginning of deer season and early one morning I got a call that a man had been shot on a deer lease. And so I went out there immediately and was the first officer on the scene. And it turned out to be two deer hunters had a shoot out going around and around a pickup with deer rifles. And one of 'em eventually killed the other one. They had a dispute over who was supposed to be legally on the place hunting deer and one of them....they got into a fight and one

of them was beating up on the other one and he got away and he got his rifle and starting to shooting and the other one got his rifle and they went around and around this pickup and shot several holes in the pickup before one of the eventually killed the other one. I thought that was rather unusual having a dual with deer rifles around a pickup.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did being a one man duty station in such a small county, you werehad to work maybe more with the Sheriff thanthan maybe ah.....you would of if it had been a bigger county of course.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you feel that when you become a Ranger you had maybe a leg up on some of the other young Rangers, that you were more familiar with some of the things that the Sheriff.....problems that he would have?

JAMES WRIGHT: Sure I did, yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I mean like, work better with the Sheriff.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah, if you.....if you hadn't.....if an officer had not worked with the Sheriff like that before, yes it definitelydefinitely was an advantage.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....when you become a trooper, what was your starting pay?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah.....if I can remember right, we were getting somewhere like \$285.00 a month while I was in the Highway Patrol school and when I got out on the road it jumped to about \$315.00 a month. And it's gone up since then of course, but that was what we started out at.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah....any other incidents?

JAMES WRIGHT: Another incident I can think of, it happened just before I was going into the Rangers. It was ah.....the Ranger.... I knew the Ranger..... I was working Bosque County then and

I knew the Ranger and the Sheriff was working on some cattle thefts, but I had no real knowledge of their activities. And along about midnight they came back into town from having been on a trip down in south Texas and had a suspect in custody. When this incident took place I was working by myself, they had moved another Highway Patrolman into Bosque County and there was two of us there at that time, but I was working this shift by myself. And along about midnight the Sheriff, who was John Baxter at that time, and Ranger Bill Gunn and Ronnie Steen who was a Southwest Cattle Registered Agent, came into town and they had a cattle theft suspect in custody who they had arrested, or had picked up in Laredo. They also hadhethe suspect had his pickup, a horse trailer and a horse in Laredo and they had driven this back with them, along with the cars, the suspect had driven and they had ridden with him in his pickup. They got to the jail and ah....the District Attorney, Byron Funnel at that time, was there with them also when they got to the jail and they were going to take a statement from another suspect. This horse had been in this horse trailer for a considerable length of time and this suspect's name was Billy Myers, he lived on a ranch up north of Bosque County. So Sheriff John.....I.....I saw 'em come in and I drove around there to see what was going on, it was just normal for a Highway Patrolman and saw who it was and everything as they stopped there at the jail in Meridian. Well Sheriff Baxter asked me if I would follow Billy Myers up to his ranch in north Bosque County and let him drop that horse off in the pasture and park his pickup and bring Billy back to the jail in Meridian. And of course I agreed, "Yeah sure I'd be glad to do that". They had.....he'd been in custody driving back from Laredo all day and had already stopped in Gatesville if I'm not mistaken and given a statement concerning the cattle thefts. So we left, Billy Myers drove his pickup and trailer, went up to his ranch about ten miles or more up there in north Bosque County. We stopped at a gate, he got out and opened the gate and hollered back to me, "Just

leave it open we'd be right back out". And we went through a second gate into his place and he got out and opened it. It was pitch black dark, cause this was after midnight, and hethere was some cattle there and he said, "We better close this gate because there's cattle here". So I stopped behind him and closed the gate. Well when I did.....when I stopped and got out of my car he speeded up and went on up to the house real fast. And I thought that was kind of unusual, so I closed the gate immediately, jumped back in my car and headed up that way. I really didn't expect anything much out of him, except that if he should jump out of his vehicle and run off I'd never find him out there in the dark you know, on that ranch. He turned in there by the barn, stopped his pickup and I was speeding up trying to get up there so I could see what he was going to do and had my lights on bright and flashed on his pickup. Well when my lights hit the back of his pickup window I saw him fall over in the car just like that, or lay over in the car like that. And I thought, well he reached in under the seat for something, whatever, and kept watching him and he never did raise back up. I got out and got my flashlight and went around behind the vehicle and come up on the other side and put my flashlight where I could see what was going on. And looked in there and there he lay over in the seat, had a twenty-five caliber pistol in his hand and he had shot himself through the head.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Hmmmm.

JAMES WRIGHT: And ah.....anyway that.....of course at that time then I called theradioed in and got Ranger Gunn and the District Attorney and the Sheriff to come on up there and bring a Justice of the Peace. Ah.....he lived.....he didn't die then, he lived about 32 hours I believe after that, but he never did regain consciousness and did die. I had ah.....just prior to that I had made application to.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, what had he done so bad that he felt he had to commit suicide?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well I don't really know, I I was not that familiar with him and his activities, except that Iwell I found out later he had been to the penitentiary once before and he was ah.....had already admitted to the officers that he was involved in this particular cattle theft case here, knew he was going back to the penitentiary. And as far as I know, he just didn't want to go back to the penitentiary.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Hmmm, okay.

JAMES WRIGHT: Then ah.....then next morning, Captain Peoples was the Ranger Captain there at that time, and I had already made application to get into the Rangers through him. The next morningof course after we.....Captain Peoples came up to investigate, look into the shooting, and Bill Gunn was there of course too. And ah.....my Highway Patrol partner, Harvey Lane at that time, was with me and wewe went with Captain Peoples, went back up to the scene and explained it all to him, showed him what happened. He looked into it, asked me a lot of questions. Finally when he got through he said, "Well I'm satisfied you didn't do it". And I thought to myself, well I didn't ever think I did in the first place, didn't really think I should be a suspect. But anyway, said he was satisfied and I did get into the Rangers right after that. I thought to myself at the time, I probably blew it right here because I let this suspect kill himself up here.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what made you decide you wanted to be a Ranger? And well first, who was the first Ranger you ever remember seeing?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well the first Ranger I ever remember seeing was back in my high school days in Hamilton County, there was a Sheriff there by the name of Houston White and he was

defeated in the Sheriff's race and went into the Ranger service and I saw him a time or two back in Hamilton after he was in the Rangers. Didn't really know him but just knew who he was and what he was. After I went on the Highway Patrol I was acquainted with several Rangers, but one of the ones that impressed me was Ranger George Roach as I said earlier, out of Stephenville, he came through Bosque County quite a bit and worked around that area. Ranger Bill Gunn worked out of Waco, Ranger Johnny Krumnoe worked out of Waco, I got acquainted with them. Ah....Buddy Hendricks worked out of Waco, worked with him some, of course Captain Peoples.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Clint Peoples.

JAMES WRIGHT: Clint Peoples, I got to know him real well. And the reputation of the Rangers was good, really good and then people admired them and looked up to them and their work. So as time went on I began to think that eventually I would want to get off the road as a Highway Patrolman and would like to get into criminal investigation and did.

ROBERT NIEMAN: So when did you become a Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: In ah.....September 1st of 1969.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And did you receive any special training when you became a Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: Of course after I went into the Ranger service I went to ah.....they sent me back to the academy on several different occasions for different training on criminal investigations, fingerprinting, crime scene investigations and so forth like that. And that continued all along, as it had in the Highway Patrol, I'd gone through quite a few different training schools over the.....retraining schools and so forth over the years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah....what was your pay when you become a Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: You I don't know if I could even remember what it was at that time, I don't..... I don't recall.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well had you, you know, when you become a Ranger and you'd heard of them, you know, did the influence of things like the old ah.....one Ranger, one riot and?

JAMES WRIGHT: I didn't know too much about those stories at that time. I learned about 'em as I got.....after I got into the Rangers and I read a lot of books on it and ah.....and all of it of course was an influence, but most of all that I learned and studied after I got into the Ranger service.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....before we get into your career with Rangers, let's.....I'd like to ask you if you.....you know, if any of these people you may have known or any experiences with them, such as ah.....Homer Garrison?

JAMES WRIGHT: Homer Garrison was the Colonel of the Department of Public Safety while I was on the Highway Patrol, he ah.....died and ah.....before I got into the Rangers, but I knew him, yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Allee, Captain Allee?

JAMES WRIGHT: Captain Allee of course was a Ranger Captain in south Texas and I was aware of him, I didn't work near him and didn't really know him, but I was aware of him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: The troubles he had in south Texas with the farm laborers, were you in the.....was that before or after the Rangers.....you became a Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well Isome of it.....it was just about the time and ah.....that..... I think some.....one incident or two might of been before and some after, but it was ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you get sent down there?

JAMES WRIGHT:in a different area of the country and I wasn't ever involved in it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....did you know Gonzauillas?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yes.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Lone Wolf Gonzauillas?

JAMES WRIGHT: I had met him, he was of course out of the Rangers before I went in, but II met him on two or three occasions and he'd come down to Waco to Fort Fisher there a time or two and I knew him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anything.....did you know himabout in particular, I mean, did you ever talk to him or visit with him?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....not on a one to one basis, other than just being around him when he was in a group, in a Ranger company and so forth, he was there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What about Bob Goss?

JAMES WRIGHT: I didn't know him, I just knew of him, didn't know him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....what about Charlie Miller?

JAMES WRIGHT: Charlie Miller was the Ranger in Company F. Now when I went in.....first went into the Ranger service, being there in Clifton, I was stationed in Waco which was Company F under Captain Clint Peoples. And Charlie Moore had.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Charlie Miller.

JAMES WRIGHT: Charlie Miller had been a Ranger in Company F ah....but he had retired just prior to my going to work with the Rangers, but I knew him and saw him even when I was on the Highway Patrol, I saw him a time or two. And then I saw him a few times after I was on the Rangers and he had quite a reputation that you couldn't help but hear and know about Charlie Miller in that part of the country.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah.....you ever visit with him one on one?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, never did.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And your first duty station is Company F, Waco and your stationed at Clifton.

JAMES WRIGHT: I was living in Clifton when I was still on the Highway Patrol and I was.....when I went into the Rangers they moved me into Waco.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay.

JAMES WRIGHT: And I lived in Waco then and worked out of Fort Fisher there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Do you remember your first case of significance?

JAMES WRIGHT: Not really. I don't know what to say....say was the first case, I worked on several things, smaller things with the Sheriffs in that area. I generally worked in Coryell and Hamilton and Falls County and Bosque County and.....with assistance and working with the Sheriffs and DA investigators and so forth. And over a period of time there were several cases but I can't really think of anything as being significant.....the first significant case.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well could you tell us about some of your ah....ah....more interesting cases?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Such as the murders orthey're always high profile.

JAMES WRIGHT: Murder cases areare as you said, high profile. Some of the ah....cases that was ah....it's hard for me to talk.....or to relate a story about a particular case, I'm not a good story teller and the things that are significant and interesting to me or not necessarily

ROBERT NIEMAN: If they are significant to you, you just tell us about 'em and we'll

JAMES WRIGHT: It's because ah.....what's really.....what's really ah.....fulfilling andand what'sis being able to solve a case and most of these cases are solved by simply leg work, interviews and things of this nature, putting pieces together, coming to a conclusion. Ah....which

gets pretty dull really when you're just talking about it or reading about it. Ah.....it's not like a quick gun fight shoot out or something, which is real exciting and so forth. But I was fortunate and I consider myself very fortunate in my career, I never go into anything like that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well how long were you in Waco?

JAMES WRIGHT: I was in Waco about 12 years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: You left there in about.....?

JAMES WRIGHT: I was.....left in there October the 15th of 1981 when I was promoted to Ranger Sergeant at that time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, so by that time I know you're.....this is way, way in the future, but were any of the Branch Davidian's already setting up out there or had you even heard of them by then?

JAMES WRIGHT: I hadn't even heard of 'em at that time. Ah.....couple of cases that I worked as a Rangers that would ah.....that I felt like was very interesting and.....one of 'em....let's see, H.E.B.....the story about the H.E.B. food stores in Waco being extorted by a person threateninghaving called in and told 'em they had put poison in some of the food and trying to extort money from 'em. The FBI, the Waco PD, the Sheriff's office, the Rangers, everyone around was involved in that investigation and I was a Ranger there in Waco at that time. Ah....he had.....the manger of one of the H.E.B. stores had gotten a call that someone had put poison in one of the.....some of the food in one of the stores and of course it concerned everybody, they were trying to extort money out of them. This investigation went on for several weeks and involving H.E.B. stores having to clear their shelves of all food that could of poisoned and dumping it, which was a considerable amount of money involved. Ah....we hadhad contact with the suspects on occasions through telephones in which they gave instructions for the officers.....or

for the people at H.E.B. to deliver money to them. The officers were aware of this and ah....and in the process attempted to apprehend the suspects but it didn't work out ah.....eventually a money drop was made and the ah.....a vehicle as it turned out.....it....the suspects weren't apprehended at that time because they didn't go through with their plan. But a vehicle was seen in the area and through this vehicle it wasturned out to belong to some small time thieves and hot check writers that I had dealt with before and eventually was able to run it down and arrest....arrest.....made an arrest on 'em and got statements from 'em and solved it. I was instrumental in solving that particular case, which was real interesting to me. It's been so long ago it's hard for me to relate all the details about it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well we've heard Glen Elliott and Bob Mitchell here talk about an old thief that worked the area, Charles Robert Mathis, and Jerry Ray James. Did you have any people working your area similar to these that was?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, I wasn't involved with any of those.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well not necessarily those guys.

JAMES WRIGHT: Now James....the James and different ones were in that area of the country at times, but not in my particular territory.

ROBERT NIEMAN: But did you have people like them that you knew were working your area hard and it took 'em six, seven years to bring like Mathis, to bring him down?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, not really, in that particular area.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well did you find ah....the crime, percentage wise, in the Waco area different than they would be in say an East Texas area, where I know a high percentage of the crimes that Rangers up in the East Texas area worked were murders, where maybe in South

Texas they.....the percentage wise wouldn't be as high on murders, it would be higher in say cattle rustling or something. Did you find that in Waco?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well it varied, there....of course you had some of all of it, there wasn't any doubt about that. But ah....probably in the area that I was working there wasit wasn't as prevalent as it might of been in some other areas over in East Texas at times. But it varied, there would be times when there would be a lot of cattle thieving going on, there'd be times when there was a lot of burglaries, and then again you'd have a murder or two along of with that. Not too many armed robberies in that area, not like there would of been maybe in some other bigger area. I remember one case of a bank robbery that I thought was somewhat significant. We got the call that the bank in Evant had been robbed, or was being robbed.

ROBERT NIEMAN: In where?

JAMES WRIGHT: Evant, which is in....actually in Coryell County.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How you spell that?

JAMES WRIGHT: E V A N T, Evant, Texas, it's over in.....west of Gatesville and the bank itself was in Coryell County. Well we responded of course, the suspects.....as it turned out a boy and girl, and we didn't know this of course at first, but they came to Evant, did some surveillance work, found out that the banker's wife would leave the bank, the bank was small and it was run by a man and his wife and a couple of employees. And the banker's wife would go home about eleven o'clock every morning, fix some lunch, she would eat her lunch then go back to the bank around the noon hour and the banker would come to the house and eat his lunch and then come back. Well this particular day, after they discovered the routine, the suspects were waiting there at the house and when the woman came into the house to fix lunch they kidnapped her. They tied her up, taped up her mouth and put a note on the front door for the banker to find

that they had kidnapped her and they wanted a certain amount of money, wanted it to be delivered down the highway at a certain location for them to pick up later. The lady was carried out into the woods, six or eight miles out of town on a back road and left in some brush. Now the suspects went to a neighboring town and waited for the time to pass. Unbeknownst to them and unbeknownst to the bank, when the banker went home for lunch he did his usual thing, he went in the back door, he didn't see the note. He ate his lunch and went back to the bank. About the time that the note.....the money should of been delivered, and after the time had expired as far as the note was concerned, the banker received a call at the bank and asking I don't remember the wording, but had to do with the fact that he needed to check on his wife or something or other, and when time had run out and they began to get suspicious of what.....what was going on. And in the meantime they had also missed the wife, she hadn't come back to the bank, they assumed at first she'd run some errands or something and didn't get to worried about it, but they had began to look for her, before this call came in. After that someone there went down and walked around the house and eventually found the note on the front door. Well the banker he grabbed the money together as best he could and he headed down the road and put it where it was supposed to be. But by then the suspects had already come looking for it, couldn't find it and left, went back and called the banker, eventually ended up down in Lampasas. But they did not get the money because time had passed. They didn't go back to the lady, she had managed to free herself eventually and get out of the brush and caught a ride back to town and about the time she got back to town, it was about time.....most of the officers got there. Because we didn't know about it until just before.....until after the time had expired and after they found the note, that's when they beganand then they called the officers, police officers. Well the woman'sthe worse thing she got out of that deal was she got covered up with chiggers, but she really didn't

get hurt. But they had left her out there in the woods. And of course she gave us.....she had got a fairly good description, although she'd been blindfolded after they took her out in the car, and she gave us descriptions of the suspects the best she could, description of the car as best she could. I talked to several of the officers around there and different people. There was a Highway Patrolman and Deputy Sheriff out of Hamilton County down there and one of them made a statement, "That sounds kind of like old so and so", and this girl from Hamilton County and her boyfriend, they had been writing some hot checks around town and were known to the officers simply because of that. But they didn't really think about 'em as being armed robbers. And after awhile we had run out all other questions and leads and I said, "Well let's go find out where they were", I said, "We don't have anything else to do right now, let's just see if we....see what they were doing and where they were at this time". So we went to Hamilton, just the Highway Patrolman, Deputy Sheriff and myself, went to this ah.....where this girl lived up there and she wasn't.....there wasn't anybody at home at that time. So we checked around town awhile, got something to eat and decided to go back out and see if they'd come home, which was about eleven o'clock that night. And sure enough, we got back out there a second time and they were there. We talked to the mother and ah....the mother in the meantime that afternoon had gone to Lampasas looking for her daughter and her daughter's boyfriend and found 'em and caught 'em and brought the daughter back home and left thethe boy I think went to Austin or took him to Austin or something, but brought her daughter back home. The mother was completely unaware of the bank robbery, but she knew her daughter had been in some trouble with these hot checks and so forth and she was trying to get her back to the house. But....although she was..... I don't remember now her exact age but she over.....she was an adult, she wasn't.....under the law, she was seventeen or eighteen years old. Then we interviewed the girl and talked to her and I was

able to get her to admit that they did do the bank robbery and got a statement from her and was able to clear that one.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Hmmmm, that was a piece of work.

JAMES WRIGHT: The ironic thing about that was ah.....several years later, I can't remember the number of years, after I'd left there and come on towas promoted and moved on to Dallas, this same woman that was kidnapped in that bank robbery was killed in her home under similar circumstances.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Hmmmm.

JAMES WRIGHT: That murder has not been solved.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....did....when you were ah.....using Glen Elliott for my example, did you have certain type cases you preferred, I know Glen he....if he had his choice he rather work.....his favorite type cases he liked to work murder cases. And I've had some say, well I like, you know, bank robbers, or they like, you know, rustlers or

JAMES WRIGHT: No not necessarily, II liked to work any kind of investigative work where ah.....major cases, whether it was armed robbery or ah.....murder, whatever, as long as they were a major case, you know, you like to work on those, high profile, those type cases, things that got attention you naturally got attention you liked to work on them better. But it wasn't any particular type of work, didn't make much difference.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What ah....what was ah...your most self-satisfying case, any one in particular or any that stick out in your mind?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well of course I think the H.E.B. food....food ah....extortion case was one of them that I thought was very satisfying or was very satisfying to me to solve that one. Ah....this bank robbery case was another one that was very satisfactory. I I solved a murder

case over in Copper's Cove by.....the suspects and the victims were at that time on some kind of dope, marijuana or something, I'm not real sure now what it was at the time. They were military people and they were together in a house and sitting around talking and got in some kind of an argument and ah.....some of them had some money and one of them didn't and one of them ended up using a small .25 caliber pistol and killing two suspects, two people in this house, two victims, stole their money and leFort Through ah....interview and ah..... I was able to solve that murder by talking tojust talking to the person as a.....at the time started talking to him as a witness because he was a friend of theirs and was there and being able to interview him and talk to him and get it out of him what I needed to find out to know that he was begin.....to begin with not telling the truth and then getting him to tell the truth, this is a very satisfying thing to me, through....just particularly through interviewing and then of course following up on it by securing the evidence of the gun, the bullets and things like that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well there in your territory ah.....you got Fort Hood, which is a huge military base. Did you work any military crimes that.....not military crimes, but military personnel where you might of had maybe a confrontation with a base commander or something, you know, this is military you stay out?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, we didn't have anything like that in my particular area. Ah....Fort Hood covered quite a bit of Coryell County but the main part of it was in Bell County and I was around there and then I had quite a bit to do on occasion with different military people and so forth, but I never had got into that kind of confrontation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay, when you joined the Rangers did you immediately think, I want to promote, or did that come later?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well, it come later really, yeah. No I didn't really think about it at that particular time no, I was just happy to be a Ranger and working and as time went on then I began to look forward to try to promote, yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: When you promoted ah.....did ah.....was it.....basically back in the..... I know in the '40's and '50's and '60's especially it ah.....if Captain wanted you to be a Ranger you become a Ranger and if they decided they wanted John Q. Smith to be a Sergeant or a Captain, he got to be a Captain or a Sergeant. Was that system still in place when you started promoting?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well pretty much ah.....when.....you had to be interviewed and it was the Ranger Captains did the interviewing. Plus the fact that the Captain and Rangers in your particular area would recommend you or not recom.....they could certainly if not recommend you they could certainly turn you down and if they turned you down or said they didn't want you well you wouldn't be.....you wouldn't be appointed that's for sure. It worked that way. Now if they ah.....sometimes they might not of been all that well acquainted with the person and you might be all right, but ah....might make it in all right. But if you ah.....if you were not liked or had some reason to ah.....the Ranger Captain in that area not to want you in the Ranger service well you would.....you wasn't going to get in.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....who was your ah.....who were your Ranger Captains?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: You started with Clint Peoples.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah Clint.....that I served with?

ROBERT NIEMAN: Uh hum.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah, well he was the only one.....well now let me back up, Clint Peoples was ah....Captain when I first went in, but he was only the Captain there for about two months really after I went in the Ranger service, or three, and he was.....he was promoted to Senior Ranger Captain in Austin and of course he was my supervisor as a Senior Ranger Captain. But following him was Butch Albers, he was Ranger Captain there in Waco for awhile, and then when Butch retired why Bob Mitchell became Captain there in Waco. And Bob Mitchell was the Captain when promoted to Sergeant and when I was promoted they moved me to Dallas and which Captain G. W. Burkes was my Captain up there.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....want to ah..... I had ah.....your Sergeant, David Burns.....

JAMES WRIGHT: Right.

ROBERT NIEMAN:which we'll explain here, all Rangers are Sergeants today and what was Sergeant we're talking about is now a Lieutenant.

JAMES WRIGHT: That's right, they didn't change anything but rank, but what was called a Sergeant back then is now at this time is what a Lieutenant is called now.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And ah..... I want to ask you, once you became a Sergeant and you transferred to Dallas and ah.....did men look at you different? Did they.....for instance I want to use from your Sergeant, David Burns told me he said, "When I became Sergeant", he said, "I was always thankful to some of the old hands like Glenn Elliott and what not", and he said, "The younger Rangers all looked up to him". And he said, "The older guys could of really made my life difficult if they'd wanted to".

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah, right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And he said, he didn't. But did you find this sort of situation too?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah it was there ah.... I did.....you know, it's just different because of the ah.....especially like you said, the younger ones ah....have a different view of you as a supervisor than they would as one of theirworking another Ranger.....just another Ranger. I know a Ranger once said, made the statement and said, "You're not one of us any more, you're one of them". That kind of holds true in a lot of cases.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah. And ah.....what were some of the new responsibilities you had, such as budgetary and working cases, did you actively still work cases?

JAMES WRIGHT: No ah....once you gotat that time, once you got promoted there wasn't ah.....it was more of an administrative type work and more office work as a Sergeant or Lieutenant is now, you handled paperwork in the office and keptyou kept up with the cases, and you could work some you know, you might work some on cases, but had as much as you could do just keeping up with he paperwork and the other twelve or thirteen or fourteen Rangers who are out in the field. And you had secretaries working there in the office and which you had to supervise, all the assistance of course of the Captain over us. But it was the Lieutenant's job to basically to keep up with the running of the office and the paperwork.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did ah.....you have a hard time adjusting from being a field Ranger to basically an office Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: It was a little bit.....it was different, it took a little ah.....it took a little time to get used to it yeah.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you miss the field?

JAMES WRIGHT: Missed being out as much as.....it's more confining in the office and I didn't like that too well, but that was just part of it. After I was promoted to Captain then it was easier to get out and you seemed to get out and be a little more freer with your activities, you

could circulate a little better with the men in the field and be in on what was going on more than when you was a Lieutenant. Then again it would depend on your Captain and what his desires were at the time and how he wanted to handle it too, so ah.....during the time I was Lieutenant I was able to get out quite a bit in the field too myself. But you had to go out too and take care of inventory, you had to take care of all.....lots of different things you had to take care of. And on occasion you might get a complaint of some sort you'd have to go see about and you'd investigate a few things like that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well I've had several Captains tell me that the most difficult job in the Rangers is the Sergeant/Lieutenant, that ah.....that's a tough job.

JAMES WRIGHT: It is, it's different and it's.....it's.....some peop.....it's hard for some people to handle that it because of the way it's set up.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anything in particular while you're a Sergeant that you remember that you want to record or.....?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well the time....during the time that I was Sergeant the cases were worked by the men andbut as a Sergeant, or as a Lieutenant is now, you were also involved with the reports and with the communications from one to the other and things like that and you were.....felt like you were part of it ah.....and did work on some of the cases to some extent, being out there as a supervisor and being in the field on surveillance's and things like that. One of the major cases we worked on in the Dallas area was the Ma and Pa bank robbery cases ah..... I was a Sergeant during that time and ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: I'm not familiar with them, tell me about them.

JAMES WRIGHT: This man and woman had been robbing rural banks in the area for about twelve years I believe, or something like that, my memory is not good anymore, I can't remember the exact time, but somewhere like that, over a period of twelve or fifteen years.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How old were they?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....he was like fiftish and she was probably thirtish or something like that at the time that they were arrested. Ah....these banks.....the FBI had worked on this, the Rangers had worked on it, different officers from different areas and they would go.....they were just small banks in small towns that did not have much of a police force or any police force maybe. For instance over here in Windom was one of them. And over.....it took a period of time for this to come to light that the same people were doing these little banks and they.....some sort of a system. Ah....we had a man over there in Fort Worth, David Dunaway, who was working for Intelligence Service at that time and later became a Ranger, did a lot of intelligence work on that and put together a pattern so to speak that they felt like that they actingof how they were acting and which way they were likely to go next and so forth. We set up surveillance's on these banks on two or three different occasions, along with other officers and so forth, and we had air surveillance, we had people watching the banks. And ah....we did this over a period of time and didn't seem to work out. You never....you just... for some reason you just wouldn't be there at the right time, but we knew we were.....or felt like we were getting close to their pattern. They would come into the bank dressed in a lot of clothing, heavy coats, covered themselves up real well, gloves. In the beginning it was.....wasn't even known it was a man and woman, they thought it was two men to start with, but turned out to be a man and woman. They would have shotguns and pistols and rifles. As it turned out later they also had a metal plate that they put up in the back of their car in case when they left the bank if they got shot at they would be protected

by this metal plate behind the seat of their car. Well after ah..... I know one time in particular we set up a surveillance on it and watched 'em for several weeks thinking they were going to hit a bank on Friday and we, after about six weeks of this watching we decided maybe we had to pull off of it and we didn't watch and the next Friday they hit the bank in Windom.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I heard Glenn tell about that.

JAMES WRIGHT: But ah.....after that ah.....they had used a vehicle, a Bronco if I remember right or Jimmy, in a bank robbery that they had committed down in Bosque County at Iredell. A farmer, or local citizen down there, had seen this vehic.....they had parked this vehicle, used another vehicle to go to the bank and robbed the bank, come back and abandoned the stolen vehicle, which it was a stolen vehicle, got in there Bronco and made their escape. This vehicle was a....it was a Jimmy, GMC Bronco type vehicle, was painted black with a wide red stripe around the middle of it. They weren't all that unusual but there wasn't just.....see 'em everyday on the road. This David Dunaway that I was talking about earlier got to watching for this particular.....he had figured out and we knew they.....felt like they were working out of the metroplex area, probably in the Fort Worth area or mid-cities area, and every time he and other officers would see a vehicle of this type they'd check the license and see who it was and where it had come from and so forth. And as luck would have it, hard work would have it really on David's part, consistent, he saw a vehicle over on Loop 820 one day looked like this vehicle. He took down the license number and checked it out, it was driven by the man's son at that time, but ah.....the man on checking his record it was discovered that he had gone to the penitentiary for bank robbery years ago, fifteen or twenty years ago, whatever it was. And about the time he got out of the penitentiary was when these bank robberies started happening again. Well then we set up a surveillance on this particular individual and followed him for several days, found out that

they owned a place up in the country out in Wise County, had a little old shop of a place up there where they would fix these metal plates to go in the car. They would steal a car maybe this month, maybe it would be next month or six months from now before they'd use it in a bank robbery, they'd park it out there in this shed on this place and leave it until they got ready to make their bank robbery. Apparently they were just broad bank use the money up and then go rob another one, just depend on how much money they got as to how long it would be before they'd rob the next bank. Anyway after so much surveillance in learning of this, they followed the suspects at one point towhile they surveyed a bank out in West Texas, west of Fort Worth. We accumulated enough evidence then and we got a warrant for 'em and went and arrested 'em. We didn't catch them actually in the process of a robbery but we.....and once we caught 'em they just gave up, admitted (unintelligible).....no problem at all. We felt like there might even be a gun battle because they were always heavily armed when they armed the banks. But we went to their house, when they saw the officers there with a warrant they just said, "Okay, you got us, your stuffs in there in the other room".

ROBERT NIEMAN: What were some of the major differences you saw going from a basically smaller area, population like Waco, to a major metropolitan area like Dallas?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....

ROBERT NIEMAN: In Rangering?

JAMES WRIGHT: Getting used to the traffic. But ah....getting around you know was different and getting used to the ah.....the big city ah....police departments and the organizations. We didn't.....the Rangers did not work as much with the bigger departments, of course, it wasn't necessary. Even though you were in Dallas we worked northeast Texas and we didour Rangers were scattered out over northeast Texas and we did most of our work in the more rural

areas even then. But we did have work in Dallas and bigger areas, Fort Worth, because of warrant service, hunting up suspects or witnesses and Rangers from out of town and other officers from othereven other states would request someone be located for a witness statement or paper service, things of this nature and we did....you do a lot of....did a lot of work in the metropolitan area. But not necessarily actually working on criminal cases, that was handled....most of them had good detectives and good police departments and the times you wouldyou would be requested by them to help them in some rural area, some other part of the state, well they needed to go and find somebody and you had a lot of cooperation and work between 'em.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Was Will Fritz still alive when you was in Dallas?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah.....yes he was.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you know him?

JAMES WRIGHT: I just knew..... I just knew of him, but he died in.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: He was a Dallas detective for the record.

JAMES WRIGHT: Right. And he ah..... I can't remember now exactly what happened, but he died soon after that if I'm not mistaken.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....when did ah....when did you become a Captain?

JAMES WRIGHT: I became a Captain I was a Sergeant for five years and I became a Captain on September 1st, 1986....is that right, yeah, yeah. I mean ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: That's right.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah. It was '81 when I became a.....'81 when I became a Sergeant and '86 when I became a Captain, that's right.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And your Sergeant was?

JAMES WRIGHT: And then when Iwhen I became IG. W. Burkes was the Captain that retired and I was promoted to take his place and then David Byrnes was promoted to Sergeant and was sent to Dallas to be my Sergeant. And it was right after he was promoted that they ah.....made the ah....changed the rank of the Rangers to ah.....Lieutenants and made the.....what was the Sergeant was then the Lieutenants and then the regular Rangers in the field were called Sergeants.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What was the biggest difference you found, was there anything surprising when you become a Captain that you hadn't anticipated?

JAMES WRIGHT: Not really. Ah.... I had been allowed by Captain Burkes to ah.....take part in the ah....running of the company and was pretty active in running the company already as a Sergeant and ah.....so I knew what was.....what it would be like and was pretty well already doing it so to speak.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you find the politics more involved once you become a Captain?

JAMES WRIGHT: To some extent, not...not...not much different though than it had been.

ROBERT NIEMAN: How did you find dealing with the politicians and the bureaucrat and the?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well it....it....to me they demanded a lot. Ah....things that youand you had to appease 'em so to speak, or try to, because of ah.....these people in the legislature ah....deal out the money and ah....theythey make the laws and the hand out the money, so you.....naturally you have to try o appease 'em as best you can. Ah....you get a call from one wanting something done, which might seemmany times seem very minor compared to other things you had to do, but sometimes it was just necessary to drop what you were doing and go

.....go fulfill their request. And that was always something you liked to do but it seemed like one of the things you had to do.

ROBERT NIEMAN: In reflection, any regrets that you ceased being a field Ranger?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, not really. Ah.... I was a field Ranger for about twelve years, I enjoyed every bit of it and it was an excellent job and ah..... I could of continued on if I hadn't been promoted and been happy, but ah.... at the same time I was ready to.....ready to move on and move into supervisory position and ah....and had hopefully enhanced not only my knowledge in doing something different, but Ilittle more money, little better retirement and this come along with it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well looking back over your career, is there any case or cases sticks out as being particularly frustrating to you, that you wish now, 'I wish I could of put this one down'?

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah, there ah....there's one I can remember back when I was still a Ranger in Waco, it was ah.....two ah.....three girls were kidnapped from a K-Mart store there, a parking lot there in the Waco area and ah....one of them was raped and carried down to the Bryan area. And it just seemed like we had the information.....almost had all the information we needed, good descriptions and information and so forth, but we never could solve the crime and I worked on that quite a lot. And that was really frustrating, I never did solve.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did they kill the girls?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, the girls were not killed, they were left in the car, the trunk of the car and they were rescued. They managed tothey were parked on the road and left locked in the trunk of a car and they were able to use a tire tool to pry the trunk lid enough to get a hand out and they were discovered and got out of there. But they weren't killed, but they could of been very easily.

ROBERT NIEMAN: This was, of course, probably would of still been when you was on the Highway Patrol, did you work any of the Lone Star Steel strike?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, huh uh, wasn't involved in that.

ROBERT NIEMAN: What is your feeling towardsafter, you know.....of course I know you've heard a lot about that strike, you've heard a lot about the south TexasRangers working strikes.

JAMES WRIGHT: Well it's just not done, it's not their job to do it and they shouldn't be involved in it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Lose, lose?

JAMES WRIGHT: It's just lo.....no win situation.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Yeah. Ah...when did you decide to re....when did you retire?

JAMES WRIGHT: I retired on ah....at the end of October in 1991.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any particular thing or things that made you decide, it's time to hang 'em up?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....two things, I had I had become 62 years old in August and I had reached 35 years of service and I felt like it was I was at an age and a time in my life when there was..... I could move on to something.....get out of the.....get out of the Ranger.....get out of working, criminal work, leave it to somebody else and I felt like that it was just time for me to move on.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

JAMES WRIGHT: Oh no, not at all, I was..... I had a.....to me it was the thing to do and I haven't regretted it one bit. I was tickled to death to be a Ranger, be an officer, be a Highway Patrolman and a Ranger, supervisor, a Captain, I had a good career, wouldn't take anything in

the world for it, but I just felt like it had come to the point where it was time to retire and I feel the same way about that. I'm glad I retired, I'm happy being retired, I wouldn't want to go back, but I wouldn't take anything in the world for it you know.

ROBERT NIEMAN: I want to reflect a minute on some of the men that you....you've worked with. Ah....of course I've got to start off with Glenn Elliott.

JAMES WRIGHT: Glenn Elliott was a Ranger in Longview, I knew Glenn before Iafter I became a Ranger in Waco I got acquainted with him, he was an excellent officer, had a good reputation and then when I became hisI became his supervisor as being Sergeant and Captain in Waco, which that's kind of ironic to say supervisor because Glenn really didn't need any supervision, he knew his job, he did his job. We didn't much personnel problems in the Ranger service, basically we were there for support and assistance and whatever the needs might be. But the Rangers themselves in the field knew their job, could do their job and you didn't really have a problem with that area of it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well had you worked any cases with Glenn when you were a field officer?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....no, not really ah..... I think there was a time or two when he requested that I get some information for him out of my territory, which I did, which really didn't amount towasn't anything significant.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well you must of made a pretty good impression, because like you didn't know until this morning though that he had recommended, when you was talking about the people being recommended, that he was the one that recommended that you be made Sergeant.

JAMES WRIGHT: Yeah. No I wasn't aware of that, no. But ah....no Glenn..... I knew Glenn and he was a good man and I liked him and ah....I'd do the same for him if he'd of wanted to promote, Glenn never did want to promote.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you know Bob Crowder and Jim Riddle?

JAMES WRIGHT: I just knew..... I knew Bob Crowder, I didn't really.....was never around him to speak of at all, I had met him but that's about it. Now Jim Riddle, I knew him better, he was.....he sat on the interview board that interviewed me for Ranger and that's my first real encounter with him. And I took an instant liking to him, he was a fine man and I really liked him and he was the Captain in Midland for awhile after I was in the Rangers and ah.....he taught some schools in Austin and ah.....got to know him a little better and really thought a lot of him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Bill Wilson?

JAMES WRIGHT: Bill Wilson became the Senior Ranger Captain ah.....after Clint Peoples retired and ah....well Bill Wilson was in Austin even before that and I knew Bill Wilson a long time, knew him as a Senior Ranger Captain, he was Senior Ranger Captain when I promotedwhen I was promoted to Sergeant and Bill was a fine man, liked him, he was good to work with.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Clint Peoples?

JAMES WRIGHT: And Clint Peoples, same way, II had ah....it was a lot....a lot of people make a lot of remarks about Clint Peoples and his publicity, as a publicity hound, and things like that, but ah....Clint was a fine individual and he thought a lot of the Ranger service as much as anybody ever did I guess. No matter what Clint did, whether he was promoting himself or whatever as people would say, he took the Rangers right along with him. He made the Rangers.....pulled the Rangers right along with him and did everything for the Ranger service.

He had the Ranger service best interest at heart at all times and ah.... he helped me get in the Ranger service and I worked under him and we got along fine, I liked him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Jay Banks?

JAMES WRIGHT: I didn't know too much about Jay Banks, I knew him, knew of him and ah.....he was retired before I came into..... I can't remember what year he retired but ah....about the time I came in the Ranger service....orRanger service I believe is the area of the time when he retired. I heard a lot about him, I was a Captain in Dallas when he died, I was at his funeral, but ah.....didn't really know him personally, I didn't.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Bob Mitchell?

JAMES WRIGHT: And Bob Mitchell I worked for him and with him and for him all through my career and he's one of the greatest people in the world as far as I'm concerned. He's ah.....was a good Ranger, good supervisor, his men thought the world of him as I did when I worked for him.

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

JAMES WRIGHT: G. W., another good Captain, he was the Captain in Company B when I came up here and ah.....G. W. and I got along real well, he was ah....in his later years of Rangering and as.....as a Captain andand as.....and as I said, I worked for him about five years before he retired and as he began to wind down I'd guess you'd say, he gave me quite a bit of control over the company and treated me real well and ah.....and I really appreciated it.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah.....Colonel Jim Adams?

JAMES WRIGHT: Colonel Adams was the Colonel of the DPS ah..... I can't remember the exact years, but he was the Colonel at the time I got promoted to Captain and ah....he promoted me to Captain. I liked Jim Adams, he was the type of individual you could depend on, whatever

he said that's the way it went, you might not always agree with him but he was ah....he was the kind of person you could depend on and respect.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Jim Ray?

JAMES WRIGHT: Jim Ray was the Chief of Criminal Law Enforcement in Austin when I was in the Ranger service to begin with before he retired and ah....he was just ah.....excellent, fine man, real fine man.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Rigler, Lewis?

JAMES WRIGHT: And Lewis Rigler, I knew Lewis real well, enjoyed visiting with Lewis, Lewis always had good stories to tell. He....he's a good man and I enjoy being around Lewis.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you work with Slick Alford?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ah....not really ah.....with him, around him, yeah. Known Slick a long time. He was in a.....at the time I was in Company F he was in Company B and vice versa, but ah....yeah Slick is good people, I liked him.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Ah....did you work any with Red Arnold?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, I didn't, Red retired before I became.....came to Dallas Company B and ah.....and died, but ah.... I knew him, I knew his reputation for a long time. Red was a....at one time worked over in Hamilton in Coryell County in his early years as a Ranger. I didn't know him at that time, but he did and I got acquainted with him one time before.....after he retired and before I left Waco, he was in the VA hospital there in Waco and I picked him up one day and carried him over to Gatesville to visit with Sheriff Wendy Cummings who he knew, they knew each other and they had a nice visit and I guess that's about the last time I had any dealings with Red before he died.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Max Womack?

JAMES WRIGHT: And Max Womack came into the Ranger service same time I did and he was stationed over at Atlanta and I was in Waco. And of course I knew Max all through my career, we went to different schools together and things like that and I always had a good time with Max, he was a good officer.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Anybody doesn't like Max Womack doesn't like anybody.

JAMES WRIGHT: Everybody's got to like Max. And then even after I became Captain up here we always got along real fine, he.....Max is another one of those people that you didn't have to worry about doing his job.

ROBERT NIEMAN: David Byrnes?

JAMES WRIGHT: And David was a good supported and help.....helped me considerably when he was my Sergeant in Dallas, a good worker, I was glad to see him get promoted, he's a good man.

ROBERT NIEMAN: And Ronnie Griffith?

JAMES WRIGHT: And Ronnie Griffith came over to Longview.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Sugar Bear.

JAMES WRIGHT:Longview after Glenn Elliott retired and ah..... I didn't know Ronnie at the time.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Oh you didn't, okay.

JAMES WRIGHT: Until he came to Longview.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Okay.

JAMES WRIGHT:as one of my Rangers over there. But Ronny's a good man, fine man, I got acquainted with him and it turned out we got along real fine.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well as you can see, most of these people I've asked are Company B people. Unfortunately I don't know some of the other men. Ah.....could.....any other names you'd like to add on that list?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well there's ah.....a lot of good Rangers all over the state, there's no question about that. Some of the people that I worked with and one of my.....Jack Dean who was the Captain in San Antonio, now U.S. Marshal in that area, was my Sergeant for a short time there in Waco before I promoted, enjoyed being.....working with him. Ah....the ah.....

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well what about Ray Martinez?

JAMES WRIGHT: Ray Martinez was out of San Antonio and I never worked directly with Ray because of the fact we were just different areas, but I liked Ray and we got along fine, I saw him on several occasions and visited with him, really enjoyed beingRay was a good man.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Did you work any down in ah..... I know it wouldn't of been your area, but I know sometimes they'd bring a Ranger in from a different area I guess, down around Duvall County?

JAMES WRIGHT: No, I never worked any in south Texas to speak of at all. I made a few trips down there on different investigations on my own, but ah.....as far as working in the area, no. Ah....Bruce Casteel who is now the Senior Ranger Captain, he was a polygraph operator in Waco when I first got to know him. Well I knew him before that because he was on the Highway Patrol and worked in Bell County. But then he became polygraph operator while I was a Ranger in Waco and I got to know him real well there. Bruce was a fine man, fine people and I was glad to see him get promoted on up to the Ranger service. He was in the.....stationed in the valley for awhile.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Captain ah.....what other questions have I not asked that maybe you would like to have put on the record?

JAMES WRIGHT: Well right now I can't think of anything .

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well your thoughts towards the Ranger Association Foundation and the Ranger Hall of Fame?

JAMES WRIGHT: I'm sorry I didn'tthe question was?

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well just your thoughts on the foundation and the Hall of Fame.

JAMES WRIGHT: Oh what my thoughts are. I think it's great. Ah.... I think the Ranger Foundation is one of the greatest things that ever happened toto the Ranger service and to.....for the promotion of the Texas Rangers and thefor preservation of the history and the tradition of the Rangers and I sure want to see it continue from now on. I think the museum and the Hall of Fame is fine. When I first went in the Ranger service the Ranger offices of Company F were there at the Fort Fisher, where Fort Fisher is now and it was just thethe first room there was all the museum there was there at that time and I've seen it grow to what it is today, adding the Hall of Fame and everything to it. And I just really think it's the great.....one of the greatest museums around as far as I'm concerned and I want to see it continue to be so.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Any other comments you want to add? I've about asked all I know to ask.

JAMES WRIGHT: No I really can't think of anything right now, I'm sure I'll think of a thousand things I wish I'd said when I get through.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Well we can always add it to the tape later on.

JAMES WRIGHT: But ah.... I don't ah....we've covered everything pretty well I guess, as far as I can.....as far as I can think of. I don't think there's anything else to say.

ROBERT NIEMAN: Thank you Captain.

JAMES WRIGHT: You bet.