

Interview with
WARREN YEAGER
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Attorney General's Office
Lubbock, Texas
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Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Warren Yeager, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



Introduction

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WARREN YEAGER
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

NANCY RAY: Today is Monday, November 3rd and we are visiting with Warren Yeager of Shallowater, Texas. We are in the office of the Attorney General in Lubbock, Texas, where ...

WARREN YEAGER: Now watch it...

NANCY RAY: This is gonna be difficult, I can tell.

WARREN YEAGER: It is...I tell you what.

NANCY RAY: Where Mr. Yeager is currently working. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Yeager's career as a Texas Ranger. Ranger Yeager, do I have your permission to record this interview?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes you do.

NANCY RAY: Ranger Yeager, do you understand that this audio will belong to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco, Texas?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes I do.

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

WARREN YEAGER: Yes, you do.

NANCY RAY: All right. Let's start with... tell me full name and where were do you currently live?

WARREN YEAGER: Warren Bob Yeager and I currently live in Shallowater, Texas.

NANCY RAY: OK, and where were you born?

WARREN YEAGER: I was born in Quanah, Texas, a long time ago.

NANCY RAY: A long time ago... how far back is a long time ago?

WARREN YEAGER: 1947.

NANCY RAY: OK, what's your month and day?

WARREN YEAGER: August 15th.

NANCY RAY: OK, very good. And is that where you grew up?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes, grew up my entire life in Quanah and I left at college time and came to Lubbock.

NANCY RAY: So you graduated from school there?

WARREN YEAGER: No, I didn't graduate from school here but I did in Quanah. I went three years to Tech and I decided I was too smart to keep going to school so I went back home for a short while and I wasn't there... maybe two or three years, and I ended up going to Patrol school in Austin.

NANCY RAY: OK, so what uh... well before you go to Patrol school, tell me about your parents, what were their names?

WARREN YEAGER: Bob and Juanita Yeager.

NANCY RAY: Brothers and...

WARREN YEAGER: I had a brother, Joe Yeager, that now lives in South Ava, Missouri. And I have a sister, Romaine Merle, who lives in Cloudcroft, New Mexico.

NANCY RAY: And how do you spell Romaine?

WARREN YEAGER: ROMAYNE.

NANCY RAY: OK, and where were you in the order?

WARREN YEAGER: I was the middle child, the one that has all the trouble.

NANCY RAY: The problem child. OK, well when you were in school, did you have any subjects that you liked?

WARREN YEAGER: No. Football.

NANCY RAY: Football, OK tell us were you good at football?

WARREN YEAGER: No.

NANCY RAY: So you didn't go and play at Tech.

WARREN YEAGER: No. Well, I was kind of supposed to and I had an ankle torn up at the end of my senior year. I fell and messed up my ankle and that kind of ended all my football hopes and wishes.

NANCY RAY: Well that's too bad. What influenced you to become, to go to Highway Patrol?

WARREN YEAGER: I don't know. No, I really I was cowboying at that time for an old boy at that time there at home and uh there was a Safety Education lieutenant by the name of Fant, lived there in Quanah at the time, at the DPS. Asked me how much I was making and said they would send me to school in Austin making more money than I was making out there. So I thought well, that sounded like a pretty good idea. And I'd never thought about it as far as Highway Patrol. Next thing I know I ended up in Austin. And as soon as I got there I was gung ho I guess you'd say. And really enjoyed it from there on.

NANCY RAY: You had to take a test to go to the school?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes.

NANCY RAY: Written test. Did you have an interview board?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes, I had an interview board before that and I took the written test in Wichita Falls. Quanah was between two subdistricts at that time. Took the written test in Wichita Falls and took my oral interview board in Amarillo.

NANCY RAY: OK. Do you remember anything about the interview board?

WARREN YEAGER: Scared me to death.

NANCY RAY: I'll bet, yeah. You evidently gave the right answers.

WARREN YEAGER: Well I hope so.

NANCY RAY: OK, so what about the school? What year was this?

WARREN YEAGER: 1970. Started in March of 1970 and we got out in July of 1970. But we were the first school that ever went through there that I know of that didn't have a place to go when we got out. And it was gonna... they were projecting a lot of vacancies to come about September 1st of that year. So we were actually out a month and a half prior so they told us at that time to go on back to our hometowns where we came from and work with the troopers there in that area. Of course you still had to wear your little old khaki uniform and you was baldheaded, no hair on your head... didn't know anything, couldn't wear a gun. They said just sit there and observe. So everybody thought we was prisoners running around with the Highway Patrol for a long time.

NANCY RAY: What did you learn?

WARREN YEAGER: Learned to watch what you was doing pretty quick. Like I say, I was there for a month and a half. Worked around Vernon, Quanah, and Childress. And I believe the first night, I never will forget that. The first night I was out, like I said, they told you're just gonna observe you're not gonna be involved in anything. And uh I said well that sounds like that fun. So the next thing I knew, we were out on the Red River. We pulled out there and were sitting on the Red River Bridge and they handed me a Tompkins submachine gun. And said if this guy comes on across, we're not gonna let him go any further. I found out that the guy had escaped from the McAlester penitentiary there in Oklahoma and was trying to get into Texas and

hit an old boy in the head and robbed him of his car and stuff and headed into Texas. And it appeared that the Highway Patrol from Oklahoma was after him and got just about on the Red River Bridge... right before that he turned around and went back the other way because somebody got there before he did and we had to turn all our lights on and he saw us and turned around and headed back the other way. And you heard a little noise over there on the other side and the Oklahoma boys said we've got him caught over here and that kind of made me think right there, what did I get into? You know this was the first night I'd ever done anything and here we are, scared to death already.

NANCY RAY: You're just supposed to be observing (laughter).

WARREN YEAGER: That's right and I observed a lot that night.

NANCY RAY: Well let's go back to the school. Tell us a little bit about it.

WARREN YEAGER: The school was rough. I had to, like I said, I didn't do too good you know with my classes in Quanah when I grew up. I'm not much of a studier but there you had to. I think you had to keep and maintain a grade average of 75 which that didn't bother me. And then the athletic part, you had to maintain a certain proficiency in everything you did there in the school. And that really didn't bother me. I was in pretty good shape when I went down there, just from wrestling calves and horses there around home. And I enjoyed that part of it. I'd worked out my entire life and kind of enjoyed that so that didn't give me any problem. But the minor things was stuff that a country boy had a hard time understanding was walking down two flights of stairs at 4 o'clock in the morning with a little old khaki uniform on and take right back off and put on gym clothes you know. But you know little things like that kind of kept me going. But I caught onto it real fast and enjoyed it and then had a good time the whole time I was down there.

NANCY RAY: I've heard it's pretty rough though.

WARREN YEAGER: It's pretty rough, really was. But that kind of got you maintained or trained to the part you know that if something was gonna happen out on the road, well you could probably take care of it a little bit, if you made it through the school.

NANCY RAY: Do you remember how many started your school and how many finished?

WARREN YEAGER: There were 74 I believe it was that started and I think I was 33 when we graduated so we lost way over half. And being Yeager, I was always at the end of the group being in the alphabet and boy I was moving up chairs everyday you know, thinking when's my turn coming? I got to notice every day that was somebody was gone but some of the other guys didn't know that.

NANCY RAY: Well do you remember your monitors at the school?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes I do. One was uh Sergeant Roberts... was a big old boy. And he was just about retiring age when he was sergeant down there. And he retired a short time later. I can remember him because we was concerned about him because at the end of the school, one of the kind of rituals was go whup on your advisors, the counselors... you know have a good time. Throw them in the shower or whatever. And we were concerned... one of them was an ex-football player from Oklahoma, Jimmy Gilstrap. Another one was, ended up being a major, McCamey, but he was a sergeant at that time... all three of them. And uh that wasn't Gilstrap either, he was a training officer. But anyway, we was concerned about Sergeant Roberts being one that how are we gonna treat this old man? Here we are a bunch of young guys in shape and I will remember, the day before we're gonna graduate or the same day, that evening we were gonna graduate. And he came into the cafeteria down there wearing high-bib overalls and didn't have a tooth in his head, took all his teeth out... said I'm gonna tell you young boys something. Said when you jump on, get a good hold and he meant it. He like to whup that ten or fifteen of us

all over the place that night. So we got where we wasn't concerned about them old men as much as we thought we ought to be (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Oh you learn a lot when you're in school.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh we did, we learned a lot.

NANCY RAY: OK, so you stayed in your khakis for a while and then what happened?

WARREN YEAGER: Then my station came open in Brownfield, Texas, so I ended up being my first station was in Brownfield. And I stayed there for about a year. And uh they had a little trouble over in Tahoka and they ended up transferring me to Tahoka to put a guy that had been on longer than I had been, on probation under me. And I believe the other guy was released from the Department. And I was over there just long enough, I think it was a year and a half, that I said if I can ever go back to Brownfield that I wanted to go. So I went back to Brownfield as soon as I could and I stayed there until 1981 when I made Rangers.

NANCY RAY: Well being there on the border, what kind of...

WARREN YEAGER: That's Brownfield...

NANCY RAY: Oh, you said Brownfield, I thought you said...

WARREN YEAGER: That's 40 miles, they didn't want me to get too far away from Lubbock... they thought I'd probably get lost.

NANCY RAY: Oh, all right. Well then what was going on in Brownfield?

WARREN YEAGER: Everything. Uh...

NANCY RAY: Could you narrow it a bit?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh, same thing that went on everywhere else in the state. Had a lot of fatal wrecks, a lot of crimes that took place that we helped the local authorities with as far as burglaries and robberies and murders and...

NANCY RAY: So ya'll did more than traffic?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah, yes... Back in those days, you were probably a non-paid deputy for the sheriff too. Because I mean you know you had your traffic job but during those lulls if something happened and they needed more manpower, we were the first ones in there that they'd call. Usually they didn't have to call us we'd be in there doing anything we could to help.

NANCY RAY: Well, what did you do about the fatalities... the wrecks... were you trying to stop them? Were they DWIs?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes, like I say, anywhere you went, you had so many traffic fatalities... you always tried to keep that at a minimum. And most of ours over in that part of the country, you wouldn't believe it but the major highways where all the traffic was, was not where the fatalities were. They were on the Farm-to-Market roads where Farmer Jones never did stop at a stop sign and didn't need to... and somebody that wasn't familiar with the country was running through there and ran into him or something like that you know. Or a lot of times there were drunk drivers out on the back roads trying to make it home at a higher speed than it would be in town. The biggest part of our fatalities were out on the back, rural Farm-to-Market roads.

NANCY RAY: Tractors driving on the road and...

WARREN YEAGER: All types of things out there.

NANCY RAY: Well who was your first partner?

WARREN YEAGER: My first partner was Thelbert Milsap... and that's a heck of a name, isn't it (laughter)?

NANCY RAY: It is.

WARREN YEAGER: Thelbert was a good old boy. He grew up around Coryell County down there and he had came out there I think approximately two years, I think, prior to me getting

there. And uh Thelbert and I had a lot of fun together. And he was a real nice, naïve, easygoing guy... a Sunday School teacher and I kind of broke him in being the rookie and introduced him to what some of life really was out there because I don't think he'd been to a lot of it. But uh we had a big time and learned to work with each other real well.

NANCY RAY: Well, I understand that sometimes you bond with a partner and sometimes you don't. So evidently ya'll did.

WARREN YEAGER: We bonded real well. Wasn't very long that he left though and for a long... I worked probably, just guess five to six years, maybe a little longer without a partner. At that time, we ended being a one and a two and ended up being a three-man station. And the guys on that I broke in ended up working with another guy when they'd come in. So there for a long time I was by myself.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well when you started did you have radar?

WARREN YEAGER: We had an old broke down radar. They said it was a radar but it was an old Stevenson unit and that's the ones that had the old needle on it. And you had to get out there with tuning forks there. Every time you stopped a car you had to do a re-setup again and reposition it and get a tuning fork and put in front of it and set it for zero and then set it for *unknown word* with the tuning fork set. By the time you'd get everything calibrated, and that took maybe ten or fifteen minutes to get ready... by the time a car time another car would come by that you could test (laughter). It wasn't nothing like they have now. But we did have radar. We did a lot of pursuit speeds back then.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever have any crashes?

WARREN YEAGER: Did I have any crashes?

NANCY RAY: Uh huh.

WARREN YEAGER: No, I didn't. I had one. I was... it really wasn't a crash. I was sitting at a red light and a guy ran into the back of me there in Brownfield. But as far as... I had lots of near crashes I guess, a lot of high speed chases... but always lucky as far as wrecks.

NANCY RAY: Well before we get too far. Let me ask, when did you marry?

WARREN YEAGER: I met a girl when I went out there. Within that first year, I met her and got married the next year.

NANCY RAY: OK. And what's her name?

WARREN YEAGER: Her name is Phyllis.

NANCY RAY: And do you have any children?

WARREN YEAGER: Have three children. I have the oldest daughter named Dawn. I have a middle daughter named Tiffany, and a son named Robert Kyle.

NANCY RAY: OK. Any grandkids?

WARREN YEAGER: Just seven.

NANCY RAY: Just seven!

WARREN YEAGER: Just seven. I have Blake is fixing to be 15 years old, Blade is a stepgrandson and he's 14. I have a granddaughter that's 11, I have two twin grandsons that's 10, another granddaughter that's fixing to be 6 next March, she's 5 now. And then a grandson that's just a little over 2 years old. And they're all within rock-throwing distance of us. So we have a big time with a lot of grandkids.

NANCY RAY: Pretty lively then.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh, we have lots of football games, lots of soccer games, lots of all that type.

NANCY RAY: That's good. Makes life kind of fun, doesn't it?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah, it does.

NANCY RAY: OK, let's go back. You're a Trooper now, right?

WARREN YEAGER: OK.

NANCY RAY: What can you tell us about your... that happened during your career that might be interesting?

WARREN YEAGER: Nothing (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Somehow I find that hard to...

WARREN YEAGER: Oh I'm sure there's all type of things but I can't think of anything.

NANCY RAY: Can you think of any pursuits that you had that had...

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. I can remember one good pursuit one time that uh... this is when I was in Tahoka. And uh we was out working a fatal accident. And matter of fact, it was my day off. I was at the house and my partner called and said can you come out and help direct traffic? So I put on a uniform and took my personal car and drove out there to where this wreck was and a guy was killed and we had traffic blocked up on US 87. And I was sitting up there kind of directing traffic and we were just about to get the accident cleared up when I looked and here come a car coming from Lubbock and jumped across the bar ditch and headed back where he came from. Well, that was a pretty good sign... red light that something was wrong you know. And I didn't know if it was somebody wanted or a bank robber or thief or somebody was wanted or just what it is but I was gonna go find out. So I told him, like I said, the wreck was about to be cleared out, so I jumped in the patrol car and I took off and headed up there and about the time I did, well they went to running from us, or from me. And we ended up going about ten or fifteen miles up that way and then we went back through... and ended up in Lynn County. Went through Lynn County, well that's where we started but on the eastern side of Lynn

County almost into Garza County and back down a Farm-to-Market road. Lasted about fifteen or twenty minutes and we covered lots of miles in fifteen, twenty minutes. And finally got him stopped and all it was, was some kids that had a little marijuana with them was all it was. We uh, another pursuit I had one time that... a guy took off running from the officers there in Tahoka. And they called and said could we help. They said they were running a hundred miles and hour and couldn't catch him. Like I say they already had about a five-mile head start on us. We jumped in the car in Tahoka and took off. And we caught them within about twenty miles...so we was cranking. About that time we had an old car that run about a hundred and fifty, sixty miles an hour.

NANCY RAY: What kind of car was it?

WARREN YEAGER: It was a '73 Plymouth at that time, 383. And I tell you it wasn't as big as a 440 but it was just as fast on top or faster than a 440 was plus they wouldn't blow up like the old 440s would. And I chased that old boy... it felt so good... I finally pulled up beside him, told my partner at that time... I said just wave him over you know, we're doing so good. And about that time when we did, he stuck his tongue out at us and took off. From there on, I'm running right bumper to bumper with him and we couldn't do anything with him. And I called ahead... and that's where the caprock is, right between Tahoka and Post. And I called the Post Highway Patrol unit and I said ya'll set up under the caprock. Said we can't do anything with this guy, can't even gain on him in my car and I knew I could outrun his car. Said when we come out, just don't let him pass you, just block him down so he can't get into Post. Well that guy was gonna surprise him and he set off his red lights going down there and was standing on the side of the road with a shotgun... thought he was gonna you know maybe blow out a tire or something. And he said we came by so fast he was afraid he would shoot me and I'd roll in the car with him. So

anyway we had two cars chasing him and we went through and got the old sheriff out and they went through Post and ended up almost into Scurry County. By that time, I forgot, went thirty some odd miles from there. But anyway, it averaged out where we was running 110 miles an hour. That's average after stopping once out there talking to him, going through Post and then all those curves down in Garza County. So we was cranking on on the straight-aways. But finally got him stopped and he was drunk. If he had been sober, he couldn't have drove like he did. Or he was just at that point so he surprised you know... just didn't have any sense. Did a pretty good job. But there were all types of races and chases like that back then.

NANCY RAY: Well you said you had fun. We've heard different ones say we made our own fun.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh, we made some fun too.

NANCY RAY: Anything you can tell us about?

WARREN YEAGER: I loved to hunt coyotes. And I thought that was good firearms training for me to work backroads in the winter time and all and hunt coyotes while I was supposedly working. And I couldn't wait for a snowstorm... and I always told my sergeant I was checking for stranded motorists on the back roads and we'd get after a coyote... and hit the snow banks running up and down the roads. Always had fun doing that until one day I forgot he was in the car with me and took off chasing coyotes. And he said I was gonna get us both fired. And I told him a good coyote just come by once every month you know but those speeders come by every five minutes so he kind of figured out I was gonna do it anyway and we went on (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Well you never knew who you were gonna stop.

WARREN YEAGER: No, you didn't.

NANCY RAY: So you had to have had some...

WARREN YEAGER: It's hard to believe that after you stop anywhere from... three, four thousand cars a day go by and you stop maybe a hundred a day sometimes... you didn't do nothing with maybe three of them but back in those days. But you stopped after a while, it's just like any other job, you learn to start typing... you know little knick knacks come to you where you can just feel things out. You used to be able to stop behind a car and just the way he actually stopped, you could tell whether this guy was gonna gripe at you whether he was gonna be real polite or whether he was a crook or you know he's got something to hide... it just came to you after a while. But that's what you hoped you learned your first year or two out on the road helped more than anything else.

NANCY RAY: Were you ever afraid?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. Lots of times. That's sort of like Matt Dillon said, a guy that wasn't ever afraid is a fool. So you kind of watched out what was going on.

NANCY RAY: Well you didn't have a cage... the backseat wasn't...

WARREN YEAGER: No. We learned... probably couldn't do it nowadays. But used to be we never put anybody behind us. So if we couldn't get them in the front seat with us, back like when I worked by myself, we put them on the hood and drive slow and hoped they didn't fall off (laughter). We used a lot of coat hangers and handcuffs. I always kept four or five extra coat hangers hanging in the backseat and kind of slip them right above a guy's elbows and put them back there behind... wrapped a couple of times. He'd probably have been stout enough to pull them apart but they hurt so bad they wouldn't. So they kind of... you'd take that hook and kind of hook it in his belt and you kind of had them pretty well chained up.

NANCY RAY: I guess you did. I never heard about that one before.

WARREN YEAGER: It would work.

NANCY RAY: OK, so how long were you in Brownfield?

WARREN YEAGER: I was there, like I say, the total time when I first went was September of '70 and I left in September of '81. But I did have that about eighteen months there in Tahoka.

NANCY RAY: Well when did you go into the Rangers?

WARREN YEAGER: 1981. September of '81.

NANCY RAY: Well why did you want to become a Ranger?

WARREN YEAGER: Well that goes back to Quanah again. You know like I say I never thought about... I didn't think... but in the back of my mind, there's an old monument up there to Bill McDonald where he was buried in Quanah, Texas. And you'd heard stories from the time I was about that tall I guess. And I just thought boy, he was a heck of a man.

NANCY RAY: What stories did you hear about him?

WARREN YEAGER: Well the main one was the gunfight between him the sheriff of Childress out there on the main street of Quanah. And it started over an old you know, a guy that had their feelings on their sleeves way back in those days... and the way it was told, the old sheriff from Childress was kind of a politically-minded fellow and he had a friend of his that got in a bind up in Oklahoma in Indian territory back and forth stealing some cows and stuff. And uh McDonald went after him and brought him back. But the old sheriff said we'll get him put down here in my county or down over here in one of these down here, well you know we'll let him go or do whatever we want to with him. And McDonald ended up taking him into Fort Worth. And when he got down there he kind of made the sheriff mad so there was a little mouthing going on both ways and threatening and stuff like that. And one day he got on the train and came into Quanah with a bunch of his old buddies and they had sort of like the old walk-down gunfight right there in front of the Dinner Bell Café in Quanah. And Bill McDonald was shot and wounded and the

other guy, he wounded him and he died on the way back to Childress, the sheriff did. And like I say, each of them had three or four friends behind them I think. And we don't know probably in the long run the way it really was but that but... and the old history you know like I say, you couldn't have poured history on me when I was in school and now I can't get enough of Texas history and stuff. Especially up in that old part of the country. They had Teddy Roosevelt and Bill McDonald and Quanah Parker all on a wolf hunt out there toward Medicine Mound up little old hills out there outside of town and uh for years you know they carried on that old wolf hunt. I mean... remember going to them when I was a little boy you know. That started way back with them out toward Medicine Mound.

NANCY RAY: Well before we go to the Rangers, I was gonna ask. You mentioned stopping someone with marijuana. Was narcotics a bad problem when you were a trooper?

WARREN YEAGER: I didn't know what it was when I left Quanah. I'd never heard of it you know. And then it came out... found out what it was a little bit and before people had it around but you really didn't know it 'til then. At that time, the main problem was heroin, stuff coming out of Mexico, hard drugs. And uh the marijuana like I say come in the '60s and the hippie days it got popular and all. At that time, they were really working hard, well you could send a guy to the penitentiary for one seed of marijuana. It didn't have to be a certain amount or nothing. You just proved that he had marijuana, just a trace of it, you know a rope of it in the ash tray or a seed left or a seed with him, well that was grounds for penitentiary time.

NANCY RAY: But the laws have, they're a lot looser now.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. I can remember. Right before I left the Rangers, I was working on the border on a deal down there where the were taking... I don't think they would even

prosecute federally or nothing less than 500 pounds of it down there in the Valley coming across the line. Unless they had known suspects right on hand and all that stuff. So it's changed a lot.

NANCY RAY: Well... OK... so you want to become a Ranger. How did you go about become a Ranger, your first steps?

WARREN YEAGER: You just started studying because you know that there's a written test involved and that was the main problem there.

NANCY RAY: And so what all was on that test.

WARREN YEAGER: Everything. Had Texas penal code, and code of criminal procedure, Texas history, geography, government, and you name it, it was on there.

NANCY RAY: How long is this test?

WARREN YEAGER: It will usually take you probably an average of four hours on most guys, three to four hours to complete it... and about 500 questions. And uh that was back when my old partner. You were talking about my partner when we started way back when... helping each other try to study then. And uh it just carried over. You'd always let your partner, he'd read you questions and ask you questions and you'd study. Try to ask him... you know the best way for me to learn for me instead of reading and trying to dig it out than anything. And my wife, now she can tell you a whole lot about history.

NANCY RAY: So she was a lot of help.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh, you bet. Because she was always helping too.

NANCY RAY: Well, when you were in Brownfield, in your trooper days, were you with Rangers much?

WARREN YEAGER: No, not a whole lot. We worked with some when something happened down there you know in that area that caused a Ranger to be sent out of Lubbock or something. I

worked... Jim Singleton passed away not too long back. He was an old retired Ranger that lived over in New Mexico his last few years over at Ruidoso. He was a Ranger here at Lubbock and worked a big gambling deal over there. And we went out and busted this gambling, uh phone house or gambling house or whatever you want to call it. But did a lot of booking out of there when he was there. And then uh...

NANCY RAY: Well explain what you did? How did ya'll do that?

WARREN YEAGER: They had an intelligence agent had been working with them or working in there with them. He had been gambling with them and all this stuff and he called at the last minute and he got enough information to go ahead and run a search warrant out there. And they got the search warrant out of Lubbock to hit this place and they called and said they had it, wondered if we'd come help them. You know go out there and... at least a lot of times and all that you want to have at least one good police car looking around to know that it's police instead of just somebody else going in and maybe robbing them or something. They want to at least know there are police there. And we go help contain the place and hold it while they were interviewing people and stuff like that.

NANCY RAY: OK, you took the test. Did you pass it the first time?

WARREN YEAGER: No. That's where... matter of fact, Thelbert had left since then but we got together and took it about the same time the first time. And the first time uh I did real well. Well, real well for me is what I was thinking on a written test. It wasn't that well but I did good enough to get picked on the list to go. And so did Thelbert. During the time that Thelbert had been gone, he had been trying to further his education and he ended up getting his Masters. He had went to a place and got into Drivers License for a while just to make Ranger to where he could study. He thought his BA and then his Masters would help him a lot. So I knew he was

gonna be two or three steps ahead of me. And he had moved back to Lubbock, or I believe it was Plainview, north of Lubbock. And uh we ended up going and taking the same test you know. We were going down there the same time and we came back and I asked him how he did when we finally got the results. He said you don't want to know. And I said no, it's not gonna bother me. I said Thelbert, I said it's bad. They called 25 of us to the board. I said one guy didn't show up. I said I came out 23rd. I said I feel sorry for that stupid booger that came... he said thank you (laughter). So I found out I had messed up there a little bit. But anyway, at that time being so far out there at Lubbock away from Austin and not knowing anybody, it kind of made it a little bit harder to get in the know and know what was really going on and who you really... but anyway, I kind of embarrassed myself there. And the next time I was up in about the middle and the third time I made it.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well what about your partner, did he ever...

WARREN YEAGER: He finally did but it was... oh it was several years later. But he was almost 50 I believe when he made it.

NANCY RAY: OK, you were called to the interview board then. That was your next step?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes.

NANCY RAY: Who was on that board?

WARREN YEAGER: Uh, let me see, on the first one... I'll get these all mixed up. I know Skippy Rundell was on one, G. W. Burks was on one. I'll guarantee you G. W., you don't forget him. Uh I think Captain Bill McDonald was on one of them. Captain Charlie Moore was on one of them. Uh Private Ranger Jackie Peoples was on one, one day, one time. I think it was my first one. Uh they had other guys... one of them was a major. Who was that major? I don't know. It would be hard to remember, that's been a long time back.

NANCY RAY: Well explain what they were looking for. What did they ask you?

WARREN YEAGER: I don't have any idea. They was asking questions they probably didn't need to be asking. This was back about the change of times, like I say the late '60s, the early '70s, there was a drastic change in attitude toward laws, police officers, what you get by with. And I can remember them asking me. They wanted somebody to back a Ranger about as hard as you could go you know. And I remember but you still, you know you didn't do anything illegal. And I can remember them asking one, what if I'd seen... what did they say we was working... take for example. You're working an investigation where a little girl, 13-year old girl was raped and murdered. And uh the older Ranger you was working with help an all... all of a sudden, the guy spit at him and he reached over there and slapped him. Next thing you know, they're in there asking you what you saw. What are you gonna tell them? I'd tell them I didn't see anything. Well that made them feel pretty good. One of them said what if they get a little bit further and the FBI comes in and asks you to give a statement. I'd say I'd tell them if I was a Ranger, I think it would be my job to take statements not to give them. Boy that really... and all there. They went on a step further and said well let's say they load you up, got you in the car and you're going to federal court. Said this is your last chance. You're gonna go to the penitentiary instead of somebody else... are you gonna tell the truth. What'd you see? Tell them I didn't see nothing. They said they set you in the chair and put your right hand on the Bible and tell you to tell the truth. They say what happened? I'd say old Thelbert just slapped the fire out of him (laughter). But you didn't go far enough to incriminate yourself but you worked as well as you could to try to... but they did feel you out to see what type of person you were too, mainly. But I remember talking about G. W. Burks. He was a cranky old son of a gun. Good man but he was cranky and well known. And you know during your interview board you're supposed to make eye contact

with the guy asking you questions and move around where everybody... Well old G. W. asked me, he said looking at your biographical sheet or the file they had on us on what we'd done and you know the schools we had and the training and you'd ever been trouble, what the complaint was. And he said see here you had two complaints. Said what was it about? And he swung his chair around and looked out the window, stuck his feet up in the window sill. I thought do I talk to him or what? And I said I haven't had any complaints. There's two places in there says two. He said I want to know why and he hadn't turned around yet. And I'm thinking how do I explain? I said I haven't. He said you calling me a liar? And I said no sir, I'm not doing that. I believe there's some type of misunderstanding. Maybe you got somebody else's sheet. I don't know what's going on. And one of the other guys spoke up... it was just a little old deal you know to see how you'd react. They said G. W., that's two blanks in case he did have action one or action two. He swung back around and said I knew back. But he was a cranky old man (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Oh goodness.

WARREN YEAGER: They're a lot of fun too but they put you on the spot every way they could just to see what your actual true feelings were and how you'd answer your questions and how you'd react to certain situations. They learned a lot about you in those boards.

NANCY RAY: I bet they did.

WARREN YEAGER: Like I say, most of them had you in there about 35 to 40 minutes and it actually seemed like you was in there for five minutes when it seemed like, before you went in, it seemed like two days sitting out in the room right before you went in. But it was fun.

NANCY RAY: Well when you, the year you made it, can you tell us some of the others who made it with you?

WARREN YEAGER: Boy named Charlie Fleming, uh *unknown name* Morris, is that right? I can see him plain as day. Now you see you get me off on names and I'm in all kind of trouble. I can't remember mine half the time. That's why they gave us name tags.

NANCY RAY: Well, after you made it, uh did you go somewhere immediately or did you have stay on the list for a while?

WARREN YEAGER: Uh, when I found it I made it, it was a short while. I knew it was gonna be within a month or two but I came into Lubbock.

NANCY RAY: OK, so here you are in Lubbock.

WARREN YEAGER: Here I was in Brownfield. And I made Ranger and they tell me I'm gonna have to move to Lubbock because everybody at that time was trying to get me to stay over there... as far as my buddies. And here I moved to Lubbock, 30 miles, so they could tell me to move my territory to Brownfield. But it worked out good. And I would have moved to... when I made Ranger to work with so I was tickled to death just to come anywhere. Well then ended up having to drive from Lubbock all the way back over there to my territory.

NANCY RAY: Well when you pinned that badge on, did you wear your badge? One Ranger said he never wore his badge.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. I wore mine.

NANCY RAY: How did you feel, can you describe that?

WARREN YEAGER: Well, I don't think it was any different from any other badge.

NANCY RAY: Really. Did people react to you differently?

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: How was that?

WARREN YEAGER: They thought I was something a whole lot than I thought I was something you know. They expected more from me I guess just from history and what they'd heard in the past and stuff. So they really had... they probably really had many deeper feelings than I did you know. I mean once... biggest part of it was when you pin you it on it was like you know to do, you said you were gonna do what was right. That was for the Highway Patrol badge or at that time when I made Ranger, you didn't have to come from Highway Patrol you know. You could have been chief of police, sheriff, deputy sheriff, game warden, or anybody as long as you came out on the interview and did all right on your written test. So but nearly everybody... one badge was just like another. I mean I was proud of it, don't get me wrong. I was very proud of it but it didn't... as far as my feelings of it, I guess it didn't make a difference.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well who was your first captain and sergeant and lieutenant or whatever?

WARREN YEAGER: Now when I first made Ranger, at the same time that I made it the captain that was here was Bob Werner. And Bob transferred out, he went south to the assistant senior Ranger captain office in Austin at the same time that I was coming into Lubbock so he really he didn't get to see me or supervise me. And at that time, Charlie Moore was transferring in as a new captain from Dallas coming into Lubbock. So he was my first captain.

NANCY RAY: All right. And who else was stationed here?

WARREN YEAGER: Uh Joe Hunt and Jackie Peoples. There was three of us.

NANCY RAY: We've interviewed Joe Hunt.

WARREN YEAGER: I'm sorry.

NANCY RAY: And your name came up.

WARREN YEAGER: I'm sorry.

NANCY RAY: Surely did.

WARREN YEAGER: What did he say?

NANCY RAY: I can't tell you (laughter). Well can you remember, what was your first case?

WARREN YEAGER: I tell you, I'll never forget that one. That is one, here I am a Ranger, brand new, and at that time you didn't get any help and you didn't ask your supervisors for help. At that time they thought well if you made Ranger, you're gonna learn and if you had to learn by messing up, well that's the best lesson you'll ever learn. So they told me that... I was sitting in there... hadn't even... it was about the second day and Sergeant Newberry was my sergeant, Bud Newberry. Bud called me and said Warren, you need to get to Tulia. They just had a Highway Patrol car torched up there burnt plumb to the ground and you need to go up there and figure out who did it. I thought oh my goodness. So I load up, worried, scared plumb to death all the way up there. And I thought how am I gonna figure this out you know? I never had any arson training, never had nothing, never really any criminal training yet beside the little bit you know working for the Highway Patrol. But I knew Peoples so I was lucky there. I get up there and sure enough we had a burned up state vehicle and about two or three thousand dollars worth of county radars in it and stuff like that. I mean it was worth a lot of money. It was burned up in the trooper's front yard. And uh they had knocked some holes in the headlights and filled them up with gasoline. And knocked some holes in the taillights, I think they'd seen that on some TV show so when they get in there and crank it up well it would blow up. But they got carried away and doused it all on the top and the trunk and all this stuff and, and uh set it on fire. And sure enough it burned it to the ground. So I get up there and the lieutenant's there... it was Joe Rex Smith at the time. He said we gotta figure out who did this and I said yeah, I know I got to. I didn't tell him that but I said this was my first deal and I'm scared to death... I don't know what to do. So I said the first thing we need to do is find out who might have some hard feelings

against the trooper. Well that was everybody in the country. It was one of the officers... you know he was one who was real strict with everybody. I mean you could have made up anybody... anybody could have had some reason to get after him. So we started going around thinking well who bought any gas you know. A can of gasoline... check around all these stores and see if they had been siphoning gas or something. We went to this one store and... 7-11 there and they just happened to... hey you know, about midnight last night these kids came in and bought a gallon of... had a Prestone antifreeze jug, one of those yellow ones. And uh they got a gallon worth of gas. After we figured out who it was well the officers up there knew... said these guys would do it just for meanness. So we started thinking well now we got somebody at least working... Like I say, this is the only time, I'm gonna have to swear to this, the only time I ever tricked anybody in my life you know. If I didn't have the goods, I wouldn't lie to them. I would say this is what I got. I was truthful with everybody but this first case... I knew I had to do something. Well we're going in there. We get these guys in there and we start setting them around. And I'm in there interviewing this one. You know we got this information and going and got him pretty well stirred up and I told Joe Rex to... I need to talk to you a minute. We got him outside and I said hey, you know we ain't got nothing on nobody. He said what you gotta do is go find us a yellow Prestone antifreeze jug and I said you give me about 30 more minutes. And in 30 minutes you come knock on the door. Don't do nothing but open that door and show me that can. So sure enough, he leaves and he goes looking for a yellow Prestone antifreeze can. And I got in there and started talking to this old boy I said you know, you don't need to hold anything from us. I said if I catch you in any lies, I said it's gonna be that much harder on you and I told him that uh, you know just one piece, shred of evidence... We already know they're pretty well involved and one little piece of evidence like I say and we need a fingerprint, we need

a trace of evidence of any type or anything involved in... Well you know I meandered and bulled along there about 30 minutes and (*he knocked on the table*) he stuck that in and nodded and he said I'm sorry. He said we'll tell you about it. He broke down out there and told everybody that did it. So he started calling ... and it wasn't but a bunch of kids out doing something they shouldn't have been doing. But anyway, I kind of got lucky there because we didn't have a shred of evidence on anybody. It would have been forever you know. So I did kind of go out of bounds as far as tricking somebody that one time (laughter).

NANCY RAY: That was your one time...

WARREN YEAGER: That I can remember and I'm gonna talk about.

NANCY RAY: That's your disclaimer, right?

WARREN YEAGER: That's a disclaimer.

NANCY RAY: Well, uh what about your most disappointing case, can you think of that? Did you ever have one you couldn't solve and it just sticks with you?

WARREN YEAGER: Well, we surely did. Now Joe might have mentioned this. We worked a little murder up here in Lubbock, a little black girl that was raped and murdered and thrown out outside of Lubbock out here. And that's one of the deals that we knew who did it from the first day that we went over there checking into it but we never could get any evidence. And after all these years... and like I say, you gotta back up now. We're talking back in the early '80s and the mid '80s where you couldn't even spell DNA much less knew what it was. So luckily we saved some evidence. We didn't know we did at the time but we just saved this... where we'd gone back in and finally, I don't know if they'd even brought it out yet or not, the old boy was in the penitentiary and they were fixing to charge him with the murder on the deal out there. But it bothered us so long knowing this sorry guy did it. We know who did it and there's nothing we

can do about it you know. So that was kind of disheartening. And we had lots of those like that but still...

NANCY RAY: Now you spent your entire career here in the Lubbock area, is that correct? With the Rangers...

WARREN YEAGER: That's all I want to talk about (laughter). No, I spent sixteen months... I screwed up and made lieutenant and went to San Antonio, Texas. And I don't like the weather. I didn't like that down there and I don't think they liked me. But anyway, I came back to West Texas.

NANCY RAY: Did you come back as a lieutenant?

WARREN YEAGER: No, I came back to my old job. I told them if I could have my old job, I wouldn't ever bother them again. And that's all we need to say about that (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Well let me just ask this. The difference between being a lieutenant and being a Ranger that's out working cases... what's the biggest difference?

WARREN YEAGER: You was a secretary. Well it was at that time, that's what I didn't like. You know you kept the books, you kept the budget, you kept the records, you checked everybody else's reports, you know you hear what they was out there doing having a big time and you was sitting in there behind a desk you know playing on a computer and checking reports. Well at that time, wasn't even sitting behind a computer. You was just sitting there checking reports.

NANCY RAY: OK. So you came back to Lubbock then. You're a Ranger and you're working cases again. What kind of cases do you have mainly?

WARREN YEAGER: You name it, we had it. From misdemeanor nothings to major multiple murders. And our territories up here, like I say, when I first made Ranger, the first time I had

Gaines County. I didn't have Gaines County, I lied to you right there. I had Denver City and Plains in Yoakum County... Yoakum County, Terry County, Lynn County and shared Lubbock. And after I left and came back, I had Palmer County, Bailey County, Lamb County, and Lubbock County. And then after Joe left, I got the old ranching cowboy county I always wanted, I had Crosby County, Dickens County, Kent County and Garza, did I say Garza?

NANCY RAY: No, I don't think you said Garza.

WARREN YEAGER: And Garza. So I had just about all of them around Lubbock at one time or the other. But a big case I worked one time... you talked about the little bitty cases. There was a burglary, had a ring of burglars, and they were eating us up along the South Plains. And I got wind of who it was and started trying to get enough information to get charges filed on them. And I probably shouldn't say this but they was living on an old place out here that was owned by the Texas Tech at that time, chief of police had a little old spot out here. And I mean we had everything but the case filed and I thought well he ought to know or something. So I go over there and hit him up. And said Chief, what do you know about this old boy living out there on your place you know? Best old tenant I ever had. Good old boy, he's got two or three boys, I mean a good old guy. I'll tell you... he said I'd do anything for them, best boys... best tenants I ever had. I said well I was just wondering you know, I wanted to check... and I left. And I thought boy, that's not doing any good. Well it took about two days later I got enough information we got the cases filed on them, three separate counties around where him and his sons were stealing stuff from everybody all over this rural area. Got a call from Tech Chief of Police. He called me back in there and said Yeager, said while you're checking this stuff, he said I had 34 pullets out there and he stole half my chickens. Of course they probably didn't, the coyotes probably ate them, but as soon as... he was the best tenant he ever had and this all come

up and then he wants me to get out with... uh the deputy chief of police started calling me the "pullet Ranger." And he said I worked some fowl deeds he said (laughter). So that stuck with me for a long time. But anyway, that was just one of our minor cases. Nothing... you know anytime we can help any... most of what I was getting out is all these rural communities, like I say, Crosbyton, if somebody'd steal a loaf of bread off the front porch of the 7-11 and that suspect lives in Plainview, he can't stop and leave. You know he's got maybe him and one deputy and they're taking care of that whole county and he needed somebody to go up there, well we'd you know help them on it. They'd request us to do you know small cases that didn't amount to anything. We'd help them just as much there unless something bigger was going at the time well we'd drop it and go to it. But we did that and like I say, we helped them haul prisoners to Huntsville and anyway we could help these local sheriffs.

NANCY RAY: How did you have enough hours in the day?

WARREN YEAGER: You didn't. You worked around the clock a lot of times like... and that's way back before FSLA came in. And you know you might be gone for a week or two. You might load up and say see you mama, I gotta go and that was it. And you may be gone on a murder trial that kept you going for three or four days running without any sleep. And you gotta stick with those leads and... do what you can when you can.

NANCY RAY: Well is there a murder case you can tell us about?

WARREN YEAGER: There was one that uh I worked that... there are several murders and didn't know it at the time. There were probably three or four or five around the Panhandle up here and it was a girl by the name Diana Lumbrera.

NANCY RAY: How do you spell that last name?

WARREN YEAGER: LUMBRERA, Lumbrera. And uh she was kind of a migrant person herself and moved to these different rural communities out around the territory. And every time she did, she'd get her a new husband. Every time she did she'd have a new baby. And then all of a sudden that baby would die. And we didn't know anything about it. And because of changing names and no insurance and no questions... Matter of fact, she'd go and people would feel real sorry for her and help her bury the baby and all that stuff. And she messed up and got in uh... where was that... Garden City, Kansas, I believe. I know it was Garden City, Kansas, now. But anyway, there's a Garden City, Kansas, and she came in and running around with her oldest baby at the time which was already a year or so old into... which was the last one to survive. And she ran him in to the emergency room saying he's dying, he's dying... I need help, I need help. And it just happened she fouled up that time because at the same time, they was having a local or a national pathologists meeting there and all these, there was a bunch of big doctors from all over the nation, pathologists and forensic pathologists attending school up there. And they just happened to hear about this and they went in there and one of them said uh uh... there's patiki eye, which you have a little old blood vessels that bust in your eyes, little old bubbles and they'll bust. And that's the number one sign of being suffocated.

NANCY RAY: And what was that called?

WARREN YEAGER: Patiki eye. And anyway, they all said uh uh, this baby's been... the air's cut off right here. Said that baby's been murdered. So at the same time one of their family members up there said you know that's so tragic, that's happened to her about five other times. So they called us down here and we started checking and found out... I first found out she had one that died in the hospital here in Lubbock. And I had a couple other deputies that I knew around the territory. And I had them checking on these other four... backtrack and find out

where she'd gone and all that kind of stuff. She had lived up in Cactus, Texas, up south of Dumas, or north of Dumas. She lived back over here around Friona and all these smaller rural communities. And like I say, two or three of them the people got together and buried the children. But then she'd move and nobody would hear anything else out of her or nothing. But when she did, it would be a different name. But after kinfolks up there said you know it's had been real tragic because they've had this happen several times. Well that's when we started backtracking and found out one of the babies was... she'd done the same thing in Lubbock. She came in there with it just nearly passed out, maybe in convulsions. And while they... at the last minute run in. What she does is lives off of sympathy she receives from these tragic accidents with these babies called Munchausen Syndrome by proxy. But anyway, she went in there and they put that baby in intensive care, critical care territory, and started checking it. And I interviewed the doctor at that time who was overseeing the baby. And the head nurse in the trauma, or in the critical care area that was in charge of that baby and all of them. And they said you know it still bothers us today that you know when they got there, after that baby got there we couldn't find anything wrong with it. You know they ate well and everything and find it healthy and we don't know what caused it. So I went and pulled medical records and started checking. And had one nurse in there at 2 o'clock one morning heard the baby crying. And goes in there and checks it and said she noticed a slight nosebleed in the left nostril. Well she just went over there and covered up his mouth and squeezed until it got to that point. Well what happened, she just started doing that and didn't know it had monitors on it or didn't know anything about it. And about that time he came in there and she releases the head and he takes a breath and well then he got all right. And so he quit there. So she came back in there and they still couldn't find anything wrong. And they was fixing to transfer to a private room to release it and uh that's

when she goes back in there the last time and knew the monitors were off and suffocated that baby right there in the hospital. And then they come in there and tried to save it at the last minute and she went to hollering... she jumped up and ran out and they went in there to help him and do everything they could and they gave it some medicine. And she accused them of killing him by sticking that needle in his leg. You know and them trying to bring it back to. But we backtracked enough that we found out that she'd done the same on every one of them I think there was six of hers and one of them that was a niece that belonged to her sister. But she...

NANCY RAY: Oh man, that is awful.

WARREN YEAGER: But she'd do a real good job... life in Kansas and then life in Texas after that so she'll probably...

NANCY RAY: No chance of getting out?

WARREN YEAGER: No.

NANCY RAY: Good.

WARREN YEAGER: But if they do we'll try her on another one.

NANCY RAY: (*short pause to change discs*) OK we're back. Let's talk a little bit about, you mentioned criminal investigation training. What kind of training did you have?

WARREN YEAGER: Before Rangers or after?

NANCY RAY: After, after you became a Ranger.

WARREN YEAGER: Well you got all kinds of it. You got basic criminal law stuff or criminal investigation which is considered... anything from photography to working with fingerprints to matching fingerprints to lifting them all types of different ways. Every time a new piece of equipment or anything come out well they'd train us on that. We had illumalight (spelling?) there for a long time.

NANCY RAY: What's that?

WARREN YEAGER: It was a different type of light sort of like a black light you've seen. You know this would show up, reflectorize or fluorescent type stuff. There was a light we had like that that would pick up body fluids and stuff like that that you could use at crime scenes and find traces of evidence that you couldn't see normally with the naked eye. But uh all types of that. Ballistics, anything that come up, anything that might help you in any type of criminal training. Blood splatter school.

NANCY RAY: Now what did you learn, what were you looking for there?

WARREN YEAGER: On blood splatters?

NANCY RAY: Uh huh.

WARREN YEAGER: See, uh you'd match up crime scenes that were real bloody compared to what actually happened to see if their stories matched up... if that's really what went on or didn't go on. There was, we used uh pig blood which is real close to human blood as far as weight, gravity and all that stuff. And like you get an old boy... you go in there and you hit somebody in the head with a baseball bat and kept beating him and stuff you know well it's gonna splatter you know. But there's a formula you can use but first you've gotta look at these blood drops or splatters. You know if you got a nosebleed back when you were a kid well it went straight down and looked like a moon you know, with little old edges going out. Well if it looks like its traveling, they call them satellites, that will be wide back here and oval end like an egg. But it will be more narrow. And then there might be a speck out in front of it and that means it was going in that direction you know. But they'll call them satellite splashes that go off from it. But you learn there's a formula that you take the width of that thing and the distance and the formula and you can tell exactly by weight and gravity where that originated from. By the amounts and

stuff like I say... lot of times you had different types of blood up there. You had regular droplets and you had splatters and you had high pressure or you high, something like a mist is what it is. With a gunshot wound, I mean it will mist him. It will have little bitty splatters all around and might not even hardly see them with an eye. But uh there's an old boy at Tokio... well I walked in there and somebody hit him one time in the head with a, with an iron poker or something at the fireplace. No, because he was about two foot off the ground when it hit because all that blood went this way traveling this direction from down here. And you could finally tell right where the wounds came from comparing to the blood splatters. But you learn that. Photography... everything you could imagine that you could use.

NANCY RAY: Now the photography, that's how to photograph a crime scene? Is that what you would be doing?

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah. You do all... at that time, anybody that sees these uh, these crime shows on TV now with the lab and go out solving... we had to do all that ourself back then.

NANCY RAY: So how true to life are those things you see on TV to what ya'll were doing?

WARREN YEAGER: Real close. A lot of them are. A lot of them are newer stuff we didn't use. But as far as like I say the illumalights, the blood splatters, the Luminol, you'll see that on TV you know. The kids came in there a while back and said you ought to see this stuff. Said they had where this guy had been in the trunk of a car and they took this stuff and they sprayed it and they put it in a light and... and I said its Luminol wasn't it? They said how'd you know (laughter)? I said we used to do that a long time ago. But it'd show, you know it would fade out pretty quick but like I say, bloody footprints headed out of a house in carpet you know. You could spray that whole area and uh put it under this light and sure enough, it...

NANCY RAY: So all through your Ranger career then you would continue to go to schools?

WARREN YEAGER: Every year you went back, every two years, every year? Now don't get me to lying now, was it every two years or every year? I believe it was every two years we'd go back for... well it was both. We changed it there for a while, that's what the deal was. It used to be every two years you'd go back for at least 40 hours of classroom training on all the new current events and all that stuff new training. And you kept up with everything. Uh, they finally changed it where you go about two and a half days every year or sometimes it was three and a half days. We kind of got, lost a day there but that way we could bring all of us together at least one day out of the year. You'd get to see all the other guys. But then you'd have every other year... they used to have a homicide school that was nothing but deaths and assaults and death school they called it. And you'd have instructors come in from all over the nation, those nationally renowned pathologists and all... they'd bring their cases from New York, from San Francisco, and they'd show different methods of solving their crimes and what went on and what to look for. And all that kind of stuff. And it used to be when I was in there, they'd show, they'd give it one time in Austin and the next year they'd have it in Oklahoma City I believe. It was kind of a switch out there a long time. But all the new Rangers would go to that. And I said there were several of those major schools we'd go to. And like I say, we'd, every year we kept on...

NANCY RAY: OK. Well how did your family deal with this, your career? You had to be gone a lot. You had to be busy a lot?

WARREN YEAGER: They got used to it real quick, that's all they knew. I was lucky. My wife's daddy had been a police officer over in Brownfield and he had worked nights the biggest part of the time so she never saw him anyway. He was either asleep in there when she was up or he was gone the rest of the time. So she kind of knew that when you was called and gone all the time whatever sort of life so I was lucky there. And like I said, the kids grew up with it so they

didn't know any different so it didn't bother them any. I'm sure they went through a lot of hard times when... I was telling somebody here a while back. I believe it was thirteen years in a row that I missed Spring Break. And I never thought about it but they said why... how did you do that? That's the same time that the Ku Klux Klan would get their parade march to march on the capitol in Austin. And it never failed, that Saturday would be the middle of March at the same time the kids were getting out for Spring Break and we'd have to go down there and sit on the capitol grounds for two days.

NANCY RAY: Well tell us about that.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh they just come in, rebel rousers that they are, and we were supposed to have to protect them from those nice little citizens in Austin. And sometimes I think it was worse the other way around. But we had lots of exciting deals there. I know one thing about the Rangers and the Highway Patrol, I probably got to see at least four presidents that I would never have got to see any other way.

NANCY RAY: Name those presidents.

WARREN YEAGER: Well Carter, Nixon, Bush, and let's see who else it was... somebody came in at the Lubbock airport way back when.

NANCY RAY: Well while you're thinking about that, let's do it like this. What kind of special responsibilities did you as a Ranger have? Like... or something unique that most people won't have... some kind of security detail or driving the governor...

WARREN YEAGER: We did that. Like I say I guess I had every governor since Briscoe in the car with me at one time or the other.

NANCY RAY: Any stories you can tell us?

WARREN YEAGER: Well, we even had their wives. And some of them were just as good as gold and some of them wanted to be big political, be known figures and others just down there good people. Mark and Linda Gale White... now Linda Gale was... but she was funny, got us in trouble one time. I'll tell you that story. We... she had a speech or talk she was gonna give in uh it was either in Dimmitt or Vega, right north of there. But anyway, she had some type of speech she had to give there. So anyway, we picked her up there at the airport and we took off up here and we went through Anton and we get up there about Hart, taking the back roads and cutting through. She said you know I'm in a hurry. Can you kick this thing up a little bit faster? Said we need to be in Dimmitt about 30 minutes earlier than what ya'll are showing. I said yes ma'am. So we cranked it up a little bit. She loved to go fast. She said can you get it up to about a hundred? So we was hitting high spots floating along there at a hundred. Had her security guy along or we usually had one of them intelligence officers from Austin traveling with them. And he's up in front and here we're meeting a new rookie way down the road up there. I said oh we're gonna have trouble from the Highway Patrol. So I said get on the radio and tell him who we are and what's going on. So he's in a unit... he wouldn't answer us. Sure enough, we got close and here come the red lights on. She said is he gonna let ya'll by? And I said it doesn't look like it (laughter). So I pulled over on the shoulder and I said he was as scared as I was you know. He didn't know what to say or what to do. He got up and I stepped out and had my gun and badge on. And he's sitting there, grabbing me by the arm telling me to get off the roadway you know so we wouldn't get run over. I said did you hear us holler at you on the radio? He said it must have been covered up by the traffic. Well we got the same radio and he hadn't even been on long enough to know that. He just didn't know what was going on. I said we're in a pinch. Said that's the governor's wife there in the back seat and she's the one wanting to go. She's the one telling

me to go on and I don't know if you know it or not but when they're on business you know, we gotta let them go and whatever. Well he kind of look back there and I said now she's serious. I mean she is really upset. I said she wants to go. You're gonna have to let us you know slide on out of here. He said I don't think that's her. And I said well it is. Well she turned around and she's laughing, she's just dying laughing and thought that was the funniest thing she had ever done. I said see how upset she is? (laughter) So we got, had to talk to him a few minutes more and finally got on the road and she said I thought ya'll had that fixed up where... and I said no ma'am, they've got a job to do too (laughter). But she teased me about that a bunch of times. It was... who was it... it was, oh Clements' wife, she come in town and I had to take her shoe shopping. Had a Margaret's store here in Lubbock used to be pretty well known across *unknown word* for different styles. Well anyway, she had to go to Margaret's. So we carried her up there to let her do some shoe shopping for a while. But like I say, all the governors, you learn who they talk about and who they like and who they didn't like and you know they're kind of ideas all the time. Bush thought I was gonna kill him. We got up here, we was running way late one day. And Larry Gilbreath over here at Brownfield was in the lead. And he had the car and I had the governor in the car with me and he was in the back seat. Now he's sharp. People are thinking right now that he's not too sharp but he's one sharp fellow. And we was going along and he was carrying on a full-time conversation talking in the back seat to this guy. I look at him and all that and we ease up to a stop sign out here at the exit to go to the airport. Like I say, we're late and running behind time. We're supposed to stay on schedule and Larry's in the car in front of me. So he eased on out in front and he said there's nothing coming, come on. Of course we got them little old secret radios and I said all right, I'm right behind you. So here we go across there. And at that time I was getting up there and *oh...* George done come unglued. He said you're gonna

get me killed! I said no sir, no sir, he's up there looking and he told me it's OK to come on through you know (laughter). So we eased out of it and he went to giggling but he was sharp enough that he knew everything that was going on around him all the time. And he... You remember when he got in that little trouble? I think he said an ugly word, called a guy... remember that time that... a few years back when he was first getting in that he called a man a name on the mic when he didn't know the mics were on? And they said oh he wouldn't do that with... he wouldn't say that word. As soon as I heard that I died laughing, I said yes he did! (laughter) But no, they were all real fun, real interesting to be around, learned a lot of stuff from them.

NANCY RAY: Well I think I saw on the game the other night, looked like there were some Rangers providing security for coaches. Is that true?

WARREN YEAGER: That's right, that's right. We never did get to do that. They told us we had some other thing we ought to be doing instead of watching football games.

NANCY RAY: Ah, OK.

WARREN YEAGER: But they've got by with it now. Guess they... One of them is a captain. That great big one standing behind Leach is a captain. Now thing about it is, they tried to get him to play ball up here so he was pretty well... His daddy played ball. And then his big brother played for Tech and then they tried to get him in his senior year down at Waco I guess. I guess they was still at Waco when he was getting out of high school. They did everything in the world to get him to come play like his daddy and brother and he ended up going to San Marcos I think and he played for them. He ate them up down there.

NANCY RAY: Now what his name?

WARREN YEAGER: Randy Prince. Yeah, his daddy, Bobby Prince, was the captain in Waco and there in Houston for a while and then his big brother, like I say, played for Tech.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well what are some of the differences you see in the Rangers when you went in and today or when you retired? The biggest differences...

WARREN YEAGER: Uh, they're more educated... uh, biggest part of them as far as formal education. Uh seems like they rely more on the new gadgets and stuff and info and computers and stuff more than we did. We didn't have any of that. We had to kind of use our own commonsense to figure out everything we had just from knowing people and the way the world worked at the time. And that would be the biggest difference. I think as far as their background and stuff like that, it's all the same.

NANCY RAY: Well let's go back to some of your cases then. Can you think of one that really gave you some satisfaction in solving?

WARREN YEAGER: All of them did. Like I say... if they were little burglaries up to murder. Like I say sometimes your smaller cases you could... nearly every murder within two or three days I can just nearly guarantee that you know who did it. I mean you got enough background who was with them at the time and who... you look at the possibilities and who had reasons to you know. And there's just too much evidence there to come together to make commonsense that this guy probably committed it. A burglary, so a lot of times it was burglaries... like I said the guy I was talking to earlier that was doing all those country, it seems like they'd give me more satisfaction because they were so much harder to solve. And like I say you'd think it wasn't but around this part of the country, the Hispanic population... I don't know why but a lot of it's in their culture I think that you don't give up on your people. You don't... and people that's got... I've known some of them that are very good people. And they had a good family, a good job, a

nice home and all this stuff. And you knew he bought this stuff off this bad guy. And you went over and asked him where he got it and he would go to the penitentiary before he'd tell you who he bought it from. That's just something, part of their culture. I don't know why, can't explain it, but so many times... so that any time all this stuff was out here stolen on these back roads, they'd go down to that part of the neighborhood and they'd sell this stuff. And you could never find out where... if you didn't know or see or somebody told you that I know he got it... and you'd go over there and you'd find it even, and say where'd you get it? I don't know. So you were back on square one trying to find out who actually took it. So like I say, if it wasn't a fingerprint or mostly around here, they'd rare back and kick the front door in and go in and haul everything out. Get a bed sheet or something and they'd throw it all in there and they'd run out and throw it in the car and take off. And that was the end of it you know. There wasn't any clues per se to... and it took a lot of time putting several together who was out there, what kind of car was seen in this territory. I mean you had to work at it quite a bit to come out with enough information.

NANCY RAY: Well is there one that stands out that you'd like to tell us about... another burglary? What did the guy do with the pullets? What was he doing with them?

WARREN YEAGER: No... (laughter) I don't even know if he got those. That guy just decided he stole his chickens, he was stealing all that other stuff. Like I say, the coyotes probably got his chickens.

NANCY RAY: OK, well did you ever have any capital murder cases?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. Uh I'm sure I had several but trying to find one any different from the others...

NANCY RAY: What about serial murder cases?

WARREN YEAGER: Like I say, Diana come back and killing all those days is bigger than anything else.

NANCY RAY: That is serial.

WARREN YEAGER: I helped some with Henry Lee Lucas and them.

NANCY RAY: Did you?

WARREN YEAGER: We all did. Had Rangers from all over the state did a lot on that you know and stuff. And that guy got by with all types of stuff.

NANCY RAY: Now was he out here?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah, he killed two right here in Lubbock. One in Brownfield, and stuff... he was amazing. We'd sit there, like I said, some of the clues were never given out to anybody. You know this like church stained glass? Well this lady had these glasses, drinking glasses, and they were just like stained glass type stuff. You know the design on it was kind of like a butterfly. You know if you had to guess what that looked like, it looked like a butterfly you know with wings spread out. But I mean just... but when he killed the little girl in Brownfield, said one thing that kind of bothered Jackie Peoples, he was actually working that case. One thing that kind of bothered you there was that she had something like one point, maybe two-point percent alcohol in her blood system. And she was a real religious type girl and never drank, never got out and ran around or nothing, I mean nothing. It didn't fit right. Well finally when he got Lucas and them cornered up on the deal, he said oh yeah, he said that's the one with the vacuum cleaner cord, wasn't it? Killed that little girl with a vacuum cleaner cord and choked her. She was over babysitting two little kids. And the kids had said they hadn't had anything to eat or nothing like that and there was a little bowl of cereal out there. Well this time he was running with old Odis Toole and had that little boy and girl with them. Well that cereal was actually

something he gave to them. And he said you know, something else too... he said I made her a drink and made me a drink. And said well what do you mean? And he said well, I had some bourbon with me. Said I made her take a drink of that whiskey and drink it. And that's what the Toole said and nobody ever knew... Said what type of glass did your pour it in? Milk glass or a paper cup, what? No, I got a couple of glasses out of the cabinet. Said matter of fact, looked like church stained glass, looked like butterflies. I mean he had a memory... just wouldn't quit. And he led so many people back to places they never had no idea... and then now they tried to turn it, a bunch of them, that he didn't do. And there was some of them he didn't do, don't get me wrong. But the biggest part of them he said he did, he did.

NANCY RAY: Well how did you deal with such sorry people?

WARREN YEAGER: It was hard to do. That brings me back to a case. Kid deaths, that tore me up worse than anything. I had one murder that did give me some satisfaction, let me take that back. Because we didn't have anything... had a child they called me from Yoakum County and said uh we've got a kid coming up there that's gonna die. I said how old is he? About a year and a half old. At that time, my little boy was a year and a half old. And they just said to go up there, he's not gonna make it but we've got to have somebody there to be with him and when he goes to autopsy, we need to know it. You know, just go in there. So I come up here and here's this baby, just everything but brain dead. And they've got the IV stuck in his head you know doing everything they can ... and sure enough, I don't have to sit with him an hour and he passes away. Then the sun's coming up and I'm sitting in there and had to go to autopsy. And the little baby goes through all that and then they say we think we got the guy over here and we need you to come interview him. Because all we've got... if he will break and we get a confession out of him. So anyway, I go over there after sitting through all that all night waiting for him to die and

then go through the autopsy and go over there and getting that guy to confess what he done. So that made me feel good to knowing he was in the penitentiary the rest of his life... paying for it.

NANCY RAY: Did anybody get out that shouldn't have... out of the penitentiary that you put?

WARREN YEAGER: Well I worked on it a little bit. These two guys over there, these kids did a murder over there at Littlefield about... there was another Ranger over there but he was kind of new, Salvadore Abreo. And I just helped him on some of the field work on the outside around while he was sitting there working the scene. They would've sent them up and they just got out on... and they're not... the DA don't think there's enough evidence to retry them again because they lost some pieces of evidence in the deal. And at the same time, he's sitting there saying I'm not saying they're not guilty... and they're just as guilty as they can be.

NANCY RAY: Well how did you separate this from your home life? How did you go home...

WARREN YEAGER: That was hard to do. That was hard to do. A lot of times you know you go in... and that's one thing about the Highway Patrol and Rangers that's so much different. When quitting time came, I might be out until 2 o'clock in the morning chasing drunks and wrestling and doing all that stuff and working all night. But as soon as you went home and took that badge and gun off, you was off, you know. Tomorrow was another day. Gonna be the same thing, a lot of the things are gonna be exciting, a lot of different stuff but you didn't... and then you go a night on these deals, you say... somebody raped and killed that little girl and I know he did it. And it's up to me to find out why and how am I gonna get this done where he's gonna pay for it. And that was a lot of pressure. You go home a lot of times and I'd be looking at a TV show or something with the family but I'm sitting there thinking what did I not do? Or what can I do tomorrow, I've gotta get out and I gotta go you know. And it distract from....

NANCY RAY: Yeah. Well what about the families of the victims? Did you... you must have gotten fairly close to some of them when...

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah, well that brings back another murder. There's a guy name Vandivere over at Brownfield. And he was right at 20 years old. I can't remember exactly how old he was but he was killed and uh, well he was missing to start off with. But his pickup and he was gone. And we looked everywhere and finally figured out we got two Hispanics with the pickup down in El Paso going across into Juarez. Now we know we got some problems. So I found out where they cashed a couple of checks on the kid or tried to down there in El Paso. And we started looking for them. So we know now that these two guys had way back when worked for his dad, they were farmers. And they worked and they knew this kid. Now this kid was a good kid but he was real easygoing, real passive type guy. And they go in there at gunpoint. What they did, they just told him give us a ride. And they went out and got in his pickup and they took him. At that time we didn't know it but they drove about 25 miles out southwest of where he lived outside Brownfield out there and baling wired his hands behind his back. Baling wired his feet and shot him in back of the head and just left him out there in this pasture. So we knew what had gone on. We didn't have a body at that time but we knew we had something bad wrong. He was either stove up bad somewhere or dead somewhere. So we got to working with the Federales and stuff. Well the Federales in Mexico picked one of these old boys up. And had an FBI out of El Paso at the time that was actually a good, working FBI agent. He goes down there, into Mexico. Of course he can't do anything. He had to come back and testify in trial that there wasn't nothing he could do he was in a foreign country. But he told us how they put a cattle prods and tortured that old boy. Didn't mess with him... they don't mess around. But anyway, he said yeah and he gave them the story on where they buried him and stuff. Of course we had two

other stories prior to that. We'd torn up the whole country trying to find them but he just told us he was out toward this Cedar Lee territory down towards Lamesa. And uh anyway, they ended up turning him loose down there. Found out him and this running mate of his both had family and had some money down there in Mexico and a ranch and stuff. So we started thinking how are we gonna get these guys out of the penitentiary. Of course we got this little bit of information kept flowing back from the Mexican officials. So Joe Hunt and I, matter of fact.... Joe and I, he was helping me that time. We get him and the DA had some horses. We all got horseback and rode out in the territory out there looking for bodies. Well it ended up we probably rode within twenty feet or twenty yards at least of this skull and never knew it. You know we had those ideas pretty close and had to give up. And uh went back and never found him again and about that time, well they... we started thinking now how are gonna get this guy in Mexico. Well that probably shouldn't get out too far but the time's passed now. But anyway, we had a Hispanic deputy and he had another Hispanic fellow over there with him and they went into Mexico. And he said this is serious he said because he said we kidnapped him. And what's bad they're kidnapping this crook and getting out of Mexico and gonna head back into southern New Mexico and Arizona with him, whichever way they'd get out the quickest from down there. And about halfway up, well one of those Mexican officials was with them, a police officer down there and thought they was gonna kill him. I mean that's the way they do business down there. So he reached back there, stuck his pistol in the old guy's mouth and I got *whoo hoo hoo*... we can't do that kind of stuff (laughter). So they jumped on the Mexican official and threw him outside and took off with the prisoner. But anyway, somehow or other, he ended up in the United States and he was picked up and arrested down there and brought back. And matter of fact, it came out in court that he had, his whole excuse that he'd ever done anything wrong was he was kidnapped

out of Mexico and everybody just... *sure*. But anyway, we got him out here and those guys telling that story being down in Mexico is another story. They put their lives on the line but anyway they got him back out of there and we couldn't find the other one. We tore Mexico up with all the Mexican officials and they went back down there talking to them trying to find anything they could do to get information. We got a little clue that he might be picking beets up in Minnesota. So same deputies, they go up there to Minnesota. They could, you know, speak Spanish real well and they could get up there talking and checking and the guy said no, that name doesn't ring a bell with me. He said I don't know, he says uh, now my guy, my guy that runs... kind of overheads all my hands and stuff, kind of a foreman, now he'll know everybody up here. He can probably tell you. They said well maybe you'll recognize the picture. Showed him the picture and there he is... my foreman (laughter). They had to get him arrested and bring him back and get him tried. Both of them went up for capital murder. You're bringing back lots of memories now.

NANCY RAY: I'll bet that's so. Well what kind of equipment did you take with you? You mentioned you rode a horse so that's not something the concrete Rangers would do.

WARREN YEAGER: Well, we always had availability. Even if we didn't own them, we had availability to where we could get horses real quick. Because we was always... like I say, some of this country around here... we looked for bodies many a days out here around Garza County riding up and down the river bottom. And down there of course we knew a lady had been throwed out down there but we never did find her body but... There'd been, oh, four or five different murders I worked on where we got horseback riding through pastures trying to locate them. And back on Vandivere, the reason I knew it was twenty foot, some kids were out there quail hunting. And they'd shoot a Blue Quail and it would fall down bounce. So he started to

pick it up and there was a human skull. And he picked it up and they brought it in scared to death. They didn't pick it up they actually brought these people out there to go pick it up. And uh I found out that was the Vandivere kid and we found the rest of his bones, a lot of them, out there and some stuff. And that's where we found stuff baling wired together. And we'd rode within twenty feet of him and turned back the other way, just gave up.

NANCY RAY: Um mmm, good gracious. Well if there was something you could do different, think back through your career, something you could do differently...

WARREN YEAGER: I'd never gone to San Antonio.

NANCY RAY: Oh, OK. San Antonio or Angelo?

WARREN YEAGER: San Antonio. Yeah, anything south of Abilene is south Texas to me.

NANCY RAY: Well what about courtroom stories... you had to spend time in the court.

Anything come to mind?

WARREN YEAGER: Well, that same murder we were talking about where we released the two guys? Well I was pretty well severely interviewing one, one night. And we got this information on a vehicle and who it might be. And uh and I told Sal he might check with the Littlefield police... Littlefield or Muleshoe... let me get this straight. Muleshoe I believe. If they could get this car located, well you know we might do some good and find out who owned it. Well he called me and the next thing I knew, they'd done stopped this guy and got him down at the Police Department. And here we hadn't got nothing to go on and now he's gonna know everything we know. And so I rush up there as fast as I could and get in there and talking to him. And then they come in with the other guy. I said well ya'll go talk to this one... and I'm gonna talk to him in a minute. And I get in there talking to him and told him what I thought about him and we're discussing killing people that are not well liked in Texas. And he was trying to say he

didn't and you could tell just looking at him that he did. And uh... I'm losing my track of thought now. Oh the courtroom. Well anyway, he well understood me and I well understood him. I was talking enough... choppy stuff that I... you know he could probably speak better English than I can, ya'll can tell visiting with me now. Anyway, when we got through, we go down there for a motion hearing. And the motion hearing was in Lamb County. Lamb County was that he was deprived of his constitutional rights being a Mexican citizen not having a Mexican counsel there. And he was sitting over there, a defense attorney that I knew, he was sitting over there with him and had ear muffs on and a translator and all this stuff. And I'm trying to think what's going on here? And he said you didn't give him right to a Mexican counsel. And I said no sir, I didn't. Can you tell us why? I said I thought he was an American citizen? What would make you think he would be an American citizen? Well he had a Buick registered in his name... Gave an address in Muleshoe... Had a residence in Muleshoe where that car was located and it was registered in his name. He had a social security number. He had a good valid Texas driver's license. Why would I *not* think he was an American citizen? Well could you tell that he didn't understand anything you said? I said he understood what I said. And they said look at him, he's got an interpreter over there now. He doesn't even really understand what's going on. I said the day I talked to him, he knew what I was saying and I knew what he was saying. They said no, he said he's got an interpreter. Can't you see those ear muffs? I said I see the ear muffs but I know that day I talked to him he understood me and I understood him. He said are you trying to tell me that my client has a good grasp on the English language? And I said hell, I ain't even got a good grasp on the English language (laughter). But he knew me and I understood him. So we got that pretty well straightened out. So there are lots of things in courtrooms that... most of that was pretty well straightforward or a lot. You know you never could really say what you really

wanted to say. You could in Grand Jury but anything that was passed as a question that was put before you was either yes or not and you couldn't bring up what you really needed to bring up.

NANCY RAY: Well do you have any accomplishments that you would prefer not to talk about but I'd like to hear about?

WARREN YEAGER: No.

NANCY RAY: No, that's usually the answer.

WARREN YEAGER: Accomplishments?

NANCY RAY: Um hmm. Something that...

WARREN YEAGER: I was in there and I got out.

NANCY RAY: That's an accomplishment.

WARREN YEAGER: That was about all. No, I really loved it. I loved it the whole time, everything was really... you know I couldn't have a better life. It was all exciting and I enjoyed it and we had a lot of bad times and a lot of good times.

NANCY RAY: What did you like most about being a Ranger?

WARREN YEAGER: Talking to some of the older Rangers you know. I go back to the history again, see what they had done and how they had done it. And stuff they had done and learn a lot of good information that way, two in particular. One of them... let me tell you a couple of little tidbits they told me. One of them told me, and this was late, late in my career. But I was concerned about not spending enough time doing things I felt like I wasn't doing right... spending enough time. He said let me tell you something. He said I've seen a lot of people on their death beds. He said I don't recall ever talking to one that said I wish I'd spent more time on my job. And that's something you need to think about right there no matter what you do.

NANCY RAY: Do you remember the old Ranger's name?

WARREN YEAGER: No, but I can remember Bill Quinn telling me a deal one time. Bill Quinn told me how to investigate.

NANCY RAY: What did he say?

WARREN YEAGER: He said these murders, he said boy they got all these new trinkets and stuff out here but he said the main thing is commonsense. He said did you ever mess around a cow a lot? I said well you do that as a kid. He said you ever seen one of them fresh cow patties? He said that's investigation. I said what do you mean, Bill? He said you ever play with one? I said well matter of fact, I did (laughter). He said you know how you take a stick with a fresh one and you stir it around there? He said if you sat there and stirred it regularly, it'll never crust over and get old. He said same way on them murder investigations. He said now if you pull that stick out and walked around and came back tomorrow, it's gonna be dried up and it'll never be the same. He said as long as you stay right in the middle of it, keep it stirred up... it'll never die on you. You'll always come up with information. And that is... I mean you can't think of a better saying. He's actually right you know. So that was something that stuck with me from then on. Stay in there and keep a stirring it and it'll come out.

NANCY RAY: So you kept it stirred, huh?

WARREN YEAGER: Kept it stirred. (laughter)

NANCY RAY: Well, what did you enjoy the least?

WARREN YEAGER: Some of the situations you got put in. Like I say, seeing the babies, seeing the babies, dead people, anybody. Just people done wrong and there wasn't anything you could do about it a lot of times. You know they hurt you, you know. And the thing I hated that I even carry with me today, like I say, you spent so many years, hours and days and just all your life messing with some of these sorries. And it might be crooked bankers, crooked doctors,

crooked preachers, crooked... anything you can imagine you know. You've seen the wrong side of all of them and then you get out and you get through with it and it's sure hard to go buy a car and think, is that guy skimming me or is that banker telling me right? If I get that loan is he gonna be getting on you? You hate to do anything. The more contracts there are the more the more you want to dodge away from it because it doesn't mean anything anyway. You know, it just sticks with you. A lot of times as many sorry people as there are today... when there are multimillion of them that are lot better... but you still, in the back of your mind, all the people that you saw that you really thought was trusted and they wasn't nothing but a bunch of crooks.

NANCY RAY: So what are you doing today? You retired in 2001, is that correct?

WARREN YEAGER: Retired in 2001 and Jackie talked me into coming, when I retired, going over to a county task force. And at that time when I retired, they just came out with the new Ranger list. And there was a boy named Tony Arnold who just made Ranger and knew he was going somewhere. And he was a Narcotics agent here in Lubbock and I liked him. He's a good kid, a real good kid. And I thought boy, if I had somebody take my place, I'd sure like to be... And I thought right there, I ought to retire. I'd had enough and it's time. I'm getting old and he needs to get him a shot of it. So I said well, if I had somewhere to go... And then Jackie had already quit about four or five years before and he was Assistant Commander of this Auto Theft Task Force that's kind of it's on a grant but it's kind of tied into the county. So he said well come over here. This has been over here forever. You know that grant's not going away and he said you know you can start a second little old retirement and make just about as much money as you was and add onto your retirement. And I said let's give Tony a chance and all this so I retired. I go over there and I'm there less than two years and the grant ran out of money. And so I, being the last one hired on, was the first one they had to let loose. So then I started looking real hard

for a job and this came up. So I got on over here and I wasn't over here no time and I got Jackie to come over here.

NANCY RAY: Why don't you tell us what this is?

WARREN YEAGER: This is a... you probably don't want me to tell you what this is
(laughter).

NANCY RAY: OK.

WARREN YEAGER: No, this is a uh, is the attorney general's office Medicaid, Fraud and *unknown word*. And what we're mainly doing is trying to save the Medicaid government in state and federal and state Medicaid dollars out of fraud cases going on across the country. Uh you hate to say it now but there's a lot of these real good doctors out here that they think that that's a golden highway to steal you know. All I've gotta do is not turn this in or say I did this when I really didn't do it. And it gets up in the multimillions of dollars. These scooter cases and stuff like that you know that you see advertised all the time. A lot of those are good too so don't me wrong too but all this, and I mean it is multimillions of dollars, that the Texas budget... We're losing right at 72 thousand dollars, did I say thousand? Seventy-two billion dollars every year goes into there. And that's more than the entire third of the Texas budget is put out through Medicaid. Not all of that's stolen now but a big hunk of it. But you start thinking if we could save a tenth of it... So that's where our money comes from. They got another grant that's actually federal grant money that comes in that supports the state for us to get out and work these cases and try to cut back on the fraud cases. Besides the fraud cases on the multimillion dollars being shuffled out that shouldn't be, we're also, anywhere where the Medicaid dollar goes, we're allowed to work abuse and trust fund cases and stuff like that there too. So we work a lot of drug diversions, you know these rest homes get these people in there working night shifts and stuff

and probably can't get a job anywhere... probably shouldn't be a nurse aide anymore... finding how to steal these medications out of these homes and uh so we do a lot of that. And a lot of abuse cases in rest homes and anywhere the Medicaid dollar goes, we try to... but our main deal is the big money. And there's a lot of it out there. I hate to say it now, but I think the last we heard, unless it's an excess of \$100,000, they won't even take the case in Houston. Wait, it's more than that. That's about what it is here, it's probably about ten million before they'll even take the case as far as federal court. And we work lots of you know doctor theft, multihundreds of thousands of dollars and that's a small deal. But this durable medical equipment... you know there's stipulations where they've got to have so much rules before they can sell it or go you know. There's always a catch in there where we can backtrack if it wasn't followed all the way to the "T" you know that they shouldn't have done this and then you add up how many times it does. But it'll scare you death how much money we are wasting. Like I say, a lot of it's good money too but you start thinking you wonder where it comes up to 72 billion... ever crack baby in the state of Texas is you know, and if they got parents and all that stuff is gonna be under medical supervision all their life, Medicaid pays for every bit of that. Everybody comes across the border down there in Mexico come up here to have their babies, we pay for every one of them. And you start to think just that stuff is sliding in and besides the people that don't have anything that's working off Medicaid and trying to help people that need it where all those others is just you know... they know that gravy train's out there and they're gonna come get it. And that money...

NANCY RAY: How do you keep from getting mad?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh, you don't, you get mad. And uh you know we got so many to write procedures and policies we gotta go by in our new *unknown word*, I feel like we're wasting time, I really do. I probably shouldn't say that.

NANCY RAY: Well, we'll get you off of this, how is that? Did you ever work with informants?

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: How did you get those...

WARREN YEAGER: Well, you just knew them. You learned them and a lot of times from guys that might be walking the line and knew they should have gone or something and then you gave them a break maybe one time... you know you wasn't gonna get a prosecution anyway so hey, you know, help us out a little bit and we'll help you and that kind of stuff. But a lot of them give you real good information. Some of them will lie to you. Some of them you have to burn them in a hurry.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever have to work undercover or anything?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes. I worked one time (laughter)...

NANCY RAY: Uh oh, here it comes.

WARREN YEAGER: No, we're not gonna say has been. It tickled me because when I found out what it was, we got a call from Colorado. Well got a call in the house state that it was a big gambling ring, look like it was centralized out of Colorado but we couldn't figure how it was going. We started thinking... all these bet slips were coming into Texas. You know the ones got the points on them you know that makes it illegal in the state of Texas. Boy, everybody was putting their wager down and doing this... and they're going back out and somehow ended up in Colorado. But I mean all over the state, that's... you can't even fathom that. Now how in the world could you get that many bet slips, you know that many bookies out there hauling them

things to that many areas? And uh then we got a little clue and I go up there and sit at Dumas, Texas. You know that motel out there right close to the south edge of town on the right? It's a... what is the name of that thing now... but anyway, that used to be the drop stop for all the major UPS shipments in the state of Texas. And they'd come in from all over and meet at Dumas, Texas. All, everybody would bring all these double-hitch and double semis and what they'd do is swap drivers. And they'd meet there. Sometimes if you sat there at the right time, I believe it was about Tuesday about 4 o'clock in the evening, they'd all start gathering. And I mean there'd be UPS trucks from all over the country. And there was one old boy would bring the tickets down and pass them out to all the other drivers and they'd get commissions. And that stuff was going out to all their different areas where they went passing along and then they come back all that money (laughter)... And I thought boy, what a way to do it. And it got right down to the point when we was fixing to do some good there and they shut them down and let them know up there in Colorado real quick that we was gonna work them and they dropped everything before we got the thing going. It tickled me that somebody was using their head up there.

NANCY RAY: Criminals are pretty smart.

WARREN YEAGER: They are. A lot of them are real smart, real smart.

NANCY RAY: Have to be. Did you ever work with the FBI much?

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah, later on, didn't really at first. Back in the old days why we really didn't get along with them that well.

NANCY RAY: I was going to ask how... *(he whispered to me)* All right, we'll go to another one. (laughter)

WARREN YEAGER: No, no. We got some right now that are real good guys. You know back in the old days, this was after J. Edgar and all his stuff started and built up so fast that he...

You've heard the story that he had a dossier on everybody and I mean he knew everybody and what was going on with everybody. He had their little file. It got to where they didn't even trust themselves. And that, they was just so tense on letting anything out or anything that they were afraid that they were gonna get in trouble. So you know they'd come in our office... I need to see your file on such and such. For what? I can't tell you. Well get out (laughter). You know, you're not gonna see our files. But that's how bad it was. They wouldn't tell you... they wouldn't give you a bit of information for nothing but they'd drag you for everything they could get from all these other small *unknown word*. And they wouldn't even tell you why, they didn't trust you. But it was because they didn't even trust themselves from the predicaments they were in... as many binds and curtails that were put on them.

NANCY RAY: What about polygraph operators? Did you ever do many polygraph tests?

WARREN YEAGER: Some. Uh, that was kind of the operator who was doing it who you trusted the most. Some of them might not, you thought might not have been as good as the other one. And they had to be just about half good investigator and interrogator themselves and know commonsense... what's going on to get...

NANCY RAY: Now were they part of DPS?

WARREN YEAGER: Yes, some were.

NANCY RAY: But some weren't?

WARREN YEAGER: Some, we'd used different agencies. A lot of times we were working big cases with PD and they wanted to use theirs you know where they had them on. If we were assisting them, they'd want to use theirs. And we had ours too. But no, we worked with them and they were usually for the most part real good.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever think that the polygraph operator could be beat?

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Did Joe tell you?

NANCY RAY: I've heard it from other.

WARREN YEAGER: I hate to be these one-sided type guys but the gay community... is that a good way to say it? The gay community, they'll fail a polygraph every time when they're telling the truth even. Don't know why, can't explain it. I don't know if they've got something in the back of their minds saying I'm wrong and I know it and I'm gonna try to hide it or whatever. But you could sit there and know one is trying to tell you the truth and he'd tell you the truth and he knows somebody will do it. And he'll fail every time. I don't know why but it just... so we usually wouldn't run them if there was any way we could get out of it.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well who was the biggest influence on you, your career? Who had the biggest impact on uh making you the Ranger you were? Is there a person?

WARREN YEAGER: Not unless it was Bill McDonald just from reading and hearing.

NANCY RAY: Legacy.

WARREN YEAGER: Yeah.

NANCY RAY: Well, what would your legacy be?

WARREN YEAGER: I wouldn't have one (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Well I'm afraid you do because your name keeps coming up. As we interview Rangers, we've heard your name.

WARREN YEAGER: No, the only thing I ever wanted to do is just, be talked about... treated everybody equal and fair you know. And that's the only way, like I say, I told all of them you know that was one of my biggest spiels when starting my interrogating. I'd say listen, I know you're gonna like me, you're in a pinch. But I can't afford to lie to you and I'm not gonna lie to you. I'm not gonna trick you, after that first one (laughter). I'm not gonna trick you and I never

did after that. But I'm not gonna trick you. I'm not gonna lie to you. Because if did one person, if I did that to one person and he went to the penitentiary for it, you know how street talk is because you're talking to street people here. It'll be all over, you don't trust that short, fat Ranger from Lubbock. He'll lie to you (laughter). But I said there's a bunch of them in the penitentiary right now that says I'm down here because of myself. Said I lied to him or tried to... I'd tell them there's nothing I can do for you but it would be better you know for yourself if you'd get it out and get it cleared up. But you know we never did anything any better than anybody else, didn't want to be better than anybody else. Just wanted to get the job done and do what was right.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever play any pranks on anybody?

WARREN YEAGER: No, we never did do nothing like that (laughter).

NANCY RAY: Now that's a lie right there, isn't it.

WARREN YEAGER: No, we never did do anything like that.

NANCY RAY: I know better (laughter). I'm not gonna push you on that one OK.

WARREN YEAGER: OK.

NANCY RAY: If somebody's looking at this video, not a video, but listening to your audio in the future, what message would you say for future Rangers? What do you think they're gonna face?

WARREN YEAGER: They're gonna face everything in the world. And it's gonna be just maintain their truthfulness, their integrity, and be themselves.

NANCY RAY: Is there anything else, any other cases you'd like to tell us about?

WARREN YEAGER: I thought of one while ago but can't think what it is now.

NANCY RAY: Oh no. We'd like to hear it.

WARREN YEAGER: I can tell you sort of a funny one.

NANCY RAY: OK.

WARREN YEAGER: This is... this was that keep things quiet and doing things right. One day I was up at Littlefield. And I wasn't... I was in Muleshoe or Palmer County. I might have been all the way up to Farwell. But anyway, I come down and I get to about Littlefield and I get a phone call from the office saying you need to get hold of George Frasier, quick. George Frasier is a retired Ranger. Have you met George yet?

NANCY RAY: We have.

WARREN YEAGER: George is a super good guy. George was in San Angelo at the time. And he said you got a feedlot somewhere around Muleshoe that can handle four, five, six thousand head of cattle? And I said I sure do. He said let me tell you what we got and we don't got it. And I said what do you mean? He said well, he said you know how these taped conversations are. And he says that's what it came from. And he said a guy came to me and he listens to these... free and air cell radios at the time. And he said I'm listening to a guy, or this man was listening to a guy and he also tapes these conversations which is illegal to use in court you know. So he said uh, he's taped this conversation. There's two guys talking and one of them says he's fixing to steal 600 head or 6,000 head or whatever, or 600 at the time... but New Mexican cattle out of a feedlot at Muleshoe, Texas. He said he can do it in an hour. He said if he can get the semis in, he's gonna do it tonight. And he's gonna have another cowboy or two with him and a couple of horses and they said they can load all them cattle in these three trucks in about an hour. He said the bad thing is, he said that night watchman, you know all these feedlots had them night watchmen. He said he can either go along with his eyes open and go along with his eyes shut. And that makes you think well they're gonna kill him. So we think we've got this big deal going

down but he said that's just taped, we don't know who, we don't know why, we don't know nothing. But if you got a place like that, suppose you... So I turn around and go back to Muleshoe. Well I get the chief deputy and the sheriff and I said listen, we got a problem. They said they're 600 head of cattle gonna be stolen from a feedlot tonight and they way they're talking, the only place we got is out here at Coyote, isn't that right? That big old feedlot out there south of town. Yep. I said well here's what's supposed to happen. And this was about four or five o'clock in the evening. So we start getting all these people together that were gonna do this deal. And uh I've got every reserve, every deputy, every type of help you get out of Bailey County in this conference type deal. And we've got a guy that's gonna play an old cowboy. He's gonna play he's the night watchman at the feedlot. At least we'd have an officer in there and get this other guy out. So the information I got was these three semis was gonna try to do it around midnight. And they was gonna meet there in town. Well we got to... I don't know whether you've ever been to Muleshoe you know it's a one-way trip through town. So I'm sitting about the middle of town. And about 11:45 here comes a bull hauler, or a cattle truck, come in and pulled up at the 7-11. I said well isn't that a coincidence you know. There isn't anything gonna happen and I look up. And he sits there about ten or fifteen minutes and all of a sudden, here comes a pickup pulling about six horses come up there. A couple of cowboys get out and go over there and start talking to this guy. And we're getting close to midnight now and I'm saying uh oh... Look up to the other end of town and here comes another bull hauler. He pulls up there on the lot. Here in a minute from the north highway here comes another one and I've got three bull haulers, just like he said. A couple of cowboys and they're all out there talking together. And they load up and head out of town. And the only thing is, they didn't head toward Coyote, they headed down Lamb County to the Sudan deal. Now here I've got every deputy and reserve and

everybody that's legal to work in Bailey County following me in Lamb County. I find out they've got one night watchman working down around Littlefield there. And I called him and I said is anybody else out? Nope. Well I said it's gone too far to pass this now. I said let me get hold of the owner of the feedlot and the sheriff... what's going on. So he called and he said I've got a new night watchman out there. And he said there should be nobody coming in there to get cattle. And I said well, I'll get back in touch with you. So I'm on the radio and we're all scattering out across the country trying to hide in this wide open country we got up here. One guy had a little old small pickup and I pulled him about a quarter of a mile before the gate that drives across the railroad track where you gotta go down to this feedlot. So he's sitting there. He's scared to death. He's one of the reserves and he hasn't never done nothing like this before in his life. And I've done told him about this big cattle theft going on. Well I get the guy from Sudan who's supposed to know the night watchman at the feedlot in the car with me. An old fellow, been night watchman up there forever. And I get him in the car and I'm kind of heading that thing and talking to them on the radio and about that time here all the trucks go and go across that railroad track. And all of them get in the feedlot except one, that last truck driver. He pulls over, being a good truck driver, to this pickup asking do you need any help or anything? Well, he gets up there. Well this kid is scared plumb to death. Here comes one of these big thieves you know up to him and he pulled a gun on him. He said what's going on... He doesn't know what's going on. He thinks the guy's coming after him or something. He sees a guy in there and he says what's the matter? He says well I don't know (laughter). He said you may be under arrest. He said what? And he'd done got all this going so he's calling me now. We've finally got cell phones. He called me on his cell phone then and he says, this guy pulled over... this truck driver and he pulled over here and he said I've got him held over here and I don't

know what to do. I said well let me talk to him a minute. So I got him on the phone and I said who is this? And he told me Bill Smith or whatever his name was. I said Bill, do you know what you're doing? Well, not right now I don't. I said what are you doing up there at that feedlot? I'm just contracted to haul some cattle. I said well let me tell what you're in amongst. You're in amongst a big theft fixing to steal 600 head of cattle. I said I'm Warren Yeager, Texas Rangers, out of Lubbock. And I said if this doesn't go on like it's planned on going on, if you go across that railroad track and nobody comes out with cows on their truck, then guess who's gonna be the first guy to go to the penitentiary. Uh, he said, I ain't gonna say nothing (laughter). I said well you just do what they tell you to do. So he goes over, he gets in there. Now we got all three bull haulers in there and horses in there and I said we got them locked in, let's go ahead. That's enough on the spirit, if nothing else, let's do it. So we drive up now. The night watchman came back out and locked the gate, once they all got in there. Of course they, he didn't know what was going on. He's thinking he captured them in there and not gonna let them out until they make it OK with the boss. The only thing now is we got all these guys in there that might knock him in the head. I get my old constable and we go to the gate. Here that night watchman comes up and I said you need to let us in. I said I'm Warren Yeager, Texas Rangers. We need to get in and go talk to those guys. Of course at that time I didn't have a badge on but we're trying to play it as undercover as we could. He said I don't know. About that time everything is going right and the old boy with me says... you ain't the right guy, talking to this night watchman. He said I am too! So they get in an argument (laughter). And what it was, that was the first night that lot owner got him a new night watchman. So this guy don't think it's the right night watchman. He said I don't care who you are or what and I finally had to reach in and find me a badge and said I'm a Texas Ranger and we need in here. Yes sir! Boy he opened up the gate and we go in there. Now here

him and the other guy are still arguing out here who is the deal. And we go in and the whole thing was once we get in there, was a guy that was tied up in one of these big feed conglomerate-type deals out of San Antonio. And this boy from New Mexico who also, and some bull haulers, those were his cattle. And he had brought them over to feed them out in this Sudan feedlot. At which time this conglomerate out here was supposed to be footing the bill and feeding them and doing all the feed and stuff through this company here. They never sent the money so they're holding the cattle. He can't get them out but that's when he was caught, listened to, he wasn't talking about knocking the old boy out, he was talking to his lawyer on this phone conversation that George called me about. And said, 'cause his lawyer told him, if you get those cattle back in New Mexico, I don't care what you have to do. If you can get them back over there with our brand laws, they're our cattle you know. You're not gonna have no big civil mess up like you got into over here. So all he was trying to do was get his original cattle and get them back over there. Of course he's going about it the wrong way you know. So I finally get them all in there and finally figure out what was going on and said well, we're gonna leave these cattle right here until we get something straightened out you know. Got it all settled down. But it was the funniest deal as a three-ring circus (laughter). I asked people where they wasn't supposed to be, that didn't know what was going on, the truck drivers involved... Had a boy, what was funny... I was gonna tell him later because we let them go and he left and nobody had any cows on the trailer and he's still thinking he's going to the penitentiary (laughter) you know because I never could get hold of him and say hey, we got it all straightened it. He just left. I bet he was wondering the rest of the night anyway what was happening... what he'd got into.

NANCY RAY: Well there's no way we can capture your entire career on this short amount of time.

WARREN YEAGER: No.

NANCY RAY: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

WARREN YEAGER: I don't know what it'd be except I had a big time.

NANCY RAY: You had a big time.

WARREN YEAGER: I had a big time. Enjoyed it all. If it wasn't for my family, I don't think I could have made it because they was behind me all the way.

NANCY RAY: So they were probably your biggest supporters.

WARREN YEAGER: Oh yeah. And like I said, the teasing and the fun, of course everybody was playing tricks on each other, but if you can't have fun doing your job, you shouldn't be doing it anyway. We did have lots of fun together.

NANCY RAY: That's good. Well I'd like to thank you for your time today for this interview.

WARREN YEAGER: Well I thank ya'll.

NANCY RAY: And thank you for your service to the state of Texas.

WARREN YEAGER: Well I appreciate that. I enjoyed every bit of it.