

Interview with
EDDIE ALMOND
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Eastgate Mobile Home Park
Harlingen, Texas
Thursday—February 5, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Eddie Almond, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



Introduction

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**EDDIE ALMOND
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED**

**Date of Birth: July 8, 1942
Date Joined DPS: April 18, 1967
Date Joined Ranger Service: November 1, 1977
Date Retired from Ranger Service: September 30, 1993**

NANCY RAY: My name is Nancy Ray. I am visiting with Eddie Almond of Paris, and Harlingen, Texas. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Almond's career as a Texas Ranger. Ranger Almond, do I have your permission to record this interview?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yes ma'am.

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

EDDIE ALMOND: Yes ma'am.

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

EDDIE ALMOND: Yes you do.

NANCY RAY: Good. Let's start with tell me your full name, when you were born and where.

EDDIE ALMOND: My full name is Thomas Edward Almond. Uh I was born in Hugo, Choctaw County, Oklahoma. I uh was raised at a little community... its located seven miles east of Antlers. It's called Dela community.

NANCY RAY: How do you spell Dela?

EDDIE ALMOND: DELA. My grandmother Rea, REA, she operated a store and ran the post office inside that store 48 years. So that uh... and my great-grandpa actually donated the seventeen acres for the Dela Cemetery where all my people are buried there.

NANCY RAY: Well when... what was your birth date?

EDDIE ALMOND: I was born July 8th, 1942.

NANCY RAY: And what about your parents' names, what are those?

EDDIE ALMOND: My dad was, my parents' was Julius and Elwanda Almond.

NANCY RAY: You better spell Elwanda for me.

EDDIE ALMOND: ELWANDA.

NANCY RAY: Just like it sounds. OK and where did you go to school?

EDDIE ALMOND: I graduated from Antlers High School in 1960.

NANCY RAY: Anything you can tell us about your time in school?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, it was you know I graduated in a class of 42. Academically I was probably about eleventh which was not saying a whole lot because we just... it was a poor country town, community. We, of course we had all sports, uh football, baseball, basketball. And of course I participated in all sports in school. I guess the uh, the most fun-loving time and memories that I have was in agriculture. We had an Ag teacher who all us boys considered a second father.

NANCY RAY: What was his name?

EDDIE ALMOND: His name was Charlie Hargraves. And Mr. Hargraves, of course he was a little short fellow about 5'7 ½" and he was not only our Ag teacher but he was the local vet so to speak. If any of our parents had cattle that needed doctoring, then all they had to do was call

Charlie at the Ag building and he'd never refuse a phone call. I don't care deep he was in teaching you uh you know the theory. So uh always wore the most beautiful hats, the old LBJ-type Stetson type hat. And he would always take that hat off just... I mean very cautiously and set it on the corner of his desk. Well when the phone would ring, he would have to leave the room, the classroom, go into the office. Well when Charlie left the room, one of us would get up and take his hat. And there was a nail that was placed in the wall just high enough that Charlie could not reach it. And we'd hang his hat on that nail. Well, he'd go in and make his phone call. When he returned to the classroom, that's the first thing he would see was the fact that his hat was gone. And he didn't turn and look. He knew where it was on the nail. So he, he would tell us. OK boys, line them up. So he'd line all 15, 16, 17 of us up and give each one of us two licks with the paddle.

NANCY RAY: You knew you were gonna get it and did it anyway.

EDDIE ALMOND: That's right. Then when he got through, he'd kind of giggle real big and say I bet I got the right one (*laughter*)... paddled the whole classroom. But that was uh I guess some of the really fun times that I remember. I had an English teacher that taught my dad. And she was an exceptional type English teacher, Mrs. Easton was her name. And she always seated us in alphabetical order. And of course she taught me freshman, sophomore, junior and senior English. And the very first thing that she done was move my desk right up adjacent to her desk on the left-hand side. She says Eddie, if you're anything like your daddy I'm gonna have to just pound this English into your head. For four years, I sat adjacent to her desk in that English classroom. But little did I realize until I got in college you know -- and I didn't start to college until I was 31 years old -- how much English I had learned from Mrs. Easton. Because to my

surprise... I made two A's and a B in English in college. So that was a reward because as I look back at Mrs. Easton, she was just so dedicated and so interested in seeing that everybody you know got the English and... because she knew that you'd need it later in life.

NANCY RAY: Well, when you graduated from high school what did you do?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, I graduated from high school in... of course graduated like on a Saturday night and went in the Air Force on Tuesday. And uh at that time, the United States Air Force, the people that would volunteer for the Air Force were not red-necked country people like I was. They come from either the East Coast, you know the West Coast, Florida, Chicago, Detroit, New York City, LA and it did not take me long in the military to realize I was really just a country bumpkin. And that's when... uh I initially was sent to Florida for the Cuba crisis. And that was right out of tech school. I was an electrical repairman on the aircraft. And... so they assigned me down there and then assigned me to the 27th TAC Fighter Squadron or fighter wing and the 481st TAC Fighter Squadron after I got to Florida.

NANCY RAY: What base?

EDDIE ALMOND: Madill Air Force Base there at Tampa. And uh so anyway, after that was resolved, the Cuba crisis was resolved, then they transferred back to Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico. Of course I went with my unit.

NANCY RAY: Did you actually go to Cuba?

EDDIE ALMOND: No. No, we were just uh... well there's not a question that it was serious because the aircraft we had was a TAC fighter. The TAC fighter is the F-100 and uh we had them loaded with napalm and it's I guess the only time in the 4 ½ years I was in the Air Force that I ever actually witnessed the pilots sitting in the cockpit or they're laying out on the wing

getting sunburned. That's how quick we were gonna be scrambled to go south from Florida.

So... of course once I got to Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico, then the uh...

General LeMay if you remember was the general who supervised the bombing of Japan right at the end of World War II.

NANCY RAY: Is that LEMAY? LeMay?

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh, yes I believe it is. Uh anyway, he... one of his people, our commander, General Comstock, was part of his entourage and staff during World War II see so he put him in charge of the 481st TAC Fighter Squadron and we were the first quick deployment TAC fighter squadron where that we had to be anywhere in the world in 72 hours. And uh of course for the next three years, I just literally lived out of a bag. And uh I made fourteen trips across the Pacific Ocean and four across the Atlantic Ocean. When Kennedy was assassinated in '63 I was in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia. And we went by the way, we went over the top and then we went into North Africa at Tripoli, Libya, North Africa... Wheelless Air Base. Then we started around there to Dharan, Saudi Arabia, and we got an aircraft down at Khartoum, Sudan, there in North Africa. It had a bad fuel cell so we, the repair team, had to go in and we stayed in the motel and it's the only place in all my travels with the military that I literally as a young man was scared to death. Because they told us when we got to... they give us what they call blood sheets. OK? And that blood sheet actually told whoever we were confronted by that you know we were American citizens and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera and that we wasn't to be harmed and all that. But they still told us that if we left the motel, to be sure to go in a group not in six or eight or ten but in a group of about fifteen. Because if you didn't, said them folks... you might... we'll find you out here in an alley with your throat cut.

NANCY RAY: Here you are, freshly out of Antlers, Oklahoma... (*laughter*) What a change!

EDDIE ALMOND: I'm telling you it was... it was... there was a great concern. And you know I thought... I was a teenage toughie like everybody else at that age. And they convinced me. And of course we went into Dharam in Saudi Arabia then they flew me over to Jiddah on the Red Sea side of Saudi Arabia. And what was occurring, they were having this uh, a revolution at South Yemen and the Egyptians were pro-communists at that time and they were supporting the revolution because they wanted all that oil you see there in South Yemen. So we uh, we'd watch them on radar, the Army would. They had a radar shack set up and when they'd take off in the MIG-15s, the Egyptians would, they'd fly out over the Red Sea well we'd send the F-100s up and they'd fly around like this for an hour and then they'd go back and we... We were over there for seven months. Well, we thought we were coming home and the old commander called a commander's meeting and said OK boys, load her up. We're leaving here but we're not going home. And we went to *unknown name*, Iran, which is where the Kurds in Iraq... the mountains north of Baghdad... right over in Iran in the mountains there is where *unknown name* is located. And we went in there and landed on top of a mountain and stayed 33 days. And to this day for what reason, I don't know. And then we left there and flew out and went to Adana, Turkey, and then back to Madrid, Spain, at *unknown name* Air Force Base, and then back to the States.

NANCY RAY: Now what kind of plane were you on?

EDDIE ALMOND: This was fighter aircraft, the F-100. It's a little old fighter airplane that at that time, it was the backbone of the fighter aircraft. It was supposed to be the thing. Well I think it killed more pilots than anything else because... we called it the lead sled because you'd get in a flight pattern to come around to land and if you got too much angle, that silly thing come out of

the air and run right into the ground. Kill the pilot and anybody around if they're too close. But anyway, it...

NANCY RAY: Well then they brought you back to... for John F. Kenney's... after he was assassinated, what did you do then?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, we stayed. We just all went on... all went on red alert. See it's what they call... you're looking for... we didn't know you know why he was assassinated. We didn't know whether it was a worldwide conspiracy or you know like one individual or whatever. But we were put on alert... had to be ready for anything.

NANCY RAY: Well is there anything else... sounds like you had a very interesting military career.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, I mean you uh... especially in Southeast Asia, you know I made fourteen different trips over there. I've been hot pad duty at Kunsan Korea.

NANCY RAY: What kind of duty?

EDDIE ALMOND: Hot pad.

NANCY RAY: That's what I thought you said.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well that's where they had the little nuclear warheads on those F-100s and they have them back down in an underground silo type thing. And then you come out the end and fly back to the right and head to North Korea. But that you'd go on hot pad... we'd actually, we were actually in Misawa Japan. We'd fly out of Misawa Japan four to five days prior. Then we had fifteen days to get ourselves orientated and then we'd go onto hot pad for thirty days. And that's where you couldn't take your boots off. I mean literally you slept... you had to be... the repairmen, the electricians like myself. There were four of us on the hot pad. And two of us

had to have our boots on at all times until it was the other two's turns to have their boots on. So anyway, and I've been into Thailand two different times, *unknown name* and *unknown name* I was not physically stationed in the *unknown name* there at Saigon but I had to fly in and out to calibrate all our test equipment. And I did catch pneumonia while I was over there and that was a farce in that I uh I could see a mail plane come from Clark Field in the Philippines to *unknown name* Thailand every two weeks. OK? And uh just because you had pneumonia didn't mean you were gonna go to the hospital. They just throwed you on a cot and started giving you penicillin out of the STD kits (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: You have to make do with things.

EDDIE ALMOND: So I laid there and I finally broke the fever after five or six days and I had pneumonia in this left lung, both lobes. And then they put me on orders so I caught the mail plane in *unknown name* and flew me back to Clark Field in the Philippines. Well when I got there, literally if you're warm and you can sit up or walk, you buffed the floors. I literally buffed the floors. They had me on 30-days orders, sick leave orders at the hospital. And I literally buffed the floor about six hours a day for 30 days. I never got sick and tired of running a darn buffer (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Well how long were you in the Air Force?

EDDIE ALMOND: I was in 4 ½ years. See I uh... I was one of those people... In 1965, the Air Force was making a transition over to the F-4 Phantoms which was the plane that the Navy was already flying off the carriers, the twin engine F-4s. And the Air Force was making that transition to them as their primary fighter aircraft. So they, everybody that was gonna be trained as an electrician on the F-4s was sent to San Diego. Well, they called me in. I'll never forget the

commander. Major Stowe was his name. He called me and I thought he was gonna give me a re-up talk and I'd already told them I wasn't reenlisting. And uh so he said it is my duty... he brought in six of us. It is my duty to inform you officially that your release from active duty orders have been red-lined and you... I am to notify you you've been extended for six months. I looked around like this... not me! (*laughter*) He said yeah, you. So you know...

NANCY RAY: You won the lottery didn't you?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well there was six of us there... we was all just surely not me! But anyway, they should have just went ahead and released me because I didn't do a whole lot.

NANCY RAY: So when did you actually get out?

EDDIE ALMOND: I got out in November of '65.

NANCY RAY: Well I was gonna ask you. Did you have brothers and sisters?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yes, I have uh two brothers and one sister. And I'd like to say this right here. You know like I say we were just poor country people. We had love and we had a God-fearing family. And my little old sweet daddy was probably the best role model that you could ever have. And then my oldest brother was probably one of the finest athletes that come out of that part of the country. And he was an excellent role model. You know I always wanted in sports if I just be as good as my brother. But uh you know I can't relate to people that didn't have a good home life.

NANCY RAY: Well tell us your brother's name.

EDDIE ALMOND: My oldest brother, the one that was the athlete, was Phillip... Julius Phillip Almond, Jr. And then of course my sister was Mary Patricia Almond. And then my little brother was Bobby Michael.

NANCY RAY: So you were the third?

EDDIE ALMOND: I was the second.

NANCY RAY: And are they still living?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah. All three of them are still living. My little sweet daddy, bless his heart, he had rheumatic fever when he was young and he died at 48. And he had, if he could have... you know it's the valves is what it affects that rheumatic fever. And if he could have had an operation... if he could have lived ten more years then they could have probably, just been routine you know. But anyway he owned and operated the sawmill all those years, 22 years. And you know he told you how to do something and he told you once. And you didn't mealy mouth around or whatever, you... Not only that we had, he would pig out 125 head of sows or female hogs, in the spring. And it's still open range in Oklahoma and he owned 55 acres over in the Kiamichi Mountains. Well we'd go out and we'd take all those pigs over there and throw them out see. And then in the fall we'd lay lines of corn back to the 55 acres that he owned to trap those pigs. And then we'd haul them out in a butcher-knife wagon to the road and then load them onto a truck and he'd take them to the sale barn and get \$3 apiece for them. And that's what was... that was our money for the winter. And he farmed... he had a peanut allotment and we farmed peanuts. We had cattle and always had horses. Of course we used... Daddy had three good teams of horses and mules to work in the log woods. So hey, you just learned to work hard. And everybody has to work because you had to help the family make a living. And one of the other things that I really appreciate... growing up in the country was the uh fact that I learned about death early in life. Because you know in the community, if someone in the community passed away, the men of the community in the morning would dig the grave, OK? Then they'd

all go home. They'd usually have it... and my job in the summertime was to haul water from my grandmother's store over to the cemetery which was about 150 yards to keep everybody that was digging the grave in cold well water to drink. So you're eight or nine years old and you're learning about death because you see the menfolks digging the grave, then everybody goes home and cleans up, and they have the service about 2:30 or 3. Then all the menfolks go back home, change clothes or if they have their work clothes with them, then they change clothes and everybody has to go out and then cover the grave.

NANCY RAY: What an interesting story.

EDDIE ALMOND: See I mean you learn and that's the thing my little wife... the only funeral she'd ever been to when I married her was her grandma's. But I'd been around death all my life. And you'd sit up with the bodies back then see. You'd sit up 24 hours a day from the time the individual was brought back out there to the house. And the elders of the community would sit with that body until you actually put it in the grave.

NANCY RAY: Good grief. Well you just mentioned your little wife... tell us about your wife.

EDDIE ALMOND: That's the meanest sweetest woman I know (*laughter*). I've been married to her 43 years as of the 6th of last month, January.

NANCY RAY: What is her name?

EDDIE ALMOND: Linda, Linda Faye. When I call her Linda Faye, she perks up because she knows I'm not happy (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: And what does she call you?

EDDIE ALMOND: And when she don't call me Honey... (*laughter*) I know I'm in trouble.

NANCY RAY: OK. So you married January 6th of

EDDIE ALMOND: 1966.

NANCY RAY: What about children?

EDDIE ALMOND: I have three lovely children. And when I... you know kids that are successful, it doesn't, it's just not a happenstance. It's because you were their friends when they needed to be and then you was a parent when you needed to be. And uh you know the one thing that I always tried to teach my children was initially, besides the good Lord, was love, how to love and be loved. And the other thing that I tried to teach them was that they, that this was the standard that was acceptable. Anything below that we need to talk about... OK? And you just simply do the right thing at the right place at the right time for the right reason. Whether you're by yourself or with somebody, it doesn't make any difference. And that's the way it's gonna be. Well like I say, the end result is my daughter... I had aspirations of her being a doctor.

NANCY RAY: And what's her name?

EDDIE ALMOND: Lisa Trawick. Lisa made one B in twelve years and that was in physical education. She was third out of over 300 kids in her class and just by fractions of points you know. And hey, I could see her going to school, you know getting her... going to med school, the whole bit. She went to school one semester, met her husband, come in and sat down in the middle of the floor and said you taught me to be responsible and she used everything I'd taught her against me (*laughter*). And she got married. Of course you know... what can I say. She's worked for the post office for years... probably I think she makes about \$28 an hour or whatever they make. She's contract... when she went to work they signed. And then the oldest boy, he uh he went to Baylor University. He had aspirations of being a city manager.

NANCY RAY: And what's his name?

EDDIE ALMOND: Marc. He graduated from Baylor with a Public Administration degree. Later he uh got into the teacher's program where you make that transition to a school teacher. And he's an elementary school teacher today and has been for the last twelve years in Waco. And he teaches math and science in the fifth grade. And of course this baby boy, he's the one that's a special agent with the Federal government with U.S. Customs.

NANCY RAY: And his name is?

EDDIE ALMOND: Edwin... named him Edwin. We uh you know we don't have a quarrel with anything. It's really good in that all my expectations of my kids... even though I really wish my daughter had went on to college, they've exceeded my expectations. You know I said if they can just accomplish this, then I will be satisfied with their adult life and their pursuit of happiness and all that kind of thing and being responsible. Well they far exceeded that, all three of them.

NANCY RAY: Now I understand they provided you with some grandchildren too.

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh listen, I've got more grandkids than you can almost count (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Good for you.

EDDIE ALMOND: They uh, Lisa's got two girls and they're both you know excellent students and both of them are in college. And they live in Abilene, Texas. And that oldest boy, he's got four kids and I've got twin grandsons there. He had two and then had twins. So bless his heart, he's about half poor (*laughter*). Edwin and his wife have blessed us with two beautiful granddaughters, Camila is 3 and Alexa is 2.

NANCY RAY: Well you're proud of your family I can tell that.

EDDIE ALMOND: That's all you got when you... I'll tell you.

NANCY RAY: Well when you got out of the Air Force, what did you do after that?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, before they released me from active duty, I had noticed and it was about the same time I noticed it my father-in-law, my wife's dad, clipped out a little old clipping about this big out of the Lubbock paper where they was hiring officers. And so I talked to Harry and I borrowed his car. He let me drive it to Lubbock to take the test for the Lubbock Police Department. And when I got there, Lord I had a cold so bad I couldn't, I couldn't hardly hear myself think. And went back and four days later they called me and says hey, you passed the test. We want you to come back for your interview... when can you come? I said well, I'm working shift work you know I was still in the military. He said well, says Saturday, Sunday, it doesn't make any difference. We need people and we'll interview whenever you can come. So I set up a date, went back, interviewed, and before I left there that day they typed up a letter and said they'd officially hired me and if I wanted to go borrow the money to buy a car on this letter, that was fine with them. They didn't care because they was gonna put me to work when I got released from active duty. And I mean I think I was off like two days and went down there and they put me to work. And then about ten days later, I went to that little academy they have there at the Lubbock Police Department. And so I went to work and worked there for uh 17 months. And then in '67, DPS had got authorized to hire about 400 people that one year as patrolmen. You know new employees. So I made application and there was three of us at Lubbock PD. One of us went... one of the other ones went to "A" school. And another Ranger... you'll interview him, Marshall Brown at Breckenridge or...

NANCY RAY: He's north... I think he's at Graham or something like that.

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, Graham. He's sheriff up there with Tangle-eye Garrett (*laughter*).

But uh Marshall Brown, he was in "B" school and I was in "C" school of 1967. We all worked at Lubbock PD.

NANCY RAY: Now, do you remember what date you went in?

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh yeah, I went to work... you talking about...

NANCY RAY: In DPS.

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, the 18th of April, 1967. And I mean...

NANCY RAY: What do you remember about the school?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well number 1... I had no fear of the physical aspect of it. I knew I could do that because you know I was young and tough as a boot and I'd already proved that to myself since working for my Dad and log woods and sawmill... I mean that's just old hard man-killing labor. And if you can stand up to that, you can stand up to anything. And I've always been really strong in my shoulders and arms and you know the first thing they make you do when you get to the DPS School is climb that rope all the way up to that beam and touch it and then come back down. Why... of course they started that phase and I was the second, third one. The first two, they couldn't get up you know twenty foot up there. Why I went up that silly thing like a monkey. Touched that beam and then from that point on, you need to do it like Almond does it. You need to do it like Almond does it. Well, that scared me. Because I knew in the military if they learned your name... that usually meant you was gonna get volunteered for everything that come down the road (*laughter*). And uh but it wasn't. It was tough, tough, tough... probably the hardest thing in this life that I've ever done.

NANCY RAY: What was the hardest part for you?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well it's just... it's uh stamina and endurance on everything. I mean anytime you get down on the floor and you do 150 pushups and you flip over and do 150 sit-ups... Has anybody explained to you what a sit-up is?

NANCY RAY: Uh... no. So it might be different.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well a sit-up is where you uh, you sit down on your backside and you lift your feet six inches... keep them up off the floor six inches then you do a sit-up at the same time. That's called a vee-up. And what it creates is what they call a red cherry on your behind. Well I'm hairy... I guess I just got lots and lots of male hormones. Because when I was born, my Mama laid me out on the porch first three days to see if I was gonna bark or cry (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: I doubt that.

EDDIE ALMOND: But uh anyway, when you're doing those vee-ups, that cherry is normally either on your hips or right above the crack, OK? And being hairy as I am, the very first thing I begin... the very first thing that began to occur was that I was developing risens where those hairs would break off, rub off. And on Friday night, I had a standing appointment at Georgetown with a doctor. Because you see, they really stress on you... do not, do not you know bring us a doctor's slip and try to get out of anything... we'll run you off. Well, hey I didn't want any of that run-off business. I was there for the duration. So if he'd need to lance them, he'd lance them. I'd sit in Epsom's salt water in the apartment where my life was living there in Georgetown. Every weekend I'd spend both days in that Epsom's salt water trying to draw that infection out of those places. And finally about the eleventh week, I got staph infection in one of them right near my spinal cord. And Mr. Floyd Hacker, I believe Floyd Hacker was the toughest man I ever knew in this life. He's one of the toughest men that I ever knew. Floyd Hacker was my PT

instructor. And Floyd you know... I went in and said Mr. Hacker, I'm not trying to get out of anything. I'll do whatever you tell me to do but I need for you to look at my behind because I've got some real problems back there. And the doctor says I've got staph infection. He said well turn around here and let me look. He turned me around and jerked them down, you know my shorts and he said *whooooa...* He said boy, you stay off of your hiney. So anyway, I said well would it be OK if while ya'll are doing sit-ups or vee-ups, I will do pushups? And I'll do them on my fingertips like this you know. So when I come out of that school, I could literally do seven or eight hundred pushups without ever getting up off the floor. So... but the point I want to make is this. We started with 109 candidates in our school. A week later we had lost already so many people that they called in an additional ten. OK? The second week again we had lost enough of the candidates that they called in an additional ten. Now that's 109, 119, 129... and eighteen weeks later we graduated 52.

NANCY RAY: Tough school.

EDDIE ALMOND: I mean there was Marines, you know people that said oh I was in the Marine Corps. Well, that's OK but this is a different kind of toughness. It's the stamina. And I guess probably the toughest thing was when they'd get you up at 3 o'clock in the morning and take you down there. They'd wake you up and you had to be in a classroom in five minutes, full dressed. And you sat down and take a 100-word spelling test. I mean *mudulla oblongata* is awful hard to spell (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Can you spell it now?

EDDIE ALMOND: *Mudulla oblongata*.

NANCY RAY: Thank you! (*laughter*) I didn't want to look that one up.

EDDIE ALMOND: It's the lower end of your or the upper end of your spinal cord, the lower part of your brain.

NANCY RAY: Those weren't easy words.

EDDIE ALMOND: Why lord no, you had to... you've gotta meet the challenge. But what I was gonna say is that uh I had no fear of the physical aspect of it. The... academically was my greatest fear because ah... graduating tenth out of 42 kids... Hey I enjoyed sports, girls, Charlie Hargraves you know... almost in that order. And uh I had that great fear of failure academically see. But when I found this out when I went before the first Ranger board... I graduated 5th out of my class out of 52.

NANCY RAY: Out of your Highway Patrol class?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yes.

NANCY RAY: That's great.

EDDIE ALMOND: So... you met David Byrnes yet, the captain?

NANCY RAY: No, I have not.

EDDIE ALMOND: David is... he graduated the top of his class.

NANCY RAY: Were there any others in your class who became Rangers?

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh... golly I can't think of one right off the top of my head.

NANCY RAY: Well, looking back at the school, what do you think was the most important thing you learned in that school?

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh probably that everything that would occur... number one you have to be in charge. And I don't mean that in an overbearing way. I'm talking about in a very cooperative-type way you have to take command of the situation around you whether it's a fatal accident or homicides or whatever. You have got to convey a leadership quality that makes people want to work with you and

follow you. I think that's probably the thing that I learned quicker. But then that was not hard because see everything that I was taught growing up... my daddy... in the log woods around the sawmill... anything breaks or tears up, it could kill you. And if he said to look out, you didn't wonder why. You go to ducking or trying to see what's going on. And uh so you just learn to take everything in stride. And early in my life, I become a master of making adjustment to whatever the task at hand is or was.

NANCY RAY: So you graduated from the school. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the school? Does anything stand out?

EDDIE ALMOND: Ah it was just... I've already said it was tough.

NANCY RAY: OK. Well where did you go? What was your first duty station?

EDDIE ALMOND: My first duty station was Grand Saline, Texas, Van Zandt County. Uh and again, when I arrived there uh the two patrolmen there was Kenneth Tidwell and Travis Shafer. And my sweet wife and I with our moving expense and all that, we arrived with about \$7.58 in our pocket... after we paid for rent for a house. We didn't have the money to turn on the utilities. And Travis Shafer, that's the first thing he asked me you know... Eddie, I know that you, you know there's a possibility that you're gonna need a little money. Do you? And I said yeah, I really do. He said well let me tell you. I'll talk to the people, don't worry about it. So he got all the utilities. Can you believe that? He got all that taken care of. Of course I went and made the deposits you know after I got the money. But also there was Glenn Smith on the fruitstand in Fruitvale, Texas, which was just west of Grand Saline there on US 80. And uh he said now Glenn will let you buy anything you want at that fruitstand, he'll even order whatever you want him to. And he'll run you a tab and you'll pay it at the end of the month. He'll keep the tab on it. So hey... that was just like... you know I couldn't believe that everybody was so nice to me. And hey, I just hit the ground running. I thought I never would learn... the first violation that I ever seen Travis Shafer make... contact, traffic contact, was on a muffler violation. And of course back then there wasn't uh... a lot of people drove vehicles that was, that needed a lot of repair. I mean that was just a sign of our times.

And uh he told these people, and this was a warning, he didn't issue a citation. He just simply issued a warning that he told these folks that the law requires that you have a muffler in good operating order to prevent any loud or unusual noise. You can't have any bypasses or cutouts. Well that's quoted verbatim right out of the law see. And I thought to myself, I'll never learn all that. He kind of laughed... he says yeah you will. I'll teach you. He was just like an old mother hen. He watched everything that I done and of course then that's where that Lloyd got involved, you know at night time.

NANCY RAY: There were four of you there in Grand Saline?

EDDIE ALMOND: No, there was just three of us. Lloyd was stationed along with three additional Highway Patrolman at Canton. See they worked Interstate 20 and we worked old US 80 and worked Rains County, Emory, out of Grand Saline. And after a year, then I was actually assigned to Rains County. That was my county. And I worked accidents seven days a week, 24 hours a day if they occurred. That was back before they had a radio or air conditioner in those patrol cars (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: So when you first... you're a rookie trooper or patrolman and

EDDIE ALMOND: Patrolman.

NANCY RAY: Patrolman. What is the difference between a patrolman and a trooper?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, the definition, the true definition I can't cite you but the way I understand it. A trooper has the connotation of being able to handle everything from a homicide up or down. And a patrolman was just a Texas Highway Patrolman. And if you have somebody refer to when they went to work when they were patrolmen, you know they've been around a long time. Those guys... we went to work and we still had the blue. We didn't have the strip down the side. We had the little thread, that little beaded seam all the way down, it was blue. The epaulets were still blue up here... Wasn't all this fancy red and blue.

NANCY RAY: Well what kind of car did you have?

EDDIE ALMOND: My first car was a '66 Plymouth Fury III with 99,000 miles on it (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: That was your Highway Patrol car?

EDDIE ALMOND: That was my first car. And I blew it up about six weeks later (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: What happened?

EDDIE ALMOND: I was chasing an old boy, drunk... running ah in excess of a hundred miles an hour and just like this (*made motion*). And I was trying to get him stopped, get him off the road and I blew the engine out of that 99,000-mile patrol unit. I didn't let it, I didn't check off and let it oil up enough I guess. See they teach you that when you run hard that you take your foot off the accelerator and let that engine... you know when you're not pushing it hard then you back off of it and that engine is able to catch up with itself on the ability to oil itself... I guess that's what happened. Anyway, let me make this note too. I had... Ed Majors was my lieutenant in Tyler, Texas. He never called me by Patrolman Almond, never once. He called me 19 ½ / 33.

NANCY RAY: You're gonna have to explain that.

EDDIE ALMOND: Because I had a 19 ½-inch neck and 33-inch sleeves and he had to special order every shirt that he got me (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Oh goodness. So you were special.

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh... he'd say come in here 19/33, sit over there. He was a good old boy, I loved Ed Majors. He was the nicest lieutenant to work for.

NANCY RAY: Well what about your Highway Patrol days? What would you like to tell us? Anything you want to tell us about?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, yeah my partner and I, Ed Daniels, we uh... about 1971 we observed a vehicle going down Interstate 20 there in Sulphur Springs and it had a uh

NANCY RAY: Now you had transferred to Sulphur Springs?

EDDIE ALMOND: I transferred to Sulphur Springs in June of '68. And uh of course Ed Daniels came there in November '68 as a new assigned Highway Patrolman. A little guy but just as feisty... I mean you

just loved to work with him. If they had, besides Lloyd, if they would assign me someone for a career, it would have been Ed Daniels. He was the same every day... just easy to get along with, uh never complained about anything... just one of those people that you just... always had a smile on his face. And he wound up shooting himself later.

NANCY RAY: Killing himself?

EDDIE ALMOND: No. Just shooting himself.

NANCY RAY: How come?

EDDIE ALMOND: He killed himself.

NANCY RAY: He did?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, accidentally. He was crawling through a fence with a 9 millimeter stuck in the small of his back and it accidentally went off and shot the picture right out of his driver's license in his pocket (*laughter*). Well he did.

NANCY RAY: Oh gracious.

EDDIE ALMOND: But anyway, there was good times and bad times. I uh, on a serious note I worked with a patrolman that was working with me that day that was having wife problems. He had an estranged wife. And I heard that... I brought an individual off the road into the Highway Patrol office to run the individual on the breathalyzer and I could hear him in the other office talking to his estranged wife. And he come through the office there where I was running this test and I asked him if he was OK and he said yeah. And he went outside and uh he got in that patrol car and drove over to where his estranged wife was living in an upstairs garage apartment. Kicked the door in and went in there and asked her if she was gonna take him back. And she said no and he took that .357 and blowed the top of his own head off. But um... it was pretty sad. And he was a kid. The world was at his feet. He was all-state football player. He actually went to the University of Texas on a scholarship and just got to running and playing and messed his scholarship up. Just went to DPS from there. Saddest thing in the world.

NANCY RAY: Well that makes me think of a question because I've heard quite a bit about the camaraderie between the Highway Patrol officers. With a death like this, uh how, how did the Highway Patrolman rally around? Can you tell us?

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh we just had to hold up one another because he was just, he was just... success was just waiting to happen for him. I mean he was just uh... you know he got along with everybody and everybody loved him. And even his wife but they just couldn't get along. She... there were some real problems in that she was a diabetic and she'd been pregnant four or five times. Had four or five miscarriages and they should have stopped and realized but that was before modern medicine had really realized what you need to do in those kinds of situations. And her mind kind of went bad and she got her a boyfriend...

NANCY RAY: Um mmm, life can get messed up.

EDDIE ALMOND: And that's again... that goes back to you've just got to take control of what you can control... that old cliché. And for goodness sakes have sense to know the difference on the things you can't change.

NANCY RAY: Right. Um mmm. I have to ask you. Did you ever crash one of your patrol cars?

EDDIE ALMOND: Never had a reportable accident.

NANCY RAY: Well good for you.

EDDIE ALMOND: Ten years. Now I've come close and there might have been one time when I did make a bootleg turn on a state highway and I backed around and I knocked the chrome off the right rear door... just the chrome, nothing else. Just enough to pop it off.

NANCY RAY: That *might* have happened is what I heard you say.

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, and Bill Cody, Wild Bill Cody, he was my sergeant.

NANCY RAY: Is that CODY?

EDDIE ALMOND: CODY. And uh I'll tell you the kind of person Bill Cody is right today. If Bill Cody called me and told me he was gonna attack hell, I'd just simply ask him where he wanted me to meet him with the buckets. That's the kind... how much I think about Bill Cody. He was not one of these mealy mouthed... talk out off both sides of his mouth kind of sergeant. People would come in and complain on the troopers, or the patrolman...

NANCY RAY: There you did it.

EDDIE ALMOND: And Bill Cody... I've sat right there in my office. His office you know was adjacent to our patrol office. And he'd set them down there and say OK. I want you to... you've got a complaint. Reduce it to writing and sign it and I know what policy and procedure of this department is. I'll investigate it and if you've got, if I find it's valid, you'll be the first one I call. And the second they said well I don't want to reduce it to writing, he'd stand straight up. And he's about 6'2 1/2" anyway. He'd stand up behind his desk. He'd tell them right quick that they didn't have a complaint and if they wanted to report a complaint, they were gonna reduce it to writing and sign it. And if they didn't, get out of his office. And that's just how he investigated complaints. And he meant what he said.

NANCY RAY: *(pause to change disc)* OK we're back and now we're ready to talk about how did you become a Ranger? What prompted you to do that?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, I never really had any desire or aspirations as a Highway Patrolman to be a Ranger because I loved Highway Patrol. And everyday I went to work as a Highway Patrolman, I had a spring in my step and I was ready. And uh but... see Lloyd had transferred from Canton to Sulphur Springs. So then he and I become Highway Patrol partners again. OK? And he was studying for the Ranger test. Well every day when he got in the car, he and I working as partners, he said OK let's review what we talked about yesterday. So he would start teaching me the information. You know the criminal aspect of what a Ranger needed to know. And then the next day I would have to review him about what he taught me yesterday. And this went... this went on over probably two and a half years period of time.

And uh where I was reviewing him and he was teaching me, the first thing you know I had, I retained the knowledge that he was having me review him on. And because of that, I become very informed on the criminal aspect. Whether it's you know how to process a crime scene and what you do and all that kind of thing. So Lloyd, then he took... see Lloyd took the first Ranger test that was ever given where they... prior to that they invited you to Austin. But Lloyd took the first written exam to get in the Ranger appointment process. OK? And so hey, he... after he got in, he's the only man I know that... the Ranger had passed away in Greenville. That was the duty station. And Captain G. W. Burks, when he got the appointment, says well Lloyd I'll just leave you in Sulphur Spring. He didn't have to move, he didn't have to do anything... he just changed offices. He just moved one door down, see? So uh that's when he kept telling me. Eddie, you really need to take the Ranger test and get off the road. Well I was only 32 years old. I was 186 pounds, didn't have a gray hair in my head, and still had black wavy hair, OK? And uh so I said well, OK I'll take it. So in 1974 I took the Ranger exam. Well the list comes out on Friday and I've made the interview board. I mean I was literally petrified. I didn't know any Rangers other than Lloyd. I had worked the Lone Star Steel strike as a Highway Patrolman back in '68, '69. I'd met a few down there like Glenn Elliott and uh Bob, in Waco, Bob Mitchell. I mean they were all... Red Arnold, he was down there. And then uh Frank Kemp, the one I replaced in Paris, Frank was down at the Lone Star Steel strike. So I... in passing and working and occasionally I'd stop one of them for speeding you know. But hey, as soon as I saw that hat I just "yes sir"... we'll see you.

NANCY RAY: Have a nice day.

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, that's right. So when that list come out it was like what have I done to myself. Why... I was tickled to death to be a Highway Patrolman, why did I want to be a Ranger? I mean this is big stuff. I mean this little old country bumpkin (*laughter*)... what have I done? So anyway G. W. Burks called me. Said I don't know you says load up and get on over here to Dallas... I want to meet you. And of course I went in and talked to Bill Cody. He said well that's what we've been working for. Just

get in your car and drive right over there and see him. Well lord I couldn't believe you know... that's pretty good stuff. I mean he just said well get on over there just like that Highway Patrol, just forget that... just go on over to Dallas and meet the captain. So that's what I done. So anyway uh I went to Austin for the interview board and I'm... it was the first time. And of course I went and bought me a first nice pair of alligator boots I ever had you know and a nice suit. I had clothes to wear of course but nothing as nice as I went out and purchased. I mean we had a family and you couldn't afford those kinds of things. And so I go to Austin to the interview board and I drew the number and I'm the first one right after lunch. Well I go in and seems like Bob Warner, Captain Bob Warner out of Lubbock, headed the board. But Captain Pete Rogers out of Houston was on that board too. Well you know each one of them of course they asked you the questions as you go around. And of course little did I realize and learned later that Pete Rogers was the antagonist on the board. Well see he'd sit there and I kind of... he was the second one down right there. And he had his leg throwed up over the chair like this and he was literally sitting there smoking a cigarette and blowing smoke rings. And then all these people was asking questions. Well of course it got around to him and he took a big draw off that cigarette... I believe it was Pall Mall or Camels, it wasn't filtered. You know he was an old World War II fighter pilot.

NANCY RAY: Oh I didn't know that.

EDDIE ALMOND: He leaned forward like this... (*blew smoke into the air*)... He said Patrolman *Alllllmond*, you didn't get the word. Well I thought just a second and I said well Captain Rogers if you'll give me some hint as to why you feel like I have neglected the word or hadn't gotten the word or whatever, I'll sure attempt to address it. I (*Captain Rogers*) said you didn't get the word! Well I went through the same little spiel again about you know if you'll give me a hint I'll sure attempt to address it. And he took and cupped his hand just like that and he slapped the top of that table. Well I'm not gonna say it sounded like a shotgun going off but it had to be almost as loud to me. Of course you're already tense you know and this is the way you do. You sit up and you look around. He leaned forward and he

says... now you've gotta remember I was just 32 years old and had a full head of hair and didn't have a gray hair on my head. He said did anybody ever tell you that you need to be at least 45 and gray headed to be a Ranger? (*laughter*) Now that's exactly what he told me. So then I... man I was trying to formulate you know and go over my qualifications and my college and you know all these things I'd accomplished trying to you know impress him. But of course apparently I didn't because I didn't make it that first time (*laughter*). Matter of fact I didn't make it until the third time.

NANCY RAY: Really?

EDDIE ALMOND: But you've got to understand. I still believe in my way of thinking that's there's a numerical formula and number and I think when it comes your turn you're gonna make it. Uh and that's my own opinion because the next year I come out, I come out like eighth that first time and then the next year I come out like fourth but they only put three on the board. Then the next year, the third year that I took it, I made, I got the appointment from the board, right from the board I made the... got the Ranger appointment.

NANCY RAY: You didn't go on a list, you had an appointment?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, the third year. And uh see, and I knew... of course you know when all that process is said and done they send you the results and how you placed on the written exam and all that. Can you believe what Lloyd taught me was right on? The first year that I took the test I come out number two statewide on the written exam. The second time I come out number three. And then the year I made it I come out number four (*laughter*). I was progressively getting worse on the written exam. So uh... but anyway it, it was a good process. Had it been any different than the way it turned out it probably would of... along with my family and all, what you go through and the openings and that kind of thing. Because I know initially even the year I made it from the board, I really thought once the list came out that I was gonna go to Houston. And boy I dreaded taking my family to Houston. But then Bill Wilson called me and he said now you... Ralph Wadsworth is number one. You're number two and you're either gonna

have a choice probably of Eastland or Big Spring, Texas. Of course George went ahead and transferred from Eastland, I mean from Big Spring to Eastland so I went to Big Spring, Texas.

NANCY RAY: So that was your first duty station?

EDDIE ALMOND: That was my first duty station.

NANCY RAY: And my records show that you became a Ranger January 1st, 1977. Is that correct?

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh huh.

NANCY RAY: OK. So you're in Big Spring. What was your first thing to do as a Ranger?

EDDIE ALMOND: I got there the 28th day of December and on New Year's Day if you can believe, Elmer's liquor store was open. Elmer had owned that liquor store about 35 years and he uh he was about 80 years old. And the first day of January at 9 o'clock at night, he closed at 9 o'clock. The Big Spring PD called and said is this the new Ranger? And I said yes sir, this is Eddie Almond. He says well do you know where Elmer's liquor store is located? I said well no sir but if you'll tell me I'll sure try to find it. He says well it's located on the loop. He says now it's my understanding you live out there, you are living in a house there on the back side of the old Air Force base. I said yes sir. He said well just come out there and hit that loop and just go straight east on it and you'll get around there about a mile and a half and on the right you'll see Elmer's liquor store. Said there's an old boy that just attempted to arm rob old Elmer out there and he murdered, he killed... he shot him... killed him. And uh so uh...

NANCY RAY: First day on the job?

EDDIE ALMOND: I mean I hadn't even... yeah, January the 1st! I had been in Big Spring... the 28th day of December is when we got there. I didn't even know where... my Sam Brown, my pistol... I was just hoping it was all in the car. So uh I had to stop at the 7-11 and buy me a notebook, I didn't even have a notebook. So I get down to Elmer's liquor store and Elmer is there and he's got an old thumb-buster .45 that he shot this kid. The kid's car was still running sitting in the parking lot out here. And he had a piece of cardboard covering up the license plate on the back of it. And uh he said the old kid came in and he

says as soon as he got up to the little old counter like this, he says he jerked a pistol out of his belt, stuck it in my face and says give me all your money old man. And he says I'm too old for that. And he said I had that old thumb-buster .45 laying right there on a little shelf right under, right under the top of the cabinet. He said I just reached and got it like that and says I shot him the first time through the cabinet. And he says when I shot him the first time he says he went up like this and he says he spun around... then he started around the edge of the cabinet... and he says when he got near to the edge of the cabinet he says I shot him a second time. And said he run past me and run in that door right there and you can see where the blood was, the trail... And he went back in and he said just as he got about halfway between here and the back door, I shot him in the back the third time. And when he hit, when the boy hit the door back there... you've seen the outline of blood on the door... I mean literally where that someone was just saturated with blood would hit a door. The imprint of his body was on that door and he just stumbled backwards about three steps and died right there. That was my first.

NANCY RAY: Welcome to being a Ranger (*laughter*).

EDDIE ALMOND: That's right. And uh the boy was the son of the local county judge who was in the door... powdered cocaine back then. So uh it was the beginning and when I knew it was serious business. No there in West Texas, Company E, I had seven counties that I was responsible for. That was Howard, Glasscock, Sterling, Coke, Mitchell, Borden... how many is that, six?

NANCY RAY: I didn't count.

EDDIE ALMOND: And... no not..., maybe half of Scurry County, I can't remember. But anyway you know out there if I went to Sterling City, Sterling County to work. All those counties out there was very, very thinly populated. A lot of those counties didn't have between 900 and 1200 total residents in the whole county. And in Coke County, which is Robert Lee and Bronte, north of San Angelo. I worked the first homicide in that county. The sheriff was 29 years old and he was two years old the last time they'd had a homicide in that county. And I went over there and I'll never forget. He didn't... they... he didn't

know what to do. Marshall Millikin was his name. Marshall... he said Eddie, I hadn't even opened the door I just know the JP went in there and pronounced him dead. He said, of course Marshall was really a pretty well informed sheriff. But he'd never worked a homicide.

NANCY RAY: But neither one of you were very old.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, you're right about that. Of course you know when I went into the Ranger service I was 34. And uh... let me make this statement right here. This is I think so very important. You know you've heard that the Ranger service... you get in the Ranger service because of who you know and good old boy syndrome etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Back then the litmus test was not only that you took the test but all the Rangers that were in the Ranger service... or I say all. Probably 90 percent of them were either World War II or Korea War veterans. Like Red Arnold... you know he was Marine Corps in the Pacific and he fought every battle they fought over there. He was the Ranger at Mount Pleasant, Texas. And the litmus test was your... the interdepartmental politics and association and it wasn't what you... what they observed in the cafeteria in Austin. It's what happened. Just like the time that this Highway Patrolman committed suicide. See, time the Ranger got there, I already had the... and I'd come from Lubbock PD so I knew a little something about you know how to maintain a crime scene and what I need to do and that kind of thing. And I'd already made a bunch of measurements and done all that for him. And that's the test. And I know that when it come time for me to, to be chosen or not, that Frank Kemp had something to say about it. He said well I know this. I know that he maintained that crime scene. I know that he had this much done and that much done before I ever got there. So it's not like he don't know how to take charge and make sure that things are as they should be when you get there. See what I mean?

NANCY RAY: I see what you mean.

EDDIE ALMOND: That's the litmus test. And I think that's something that maybe today's Rangers uh that's lacking somewhat. And I'm not saying that a lot of them are not... you know Gulf War veterans,

Iraq veterans... that kind of thing. But I'm gonna tell you something. You know I had... my mother had five brothers and four of them was in World War II. And they all come back. One in particular in the Navy he had two destroyers shot out from under him and he laid... he was in the ocean, the Pacific Ocean, for nine days and drifted upon an island that was infested with Japanese. And they literally would sneak in at night and steal their garbage for something to eat. So those people have been there, done that, and have met the challenge. And they just... I mean you get around them and you don't say a whole lot. And really I didn't. That's kind of hard to believe probably (*laughter*). But I really didn't say anything. I was seen but not heard, especially when I was around them old Rangers. They were just a wealth of knowledge.

NANCY RAY: So you learned from them.

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh yeah. And they were just like old mother hens. If you asked them a question, they would drive 200 miles out of the way to help you with anything. And see I think the Ranger service today is kind of lacking in... that they, they don't mother-hen everybody and really make sure they're successful in every little aspect of what they do.

NANCY RAY: OK. I see what you're saying. Well you're talking about the older Rangers. Who was your first captain?

EDDIE ALMOND: J. P. Lynch, Midland, Texas. Had... bless his heart, I always loved him. I never met a captain I didn't like. There might have been one or two that I didn't like what they said but that don't mean I didn't like them because all of them was just a wealth of knowledge. And Captain Lynch... Did you know when he was a Ranger private he was stationed in Mineral Wells, Palo Pinto County? Did you know he called me out of Big Spring one day and says look, meet me at Lamesa... you and I've gotta to Lubbock. He says I worked an aggravated robbery/murder in a liquor store in Palo Pinto County in like 1947. And he says this man wants to make a deathbed confession to that murder and robbery and I want you to go with me to the hospital, there at Methodist Hospital there in Lubbock... and let's get this done.

Now see that's '47, '57, '67, '77... what... 33 or 34 years removed from when that occurred. We went in there and this old gentleman was a World War II veteran. And he'd been shot up in Europe. He come back and he was on crutches. And the captain talked about how he never could... he even told me this you know as we were driving to Lubbock. About all these black marks were up on the ceiling. He said Eddie, I never have figured out why those black marks... or what they were up there. So we get up there and we go into this man's room. His name was Emerson, last name Emerson. He said that... well I know that I'm gonna die and that's part of you know if it's admissible. It's gotta be imminent you know that they're gonna die. And he says I need to get this off my mind because I'm trying to get myself right with... for the good Lord. And he was on crutches. He'd come back from World War II. He was on crutches and went in this liquor store. And he had a .45 and he says the clerk, when he told him this was a robbery and he wanted all his money, he says he looked at me and me being on them crutches he said he started trying to take that .45 away from me. And he says I went to hitting him with it and he says he finally uh got about halfway away from me and I had my crutches. But he said I was swinging at him and he says every time I'd swing at him, he says the end of those crutches would hit the ceiling. And he says finally when I got that pistol where I could, he said I just went ahead and shot him. And took the money and left. And so we you know that was his confession to that robbery that my captain had worked back in Palo Pinto County.

NANCY RAY: Good gracious. Well what kind of cases did you have?

EDDIE ALMOND: You name it (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Well why don't you tell us.

EDDIE ALMOND: OK. In Big Spring, Texas, uh one... I'm just gonna go through these randomly and tell you about them. Uh it was a rape, burglary, and then murder. We had a man. He broke in the uh residence there inside the city of Big Spring. He went through the back window. He raped the daughter, 15 years old that was there in the bed. Her daddy heard the commotion. He got up and started in there and

the defendant heard him get up and was walking through the house. So he got up off the bed and shot and killed the daddy, right there. And he fell dead in the floor. Then he went back out the window then he went 16 blocks across town. Broke in another house and committed another rape. But the lady he raped over there, she knew him. She was a black lady. And so you know that took us a little while, three or four days, to pull all that together. You know we initially, when we realized that he raped a lady that he knew and she had identified him, then we suspected... that was back before DNA typing. So we went ahead and was able to tie all back together. But uh then I worked a theft of trade secrets investigation out there where they had developed... Three Aggie engineers had developed...

NANCY RAY: This sounds like an Aggie joke.

EDDIE ALMOND: No, it was pretty serious.

NANCY RAY: I'll bet.

EDDIE ALMOND: About \$2 million worth right up front. Uh they developed a fiberglass sucker rod. And in the oilfield, those sucker rods... you know that artificial lift is what they use to run the pump underground to move the oil to the surface. OK? And the key to those fiberglass sucker rods, because they had stretch in them and they wouldn't corrode. So everybody was trying to go to them. And uh but they had to develop a rod coupling. And all a rod coupling is... it's uh... it's actually called a rod box. And it's where you just screw the end in those sucker rods into a metal box to make a connection so you can add more length and more length and more sucker rods to it you see. So they, these Aggie engineers, had to develop not only... they had developed the fiberglass sucker rod but they had to develop a glue that they could put in this rod box and that fiberglass would stick in it without pulling apart. Well they worked on this thing almost two years. And they finally developed the glue that would get hard enough to glue those rod boxes on those sucker rods. OK? And when they was pulling it they pulled their pulling machine apart with it... they knew they'd found what they needed. So then they went to manufacturing these fiberglass sucker rods with these rod boxes. Well some folks out of California uh, San Jose, California,

came to Big Spring. Climbed over in their storage yard and sawed them off then carried six of them back to San Jose, California. And they went to producing them out there. Well a patent was pending on all this stuff and they were still trying to get all this taken care of for the patent office. And so anyway that's when they realized... they filed for a patent about three days before the people there in Big Spring actually filed. And they'd taken and analyzed this glue and all that to determine what they needed. So anyway I uh, I went to San Jose, California.

NANCY RAY: How did you know to go to San Jose?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, just because the conversation and phone calls you made it was... they actually told me hey, the only people we know that would probably, that we know is trying to manufacture this... they patented and it's in San Jose, they're out of San Jose, California. OK? Well anyway I went out there and stayed about ten days and developed enough information that I knew I needed to go to Birmingham, Alabama. So I come back to Big Spring and I get everything ready and then this Roy Lee Osborne, he was with the Big Spring PD. He and I fly to Birmingham, Alabama. And if you can believe, those people out of San Jose, California, had shipped these rod boxes... and there had to be a certain concave end to all this, or inside the machining on this rod box. And when we got to Birmingham, Alabama, we got with the Alabama State Police. We went out to this machine shop... we'd developed that information. And when we walked in there, it's the only time I ever had a man just give me his office. Them seven or eight rod boxes that they'd sawed off of those sucker rods in Big Spring, Texas, were sitting there on his desk (*laughter*). So needless to say, I went (*laughter*)... that's my evidence. Anyway to make a long story short, they had already developed all this and they'd even manufactured... Matter of fact, have you met Al Mitchell out of...

NANCY RAY: Uh huh we did. We've interviewed Al.

EDDIE ALMOND: OK, Al... hey, he is a teacher too. Al Mitchell can teach you anything that you want to... anything you need to know about policing. Uh and he was kind of my mentor out there too. Uh

anyway, Al Mitchell bought a load of these out of Omaha, Nebraska, for me in this case... see through the Brown Drilling Company he works for out there in Midland now. And but anyway to make a long story short, we got it all taken care of. And I worked another case where that... these two old oilfield... crude oil thieves out of Odessa.... They had gone out. They had five old stripper wells is what they call them where they won't produce more than probably 20 barrels of liquid, that includes salt water and oil and paraffin and everything, a day. And all of a sudden they have found a new chemical out of Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, that you can pour in these stripper wells and they'll suddenly start producing 280 barrels of oil twice a day. OK? So anyway, the problem with what I had to start with was that this 280 barrels... you never hold a well... an oil well never increases, they always decrease. Well, having roughnecked a little when I was in high school, I understood the nomenclature when they referred to something, that kind of thing. But yet I had a lot to learn about computers and pipelines because they were putting 280 barrels of oil in a pipeline Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And it was going in a pipeline that handled 60,000 barrels of oil a day. And the deviation on the minus or plus on the computer was more than that. OK? So we sat around and we brainstormed. Matter of fact I talked to Al Mitchell a whole lot about this case. He said uh Eddie, I tell you what. Why don't you just go out there and put a drop meter in the pipeline, off the premises of that land. That way it won't be an illegal entry. If you've got permission to be where you're at on that adjacent lease, then won't be any problem. But we'll put it in that pipeline in such a way that that will be the only wells or... the stock tanks will be the only ones feeding off that particular line you see. So that's exactly what I done. And I dug a hole for me to lay in and that was back before really all this modern videotaping like we know it today. I mean they just had a little 8 millimeter black and white back then. But I literally dug a hole out there and went out there for 58 times. And laid in a hole and it's the only time I ever wet on myself, laying in the hole, because they was right there on the lease. Drive up in their Lincolns and take their little sheet chamois and wipe the dust off of it waiting on the pumper to come. And they was... oh listen, let me do that for you. And the old, that stock tank, it was... the oil that

they had stole in Glasscock County, which I made that case later... and hauled in and put in that stock tank. It was almost asphalt. It had been there so long. See every time they, you sell them oil, then they come in with a plumb bob and try to penetrate you know measure the oil in the stock tank. Well the plumb bob would not even move past the top of that oil it had been in there... it just set there. It'd just lay over like that. But anyway I made that case and they wound up stealing 12,500 barrels of crude oil... back then to the tune of right at \$500,000. And the poor old... the only thing it was costing them... the pumper, they'd bring him a case of whiskey about every ten days. And then they'd be out there waiting on him and they'd play like they turned the valve on so that... But that drop meter we put in the line, in all that time, 58 days, there was eight tenths of a barrel of oil traveled down that pipeline.

NANCY RAY: Eight tenths...

EDDIE ALMOND: Eight tenths. So...

NANCY RAY: Did you spend all of your career in Big Spring?

EDDIE ALMOND: No. Five years... the first five years.

NANCY RAY: What else did you do in Big Spring?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, uh I worked a triple murder at the Hilltop Bar (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: You did? Tell us about that.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well they had a... when I got out there I was informed the very first thing that the Suarez' was the gladiators of Big Spring, Texas. There were eleven Suarez brothers.

NANCY RAY: How do you spell that?

EDDIE ALMOND: Just like at El Paso... Juarez... Suarez. It's an S instead of a J. And they were the tushhogs that means they were the meanest motor scooters coming down the road. OK? And uh from bottom to top, they was the cats... you needed to step aside if they come. So anyway they got out in that Hilltop Bar that night and the old gentleman that ran it and owned it was named Benny Garza. Well Benny, he wasn't afraid of anybody. So he's running the bar and he's got him the old Blackhawk...

Ruger Blackhawk 357. It's laying there under the bar. Then he's got an old Colt .45 Model 1911 under there. Well he'd waited. These Suarez's, they were playing shuffleboard over there, three of the brothers. And uh one of them went in the bathroom and come out and he said hey boys, its 2 o'clock, I need to close up. Give us some more beer! No, hey... it would be a violation of the law if I served you after 2. We're closed. We're officially closed right now. Ya'll need to gather your stuff up and go on. Well the one in the bathroom he heard all this. Well when he come out he already had his pistol out. So he just walked, or started walking over there to Benny who was behind the bar. He said I'm gonna tell you, you're gonna give us more to drink and we're not leaving until we get ready. And he's pointing that gun at Benny and Benny just went *kaboom*. And he fell right in the floor and wet all over himself. That bullet hit him right there and went right through his heart... with the, what did I say?

NANCY RAY: Ruger?

EDDIE ALMOND: It was a .45 is actually what he shot the first one with. Then the others went over there and grabbed his pistol and they went to shooting at Benny. Anyway, long story short, before it was said and done, there was three of them Suarez' boys laying dead in the floor and Benny Garza hadn't got a... he wasn't touched. So he closed the bar up at 2 o'clock.

NANCY RAY: He was the meanest motor scooter now. What happened to him?

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh we took it before the grand jury and hey, everybody in that Howard County knew about the Suarez brothers. They didn't do anything... they... justified. Uh

NANCY RAY: Didn't you tell me... how many murders did you say you had in your career?

EDDIE ALMOND: 144.

NANCY RAY: That's a lot.

EDDIE ALMOND: Now I mean... you know homicide is the taking of a human life. Now you know there's two kinds, there's lawful and there's unlawful. You know if you accidentally die in a hospital then that really comes under the classification, even though they don't say it that way. But you look at it

whether it's lawful or unlawful. And that includes you know some... the death of some people, especially suicide. You have to investigate that just like a homicide. Just like... an example would be I worked a suicide where a lady had drove out to DFW. See I stayed in Big Spring five years then I had, I transferred back to Garland, Texas, and I was there like eight months and then... anticipating Frank to retire in Paris. And then when he retired in August of '82, then I transferred on to Paris. But it was during that interim of being there and working out of the Garland office that I worked this suicide where this lady went out to the airport and committed suicide out there. Well she was a very prominent person and there was a lot of speculation. Well you know it could have been her husband. It could have been her boyfriend. You know how that goes. I just simply had to work it that way. So that's inclusive in that 144. Uh I know Lloyd one time worked a situation where a boy that was not of his right mind actually climbed up in a hay barn and killed himself you know on top of the hay. So that's, that's included in those 144 homicides. But probably 138 or 139 of those are... was as we know, you know either a "whodunit" homicide or you know you worked it as a homicide, an unlawful-type homicide.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever have any serial murder cases?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well I interviewed Henry Lee Lucas on a... where a body was found in Delta, Cooper, Delta County, because he was admitting... remember to all these homicides. I wanted to interview him and did interview him about that particular murder. But...

NANCY RAY: Wasn't it?

EDDIE ALMOND: Wasn't no way. He was not involved in that. No way. Uh one time Captain J. P. Lynch while I was in Big Spring called me and he said Eddie, go to Calper's (*spelling?*) Clinic in Big Spring. Pick up Dr. Calper and carry him to Sanderson which was 200 miles away. He says you've gotta carry him down. He's gonna do an autopsy for the sheriff's office down there. So I go get Dr. Calper at 4 o'clock in the morning. He's an old gruff. He didn't say ten words to me in 250 miles. He was about a 68 or 69 year old doctor. So I carried him all the way down to Sanderson, Texas. We get down there and we

do the autopsy in the garage of the sheriff's office. And uh he cuts... it was a body that they'd found out near a main-traveled highway. It was on an oil lease but you know they suspect that they drove... because they could drive off onto that lease and just throwed the body out and drove away. So anyway he just, you know he just does the autopsy. He pulls him apart here and he ... uh so I'm trying to take pictures. I got my little millimeter-type measure you know. I'm trying to do what I need to do. And he gets down here and he opens him up up here and he says perforation of the heart by the rib. Got his string out.... And I said Dr. Calper, wait a minute. I need to take a picture of that. Ah... we ain't gotta... hey, my word's good enough. Yes sir! I mean that... people don't realize even though how rural West Texas was back then, on a police radio... lots of places, Highway Patrolmen they can't talk to anybody. On a good night maybe they can talk to Ozona but you have no communication. You're just stuck out there. So that was my experience in Sanderson with Dr. Calper.

NANCY RAY: Well while you're looking at that, let me ask. You're talking about being so far away and out of communication, what was the most frightened you ever were as a Ranger? Can you think of a time?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well I'm gonna say this in such a way because I was fortunate enough that I was raised by a little sweet mama that took me to Bible school early on in my life. And I learned the 23rd Psalm. OK? And you'd be surprised how many different times, I'm not gonna tell you that I was not frightened at times on some cases or some times. But I always started saying the 23rd Psalm and a cool reflection would come over me. OK? And I mean you know *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. Leads me beside the still water.* And how can you be afraid? And I'm not gonna say... I'm sure I was afraid. But that's the first thing and only me and the good Lord knows the different times that I, that I said that. And uh and I'm sure it was always those times where... either we were in a bind or we could get in a bind because as a Highway Patrolman, I got shot at 26 times.

NANCY RAY: Did you really? Whoo!!

EDDIE ALMOND: But anyway... but uh I mean to answer your question. I'm sure I was frightened a number of times. But I always remembered my teachings. And I thank the good Lord for a mama like I had. And that's just like... and I never had a quarrel with anybody... I never understood this. Even though I don't have a quarrel with anybody who drinks, all I've drank in my life you could probably pour in a 5-gallon bucket. But I don't have to drink to get high on life. I mean I'm just me. And maybe that's... I bubble over with talking (*laughter*). Maybe that's... But uh

NANCY RAY: Well what was your hardest case... that you every worked? Maybe you were not able to solve it or something, I don't know.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, probably Big Spring and I say that. I worked a homicide out there where a mother, a 39-year old woman and her little 13-year old boy were kidnapped out of a Texaco station and carried out in a field. And the little boy was made to sodomize whoever kidnapped them. And I never was able to solve that even though I tried to do DNA typing on it. Even later we never could get it to work out. And we did have an individual in Big Spring that his wife, after he died... he was a male that his wife said he drank himself to death. I mean chug-a-lugging Bicardi Rum, a fifth of Bicardi Rum, for no reason. And she said that he told her he murdered those people. And that probably was the hardest case that bothered me as much. Even though I did work a case where there was a child was involved. And also worked probably one of the longest cases I worked was in Big Spring. It was a murder-for-hire where that a wife, over a nine-month period, had taken out \$450,000 worth of insurance on her husband and then had him murdered. And we worked on that every day. We knew in the first 30 days who had, who had hired who but we got to working on that thing. We worked on it just about every day for 17 months. And on the last day, we arrested the wife and the shooter on the same day. And we made like 19 recordings of her because we was able to flip the bad guy that set it all up. She had perfected 28 insurance frauds. And this, she just went and got bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger on the insurance aspect. And uh we made the old boy that she had a... she'd just bought a house and a month later had it burned and collected all

the insurance on it. And we were able to put it on him. And it all went back to the fact that when we subpoenaed all his phone records, the prime suspect, he had been calling an old boy in West Texas, in Midland, Texas... that his wife, he... the phone number he was calling was the bad guy, the Little Dixie Mafia guy, in Midland's wife's beauty shop. And I had done a lot of work on him while I was out there in Big Spring. OK? ...or the Little Dixie Mafia. And when we got those phone records, I kept looking at this which was a 915 which is that area. And I just kept saying... man, what is it about this phone number? There's something... And I kept going back and going back and finally it dawned on me. It was this old boy's wife's beauty shop and he was a member of the Little Dixie Mafia.

NANCY RAY: You're saying Little Dixie?

EDDIE ALMOND: Little Dixie Mafia. See Jerry Ray James was the one that put the Little Dixie Mafia together. OK he was the one, remember uh Judge John that was murdered in San Antone? OK this was the old boy that put it on the two brothers out of El Paso that was uh, was a cell mate of his in Kansas in Leavenworth. And uh so anyway this old boy that I'm referring to out of Paris there, when I realized that's who that was, then I knew that that expanded his capabilities even that much more. And I knew we was on the right track see. And when we once made him on this arson and indicted him federally... because the insurance was out of state. Then we were able to turn around and when I got him and I told him I said hey... said I know your associates and I know your capabilities and the best thing you can do because you're already... been a three-time loser... we're gonna put you in the penitentiary for life. I said the best thing you can do is help us. Well he... it took us about two weeks traveling all over East Texas with the DA's secretary to uh put together a plea bargain with him on how we was gonna do that. Once we flipped him, he was the best informant I ever had. And he put it right on the wife and we got... he was the one who assisted us with recording her all those times. And the very last recording was the day we arrested her. We had her meet him in his truck in Commerce, Texas, which is 39 miles away. And we were sitting right in front of them in the Wal-Mart parking lot when they pulled up. And he knew right

where we was at and we was videotaping the whole thing. And see how we kept her from keeping the insurance money, we had her husband's natural son file a wrongful death suit on her. See and she sat there and of course this old boy we'd flipped... he got his bottle out and he took a big drink of whiskey. He said did you want a drink? She said yeah, let me have one. She took a big drink and of course we were videotaping. I mean we're focusing... just like you and I across... right there. And she says well you know I planned and I planned and I planned but I didn't plan on his damned old son filing a wrongful death suit on me to keep me from getting that insurance money. And that's the reason why I can't pay you (*laughter*). Anyway, to make a long story short, we got her because we had two additional capital murder cases. We let her and the shooter both plead to 99 years instead of trying them because the county was about out of money.

NANCY RAY: There is no way we can capture everything about your career. Is there something you'd really like for us to know and be sure we've heard about?

EDDIE ALMOND: Let me look at my paper. Well, let me just explain to ya'll how this... you know I talk too much and I write too much.

NANCY RAY: Do you (*laughter*)?

EDDIE ALMOND: Because I do.

NANCY RAY: That's just what Lloyd Johnson said.

EDDIE ALMOND: The murder for hire... when the girls in Dallas typed that written report, it took them 28 hours to type it. It was almost 500 typewritten pages.

NANCY RAY: How much... but you couldn't have left it out though?

EDDIE ALMOND: No. But let me tell you. That's... that's something that I've always been surprised about... is that when you work a crime scene, that's your bread and butter. If you don't document it there and get it on paper and know what was there, then you can't make the case. And I worked a double murder in Red River County. OK?

NANCY RAY: Let's get a new disc so we don't have to stop. *Pause to change disc* OK we're back and we're ready hear about your case.

EDDIE ALMOND: OK I was still in West Texas and I was... I had Glasscock County out there... over there at Garden City. And the sheriff there was Booger Pruitt. And Booger was a big heavysset, 300 pounds... but just a teddy bear. Just the nicest guy in the world and he was married to a girl that grew up within twelve miles of where I grew in Oklahoma. And I knew her all her family. So we got to know each other pretty well. Well they was having their October Fest in Glasscock County down there at uh, it was the German community there in Glasscock County. Anyway he uh, he got there and of course there was a lot of migrant workers that worked for those German farmers. And he got down there and one of the Mexican migrant workers got pretty drunk and he jerked a knife out and stabbed the sheriff. Well it occurred and of course they called me. And I went down there and of course implemented an investigation. The first thing I found... yes, it was just like... but what occurred was when he stabbed him then Booger was holding him, you know holding the hand that had the knife in it. And just physically holding him to keep him from stabbing again and he instructed another man there to take his pistol out and tell him to drop it. And if he wouldn't drop it, shoot him. Well he did and they wound up shooting him twice and killing him right there, the migrant worker. Well you know this was at the time that... they'd had the uh, the choking in the Ector County jail where the Hispanic had been choked to death by the jail employees there in Odessa. And also, there in Big Spring that I had worked, was where that a, the coach out at Howard College there's wife was out getting in her car... well a Mexican male come up behind her and about halfway kidnapped her. Shoved her in the car then he crawled in the car and he drove just half a block and then kicked her out. But he did keep the car and so he was driving around Big Spring running from the police and they set up a roadblock. And when they set up a roadblock, well he run that roadblock and of course tore that car up that he'd stolen... hit those three patrol units. And once he had done that of course the car you know come to a halt and the policemen run up there and a sergeant,

a Big Spring Police Department sergeant ran up there and thought he had a pistol. Anyway it was one of those big cones. But anyway he wound up shooting the kid through the head with .44 and killing him right there. And uh so anyway we had the uprising of the Mexican communities. I mean they were all concerned and rightfully so up to a point. But everything that I could find you know, police were just as right as they could be about it. So the next thing we had was the Brown Berets who is a militant Mexican organization out of California. They show up and they start marching on Big Spring and Glasscock County down there (*laughter*) so... that's the only time I'd ever seen them. They had the blankets where they put them over their heads, what do they call those?

NANCY RAY: Ponchos?

EDDIE ALMOND: I guess that's what they call them. But anyway they just slip their heads through the slit in the blanket and wear the blanket. Well there wasn't any question in my mind that those Brown Berets had sawed-off shotguns under those blankets and that kind of thing. But we had us a gathering of about 3,000 of them.

NANCY RAY: Did you say the 23rd Psalm?

EDDIE ALMOND: Ohhhhh.... Well yeah and then some. But it... that... There was a great concern for the safety of everybody in that situation. And of course... I was thinking boy it sure would be nice to be a little old Highway Patrolman in Sulphur Springs, Texas.

NANCY RAY: Well you mentioned the Branch Davidians. Were you involved in that too?

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh yes, I'll get to that. Uh... OK then before I left out there I got involved in a public corruption investigation where a local attorney's little wife... he sent her and she was a pretty little thing. He was 40 and she was like 25 years old and he sent her off to Texas Tech to get a law degree. She got to running and playing so when she come home he give her a whipping like you couldn't believe. She called me and she reported everybody including her grandma for smoking dope and what he was doing and that kind of thing. So anyway I implemented that investigation and started looking at all this and

before it was all said and done, I wound up getting the assistant district attorney involved in this dope scene, the senior adult probation officer, and six additional local citizens. And so it... matter of fact after I left out there it took a while for it to get to federal court in Abilene. Another case I was involved in is where an old boy, he was a diamond salesman. You know those diamond salesmen carry about \$300,000 in their case around in the back of their cars all the time. Well he was an alcoholic that had got on the wagon. So the company had not fired him they had sent him to rehab (*laughter*). They said OK... he's OK now we're gonna send him out with \$300,000 worth of diamonds again, OK? So he winds up in El Paso and he gets out there and he goes across the border in Juarez. And he gets drunk and he has them black-out spells and he can't remember where he left his diamonds and his car (*laughter*). So he didn't know what to do. So he gets on a bus and he, he says well where's the nearest state hospital? Well it was in Big Spring. So he gets on a local bus and he rides the local bus to Big Spring, Texas, and then he gets off the bus there and then he goes out and checks himself in the state hospital there at Big Spring. So then he calls me. Well this being out of the country, you know the possibility of \$300,000 worth of diamonds in Mexico. So I call the FBI. And they show up and we go out there and we interview that old boy and he tells us this big story. So anyway I called Pete Montemayor, he was the Ranger out there at El Paso.

NANCY RAY: I talked with him.

EDDIE ALMOND: How's he doing? Is he...

NANCY RAY: He's OK. His sister-in-law... he's dealing with some health issues for her so we had a good talk though.

EDDIE ALMOND: But anyway, I called Pete Montemayor and the first thing I done... I called him before... I'd forgotten there's a time change between Big Spring and El Paso. So I called him an hour or two early. He said boy, its 7 o'clock, I haven't even gone to work yet. I said well Pete I need a little help. He said well OK, what you got? I told him so he goes and he gets to checking. It's not even two hours he calls me and he says Eddie, I got this old car located and I've already popped the trunk on it. He said all

them diamonds are still right there in the back. So we go back out to the hospital. We talk to this old boy... we say hey, we've got your car located and we've got your diamonds located. But uh the company just called us and said you no longer work for them. So we can't release the diamonds to you now. Is that your car or is that the company car? They'd already told us it was his car, the company people. So anyway Pete, he got, he kept the diamonds out there and they went on out there and got it. But anyway when they'd found out we'd located them diamonds and that car... he just went up there and told the nurse... said hey, I'll see ya'll later (*laughter*). But uh...

NANCY RAY: You had a variety of cases then.

EDDIE ALMOND: OK. I worked a homicide there in Big Spring where the victim was shot 17 times with a .22 pistol. This old boy, about 8 months prior, the victim had shot him. And the .22 lead portion had lodged in his jaw. Well it was in such a location they couldn't remove it. It was right here (*he pointed*). So anyway the victim, the old boy that he had shot talked the victim, of the murder, that was shot 17 times, into getting in the truck with him. They was gonna go get some more Budweiser. So they're leaving the state park there so they get to arguing over you know the driver being shot in the jaw and he still had the lead in his jaw. So he sees right quick he's in trouble so he pulls out his little 9-shot .22 Saturday night special and he shoots one time at the driver, the one that's already got the lead portion located in his jaw. And it goes right beside his head and goes out through the cab. Well the driver, he jerks out his Saturday night special and he just sticks it right here and he shoots him nine times. OK... little old shorts, OK? Well when he shoots him, he said he didn't slump forward until he'd been shot the third time and then he said he just kind of slumped forward like this on the seat. He says once I emptied my pistol, of course you know how they talk in broken English. Then he said I got his pistol... see it's still got eight in it. So he shoots him eight more times. So eight and nine is 17. I thought he'd initially been shot with buckshot. But he'd laid... that old boy had disposed of the body. Took him down to Glasscock County out by an old church and covered it up with a piece of sheet iron. And it was 21 days

after he'd been murdered that we found him in August and he was nothing but just a moving mass of maggots. I mean... and we had to x-ray him you know to find the lead to retrieve all the lead. Now you talk about a mess. That's the only... I never did throw up but I only used about two bottles of Vicks packed up my nose so I couldn't inhale. I even put a little on my tongue so I couldn't taste it. You know sometimes you get in those houses around those bodies where you can taste them and smell them for months. Anyway, I... when I transferred to El Paso...

NANCY RAY: To El Paso?

EDDIE ALMOND: I'm sorry, to Garland. When I transferred from Big Spring to Garland and I had become real good friends with as a Highway Patrolman was Slim Hulon who was the Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association inspector for that northeast Texas area. Well Slim called me while I was there in Garland. He said Eddie I've got an international cow thief that we need to work on. Said he's stealing cattle all over northeast Texas here and Oklahoma and Kansas. I just really need for you to do a periodic surveillance there in, on Military Parkway there in Mesquite for me. I said I'd be tickled to death to help you Slim. So I started doing a periodic surveillance, going there in early morning. He said if he comes out and he's hooked up to that goose-neck trailer, says follow him because we need to know where he's going. And he says I think he's got a stolen horse and he described the horse to me. So anyway I went there and of course about the third time that I sat on him, out he come that morning... right at daylight with that goose-neck trailer. He turned and went out to the loop and started around 35, 635. Went all the way around to 35 and then he turned north toward Denton. So by this time I kind of realized well maybe he's you know... maybe he's going a long way. So I went to calling for some help plus an airplane to help us with the surveillance. And sure enough, he takes us right over into Oklahoma, right on up to Oklahoma City, right on... that night he stopped in Newton, Kansas, and he got a motel room. He put the... you know dollied that trailer down and then he went out... he had a map. You could see him. He'd pull up, turn on his light... he'd mark on that map. And it was actually, you know those people have a lot

of little old feedlots, have 40 or 50 head of cattle in those feedlots. So anyway he uh, Newton, Kansas...that night. Then the next night he took us straight on, we was still following him. He took us to Manhattan, Kansas. Well he done the very same thing there. He dollied that trailer down at the motel then he went out and went to casing all these feedlots, marking them on his map. Next morning he hooked up that trailer and he took us to Lincoln, Nebraska. OK? By this time we're out of... we hadn't slept. We're out of money and the credit cards won't work in that part of the country we use here... Gulf and Texaco don't work very well up there in that part of the country. So anyway he took us to Lincoln, Nebraska, and he sat there in one place for about four hours. We really thinking he was trying to meet somebody you know. But then he turned south on like 27 and he started back down towards St. Louis. Well he gets down there to Rockport, Missouri. He pulls in and he turns around and just goes to looking at us. So I just pulled up there. I said man you're a long way from home. He said yeah I know it and you've been following me for three days. I said how'd you guess? He said well I just know. I just... I just see everything that goes on around me. I said well all right. He said you're helping Slim Hulon, ain't you? I said I don't know who Slim Hulon is. He said yeah you do, with Southwestern Cattle Raiser's Association, you know him. All right, I'll see you. I gotta go. So we go back to Manhattan, Kansas. Of course we go to the sheriff there and he gives us a bunch of money so we can get home. Fills us up with local gas out of his department and we get in his jail and we sleep for about 13 or 14 straight hours before we get up. Oh, we're just give out. That was on Thursday. Friday night... he comes back to Manhattan, Kansas... John Wesley does and steal 22 head of cattle. He could actually cut a fence at night, pull inside of the pasture, create a corral with his trailer and his pickup, and then use two cow panels... he was a big guy he was like 6'5", weighed about 240. He could literally load those cattle by himself in the dark. OK? So anyway, we come on back to Texas. There was about six of us in that little group. We get back down here and that was in May. About the first day of July, I get a call from the division chief of investigation for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. And he called me at 3 o'clock in the morning. And I believe that

was the maddest man I ever talked to on the phone. He says you know you boys out of Texas, ya'll come up here and ya'll followed John Wesley right around. And he says uh ya'll can just point him right out and knows where he's going and where he's been... and he says my folks... Let me tell you what happened. He says John Wesley Wright showed up and says I've got one agent, his girlfriend worked at the motel where he's staying. He checked in out there and uh she called my agent. We get a surveillance team put together. They go out there and uh start sitting on him and he says uh that damn bunch of folks I got, they can't even follow him out of town. Says they followed him out here about three miles and lost him in the fog and he went and stole another bunch of cattle last night. He said I'm gonna fire every one of them SOB's. Oh, he was mad. Well I said I'm sorry sir but hey... see I really wanted to go back up there but Bill Wilson and them could not justify the gain see if it didn't happen in Texas to go assist them that way. So he said at that time. You know we got subpoenaed back up there for court later (*laughter*). So anyway it was probably, maybe the last three or four days in July. That same man called me about 10 o'clock at night. He says is this Ranger Almond? I said yes sir it is. He said well I hate to bother you this late at night but he says we got John Wesley Wright in jail. He said we've been out all day and I intended to call you all day and tell you what's going on. He said will you call Mr. Hulon? I said yes sir, I sure will. He says we need ya'll back up here. We're gonna have a roundtable forum. We got his truck. We got all of the paperwork out of his truck. We got him in jail and he says we need to have a roundtable forum, an intelligence-type meeting, and find out where he's taking these cattle and try to put this thing together on him. So anyway we travelled back up there, Slim and I do. And we sat there for two days and kicked this thing around. But the reason that he could go so far with his truck... he has an auxiliary gas tank. He could drive 900 miles without gassing up that truck, pulling those cattle. But we still, and Slim had done most of the checking on you know like Des Moines, Iowa, and Oklahoma City, and the sale barns and all the livestock stock yards where he could sell those cattle. And he never could locate where he was selling. Well we found a receipt that put him over by Belleville, Illinois. Slim just that quick when he heard that,

he says we ain't checked Belleville, Illinois, at those stockyards. I'll bet you that's where he's selling. Because when they caught him, he'd went in... cut a fence, went in, loaded them up and then got out and got in the fog and they didn't lose him this time. They went ahead and took him down. And by 10 o'clock the next morning, they'd already got the owner of the cattle up there and got them identified by you know description number and the whole bit. And, but he says he was going to Kansas City so I'll bet you Belleville, Illinois, is where those cattle are going. Anyway we wound up at Belleville, Illinois. And we found where he'd sold 256 head of cattle in over a 14-month period and cleared up every cattle theft they had in Kansas except seven by sheer description and numbers. An old boy named Rudy Diness was the Kansas livestock person.

NANCY RAY: What was his name?

EDDIE ALMOND: Rudy Diness. Anyway, he was always... we talked about him. He was almost an international cow thief. But he, when he got out of the penitentiary there in Kansas, he served like 6 ½ years of hard time. He came back to Texas and the first thing he done was hire an attorney and file on Slim and I for civil rights violation. See there's... on civil rights there's no statute of limitations. We wound up in federal court in Texarkana, Texas. And they tried us and of course the judge, the federal judge kept saying hey, we need to get all this because it's gonna be a frivolous case I know that. He wasn't telling us, he was talking to our attorney. But we've gotta get enough in the record when he appeals it to the Fifth Circuit, New Orleans, they'll confirm it and send it back. So anyway to make a long story short... the first week they had us in court down there and the second day of the next week on Tuesday, the Cattle Raiser's Association out of New Summerfield, down there in east Cherokee County. He showed up. He said look, John Wesley this weekend come down there and stole twenty head of cattle and sold them and I've already got them recovered and got him made. And I come up here. I got to work right here we're fixing to arrest him. The federal judge said no you ain't. Said we're gonna get enough in

the record here on this case and then you can arrest him. But he done that just to pay his attorney for that, you know for some more money. But that was a pretty interesting case.

NANCY RAY: And you were at Garland when that happened?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah. Well actually I was at Garland but then I'd transferred on to Paris in August. And this was over a period of time and then it was seven years later when he filed on Slim and I on the civil rights case. Just another day in the life of a Ranger I guess.

NANCY RAY: You had a wide variety of cases.

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh I worked... I'm gonna skip over to uh Lamar County. I want to talk about a rape murder that I, this was about 1985. Uh there was a little nurse at the hospital there. She was working nights and the people that actually murdered her burglarized her car. Found out her home address and got a lot of important papers out of the glove pocket of her vehicle while she was at work there at the hospital in Paris. Then she went home the next morning. She reported the burglary and then went home and went to bed. And they showed up and broke in her back door and went in. And raped her and this was before the school bus run uh and then stabbed her like 22 times. And she was alive enough when they left that she crawled out of the bed and down the hall... she lived in a duplex. And then out the front door and died actually on the duplex, trying to knock on the door of the duplex next door to get help. And the school bus come by and saw her, you know the kids. But uh that case, that was 1985, and you know DNA at that time was brand new. It wasn't as thorough as it is now and that particular case we got uh an individual the death penalty. And he's already been put to death. And it was the first case in Texas where an individual was given the death penalty strictly based on DNA typing. We recovered 42 hairs on her bed that they done DNA on and was able to give him the death penalty. And we had two co-conspirators that got life. And uh we could only identify his DNA as far as the rape was concerned. To this day I still think those other two people were involved, did rape her, but we couldn't prove it. And uh

NANCY RAY: And that was '85 when the DNA started?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well it was a little prior, probably 1983 or 4 but we were not, you know we were not addressing it then. But just like right now, I mean that's the first thing they do. They just don't know how it was back then.

NANCY RAY: Well that's why we're doing this so that... we're learning.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well if you know it's kind of like modern medicine you know. You thank the good Lord for modern medicine well you thank the good Lord for all these... all this equipment and procedures that will get you where you need to be on identifying these type people, these cases. Uh and it was about the same time I worked... we had a Paris police officer murdered. We had two people out of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, had stole a vehicle. They were doing dope all the way from Oklahoma City down to Paris, Texas, and then the early morning on a Saturday morning like 9 AM, they went in and robbed a, an ice cream place up in that part of the country.

NANCY RAY: Baskin-Robbins or something like that?

EDDIE ALMOND: No, it's not Baskin-Robbins, it's out of Oklahoma... Stonewall, Oklahoma. I'm having a senior moment.

NANCY RAY: We all have them. Ice cream is good enough.

EDDIE ALMOND: It's a hamburger place or whatever...

NANCY RAY: Braum's.

EDDIE ALMOND: Braum's, it was Braum's. They'd robbed it and he was on patrol that morning and he observed the vehicle description with the two individuals in there as they described them. He uh stopped the car and the driver of the vehicle, when he stopped it... and pulled into the Ramada Inn like this, the driveway. And he just stepped out and laid that pistol over the top of the car and shot Dave through the windshield and hit him right here (*he pointed*). Went around here and paralyzed him and he fell over in the seat like this and then he walked up here and opened the door. And under the vest here shot Dave five more times... right there under the arm. Of course he was dead. And you know I've had

cattle 35 years of my adult life. I was coming down the road even though I was resident Ranger there that Saturday morning to have some calves worked by the local vet. And I knew something bad had happened. Well of course we immediately were you know worried about Dave. Got all that taken care of and went to looking for the bad guys. And there was one pickup that actually saw the whole thing and actually chased them and was still chasing them. This was back before cell phones. And uh but anyway, they got them on the ground out there northwest of Paris right there on the Red River. We had a manhunt all day and then finally caught them about dark that night, the two of them. Got them arrested and we actually got the one, the shooter, the death penalty and he's already been put to death. That was a sad thing. He was such a fine young officer...had two little kids and a wife.

NANCY RAY: That hurts. That hurts the whole... everybody.

EDDIE ALMOND: Uh... in Red River County I worked two double murders. This is the one I was telling you about. We was talking about these in-depth reports. The Ralson double murders is where that Johnny Victory was the tushhog out of Oklahoma. Well an old boy named Kenneth Ralson had taken up, he was 52 years old. He had taken up with Johnny Victory's wife who was 27 years old and was a looker you know. But she had kids just like this you know stair steps. Well uh when... his wife got to messing around because Kenneth Ralson was probably one of the biggest cattle people in that part of the country. You know he owned probably 1700, 1800 head of cattle. He fed cattle you know 16, 17 hours a day in winter time. But he got to running and playing with this 25, 26 year old and uh of course Johnny Victory was the father of the three kids that witnessed this double murder. And uh but what had occurred, uh Johnny Victory wanted all his kids with him. Well this Kenneth Ralson had rented her a place in Paris, Texas, to live. OK? And uh so Johnny Victory, the daddy, he went over and found the place that they had rented for his estranged wife and their kids. So he just went over there and drove his Cadillac around to the back of the house and broke in the back door. And he was sitting there when about 3 o'clock well Kenneth Ralson showed up. And she was gone to the laundry, doing her laundry. And so Johnny Victory,

the daddy, kidnaps the 52-year old that owns all the cattle that's messing with his estranged wife. So he rides him around all over northeast Texas and southeastern Oklahoma and every time he looks at him, he hits him right in the face with a 9 millimeter pistol. I mean just warped him. You know his lip was turned out like this and his nose swelled up like this. I mean he just pistol whipped the fire out of him. And every time he'd hit him, he'd say you can have that etcetera, etcetera you know favorite adjectives he had for describing his wife. And so anyway that was the motive behind the double murder was that it was the young tushhog had put a pistol whipping like you couldn't believe on the old tushhog. The old tushhog living in north Texas. The young tushhog living in southeastern Oklahoma. And the young wife in between. So uh anyway this thing simmered on for six or seven weeks before it finally come to a head. And what had occurred, Johnny Victory, the daddy of the kids and the young tushhog, actually had started talking to the old tushhog's estranged wife, Sarah Peek. And uh there was nothing, you know no imminent (*intimate?*) type relationship, just talking business. Well if you divorce how many of them good-looking cattle are you gonna get. And I know what I've got and hey, we may just put a little situation together this way. But they hadn't at that point. Anyway, they showed up at this Sarah Peek's house, this old tushhog's house. And the old tushhog and two more people were laying out behind the woodpile. And the three kids were with Johnny Victory, the young tushhog. So uh I assumed he... and Johnny Victory was a big man. He was like 6'4" and weighed about 240 and when he said I'm gonna clean out one of them dives, I mean he could do it. He was tough. Well when he stood up over the top of that Cadillac, they hit him right in the chest and the face with double-aught buckshot, twice. And of course he went down dead and them three kids were right there and to witness that whole thing. Then they came around and Sarah, the old tushhog's estranged wife, her Lincoln Continental was sitting in front of Johnny Victory's Cadillac. So then this, an old boy shot her but it didn't kill her the first time. And she went down but it didn't kill her. So then the old tushhog, Kenneth Ralson, he comes around the truck, I mean through the fence and around to the front of the vehicle. Then he has this other guy to go ahead and

kill her right there. Well them kids, he tells the kids ya'll get in the house and ya'll better never remember what ya'll saw. So they find the keys that Sarah had and they opened the door and they go in the house. And they don't call anybody or say a word. And this was like 8:30 at night. Well at like 10 o'clock the next morning, a woman calls her house, Sarah's house, the old tushhog's estranged wife. And says hey, let me talk to Sarah. And the kids say well no, you can't, she's dead. She said oh no, you don't need to talk like that. Go get her... bring her on the phone. We want to talk to her. So anyway, the kids convince her they're telling the truth so they show up and sure enough, her and Johnny Victory's laying there dead on the carport. And so... of course we do all this investigation and those kids back then were like 8, 9 ½, and 11 ½. Well Child Protective Services here in Texas, we never could... we couldn't interview those kids out of the sight of the Child Protective Service. And that was so limited we just could not go in on a good interview to really find out. So over a period of time, Kenneth Ralson, the old tushhog... well he's living you know with young and beautiful, Johnny Victory's wife, over there at Valiant, Oklahoma. Well like he'd Sarah, when he'd get mad at them well they'd go out... if they left the house then he'd get in his pickup and go up the road and knock them off the road. Well he done... they had got in a big argument over there at Valiant and she gets out and gets in her car and drives away and he goes to chase her. And he hits another car head on and kills himself... the old tushhog kills himself, his poodle dog, and a man and a little boy in the car he hit head on. And so then with the other... the other actor, the one that done the killing of Sarah, shot her and killed her at the same time. He finds religion later on. We know who he is and we indict him. But he escapes so it takes us about six years to get him out of Missouri, out of jail in Missouri, on another charge, on a different charge. So anyway, he's in jail. He finds religion so he comes back and he gives a full confession then on his participation in all this murder and whatever and who the other actor is. So then we identify the third actor who all time we suspected was the third actor. So December of a year ago, not 2008 but 2007, that particular individual had never been convicted and it's because the kids would not identify the third actor. They would tell us he was there but they never would

tell us who he was. But the reason being he was living with their aunt, their mother's.... the pretty little thing... sister. So then, December 2007, they get together and decide it's time for them to put it on him. So they go to trying to get all this pulled together. Well you know how we pulled all this thing together?

NANCY RAY: How?

EDDIE ALMOND: Because I wrote a 109-page report on it you know when it occurred. We got him last December... we got him life in the penitentiary after 22 years.

NANCY RAY: You have to feel proud.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well... but I am proud but the thing about it... everybody ought to be writing those kinds of reports. I mean let's face it. You're just as good as what you've got memorialized or documented. And if you've got it, 22 years ago... I mean they tried to give me every excuse in the world not to remember. And I just... I was on the stand almost three days... I testified.... And the old constable that had known me all these years, when I got through with getting all the evidence into, you know in... they called a break, see it was like 11 o'clock in the morning. And as I walked back there, old Tim, he snapped his fingers like that and said damn Eddie, you still got it (*laughter*). I said you know why I got it Tim? It's because I wrote it down and we got it in black and white. And I never could understand. In court, every officer I ever tried to, I worked with... I always talked about when you're in the court, you champion your cause. You can show a work ethic Don't be afraid to testify in court. Hold your head high, stick your chin out, and tell those people what you accomplished out there.

NANCY RAY: So if you were giving advice to a Ranger, is that what you would say?

EDDIE ALMOND: Yeah, plus a whole lot more things (*laughter*). That's just the tip of the iceberg. But I hate to hear, whether it's a constable, it's a... it's uh you know a city officer, municipal officer or a county officer or a DPS officer... I hate for them to start talking about well, I just don't want to go to court.

NANCY RAY: That's part of it, isn't it?

EDDIE ALMOND: That's where you champion your cause. Stick your chin up and your nose out and smile at those people and go in there and tell them what you've done out there. That's what it's all about. Well I worked in that same county and it's after I retired. I don't know if you know this or not. You know I stayed retired one year. And then our chief of police, Carl Lewis, he asked me if I'd come out of retirement. And I headed up a drug task force for eight years, eleven months. I had as high as eight narcotics working for me at one time.

NANCY RAY: OK now you retired September 30th, 1993, is that right?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well the 1st day of October, '93. And uh then I stayed retired and I don't know if ya'll are farm people or not but I've... all those years I was in the orphaned baby calf business, I raised orphaned baby calves.

NANCY RAY: What kind of baby calves?

EDDIE ALMOND: Orphaned. Little orphaned... you know the dairy farm? And in 1971 my wife and I raised 217 of those orphaned calves in one year. I was a Highway Patrolman. All three of my kids, they know what nipples and baby calves... they know how to raise calves. And number two is, when I retired in '93, I already had 60 calves going and I raised... that first year I was retired I raised 268 calves. And... that's the only way you can get ahead. I mean you raise a bunch of those calves... you know that first bunch... I sold that bunch and went and paid cash for 40 acres. So hey, that's what it's all about. You know you've got to hustle. And that's what I taught all my kids. And that's you know all of them talk about it today. He says Daddy there is one thing, you... you are the best fellow I've ever seen about organizing work and getting it done. He says we don't lack in that and that's especially with this one here. He'll tell you right quick the things that's wrong with the federal government agency is people are afraid to get out and work.

NANCY RAY: Well let me ask you, this leads into... What would you like to be remembered for? If people see this video...

EDDIE ALMOND: It's simple. I always would come early. I would stay late. And I doggone sure intended and would do a lot of work in between. That's it. And I was always on time. If we were to meet, I was always 15 minutes early. And knowledge is power... power to make the right decisions. And Ray Lee Osborne, chief of police at Coppel up there? I went to his, I don't know... 20th, 25th law enforcement anniversary here a year or two ago. He pointed that out. He made me stand up. He said there's the man that taught me that knowledge is power, power to make the right decisions. So...

NANCY RAY: That's great. Um mmm. Well before we wrap up, is there anything else you'd like to tell us about?

EDDIE ALMOND: Well, the Branch Davidian business. I was down there uh the better part of four months. Uh you know that... David was in charge, David Byrnes, Captain Byrnes. He and I worked adjacent counties in West Texas together when he was a Ranger sergeant. David and I've been down the road a long ways together. And uh he assigned me and the people that he assigned about four of us to working all those cars there in front of the compound. Do you remember where all the agents were lined up and they were hiding behind them and shooting into the compound? We had to process each one of those cars. We had to inventory everything in the vehicle. We had to do the angle of trajectory. In other words, you know if the shot comes from that window and you hit that car through the fender and through the firewall and through the seat then lodged in the back seat. We had to take pictures and document all that. Then we had to attempt to recover the projectile. And uh we worked 17 vehicles including the ATF pickups and both trailers. And uh you know to be able to do that kind of thing you've gotta be two-thirds mechanic and one-third police. And you've got to do it in sufficient light. You can't... artificial light doesn't help you a whole lot. But you've got to do it right. And uh there was four of us that not only did we do those 17 vehicles, but I uh we worked the undercover house that the ATF had across the road for criminalistics and then the ranch house there say where they shot in the walls and the roof and all that business. And we had to trace all that down. So that took the better part of probably, it took us about a

week per vehicle or... I say that. Some of them it took three or four days. We took 78 rolls of 36-exposure film on 17 vehicles. That's how much documentation was there. And I wrote 39 in-depth reports while I was down there. And even argued with my captain about one and even after it was said and done, he's told me a number of times Eddie, you was exactly right. And why I didn't do what you told me to do I'll never know. And I'm not trying you know... because David had such a load down there. And only he and the people that were there know sometimes when you're working with a federal agency, they not only can exasperate you and everything... they can make it come across so complicated. When in reality, if you'll use a good commonsense approach to it you can pacify it in an hour. But anyway, it was a good experience but I'd like to say right here, that little wife of mine was God sent. And of course there's got to be a special place in heaven for her because just like when I went to Lincoln, Nebraska, and made all that round, I left home on Monday morning and she didn't hear from me until Thursday night. And they just have to know... they just have to be "get it down" kind of folks. You just go on with life you know.

NANCY RAY: It takes special people.

EDDIE ALMOND: She's awful special. And uh she has never been anything but an asset to me.

NANCY RAY: Well that is captured and that is a fine tribute to her.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well she's special. Probably when I've... at times, you know, you become frustrated at times. And it's not through... I don't think it's through uh being overworked. It's just a fact. You know my greatest fear all those years, especially with the victim's family whether it was a Highway Patrolman whether it was fatalities or whether it was uh you know as a Ranger with victims of bad crimes... that you know I, that you misled the family about that there was something good gonna happen at a point in time. Because there are some of those cases that I never solved but that didn't make it hurt any less to the families. And false hope was my greatest fear as it relates to the families.

NANCY RAY: That's a tremendous responsibility isn't it?

EDDIE ALMOND: Oh yeah. And I mean you see it and I mean they're so honest and they just look you right in the eye and you have got to be able to convince them that there's faith and hope in what you do. And just give me time and hopefully I can pull it together.

NANCY RAY: Well I think they would probably want to tell you thank you for all that you've done. And I want to say thank you for your interview today. It's been very interesting, we've learned so much.

EDDIE ALMOND: I hope I didn't...

NANCY RAY: Thank you for your service to the state of Texas and...

EDDIE ALMOND: Well I tell you what. It... of course you know I'm literally tickled to death about this one son. That doesn't mean I'm not proud of my other two because they're very accomplished in what they do. That boy whose the school teacher, his TAKS test scores have improved such that they even asked him to try to teach other teachers how...*(loud background noise)*... and he's got that certain knack about him. And so I'm just blessed.

NANCY RAY: Well I think we're blessed to meet you and thank you again for your time.

EDDIE ALMOND: Well we just... you never have time to smell the roses you know. When you're so busy and you want to do everything and you want to go that extra mile to make sure you know check, check, and double check, and check, and then check again... that you really, you don't have time to smell the roses. And you get down the road and I guess... have you interviewed Charlie Fleming yet?

NANCY RAY: No, we have not.

EDDIE ALMOND: I'm gonna tell you something. I'm still truly amazed. Do ya'll remember the ultralight murders in Sherman where the old boy he was selling ultralights and uh, then they... I think there were four or five people murdered at the airport there at Sherman over these ultralight aircrafts, little old aircraft. And Charlie Fleming had presence of mind enough to know. He peeled an inspection sticker... it actually was a state inspection document. I don't know if it's an inspection sticker... where they had actually, the bad guy had beat up these little old engines on these ultralight aircraft. And that

little old decal stuck on the head of a sledge hammer, rolled up on it. Now who would think to look for that? And Charlie... whenever I see Charlie, of course you'll get to interview him he lives in Sherman. And uh that case right there is probably... and the other two people I'd like to mention. During the Branch Davidian deal, see the 21 ATF people that was involved in the skirmish line that got in the shoot-out that killed the old boy on the back side. See my team was charged with going back and getting that body. And we had to interview all those people. Well they assigned to our group a captain... he's retired now from what I understand... De Los Santos. Have you talked to uh Bill Gerth?

NANCY RAY: Yes we have. We have interviewed Bill Gerth.

EDDIE ALMOND: OK. Of all the work that I've reviewed and of course because I was writing those reports I had to pull all that stuff together see. Those two people impressed me with taking the most complete statements that I'd ever read – Bill Gerth and Gerry De Los Santos. I was impressed.

NANCY RAY: Made an impression on you then. Well I want to thank you again for your time, we have had a great time. And we look forward to meeting you again in the future.

EDDIE ALMOND: Good.