

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: **Jim Stinebaugh** (JS)

INTERVIEWER: David Todd (DT)

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DT: My name is David Todd. I'm here for the Conservation History Association of Texas. It's April 11th, the year 2002. We're in Austin, Texas at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Headquarters. And we're in the office of Jim Stinebaugh—Colonel Jim Stinebaugh who's the head of the law enforcement program here at the department and has also served as a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and before that was a—a field Texas Game Warden, as well, again for the department here. And I wanted to thank you for taking the time to talk about law enforcement and—and game protection in the state and—and throughout the United States in—in your capacity with, Fish and Wildlife.

2:01 – 2180

JS: My pleasure.

DT: We usually start these interviews with a—a few questions about somebody's childhood or what might be the first impressions and experiences that led them to a—a career and a life in—in conservation. And I was wondering if you might be able to help us there.

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JS: Surely. Well, I grew up in Crystal City down in southwest Texas and spent my time in the summers in farms and ranches and like most everybody else in that part of the country. I joined the Marine Corp. in—in—after I quit junior college in 1961 just in time to go off to the Cuban Missile Crisis and I got back from there I was stationed in the Sierra Nevada Mountains with the Marine Corp.—had a survival training school up there in the s—in the Mono Country area in Northern California. We had a large area that we operated out of and they needed Game Wardens to control the civilians that were coming

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into the area during hunting seasons because we had to patrol some things that were moving through there at—at time and—and then we'd have armed hunters. So, the colonel there decided that we ought to have some Game Wardens and talked to the California Game and Fish people and they sent some captains down to give a school and—and several of us volunteered and I was deputized as a California Game Warden while I was at the base. And on weekends and things I would patrol in that capacity and—and decided that would be a nice thing to do when I got out of the service. So, that's—that's how I got interested in being a Game Warden.

DT: Do you recall any of the cases that you worked on while you were in California or the people you worked with?

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JS: It was—California was just beautiful country. The thing that—that impressed me the most having come from South Texas and growing up in the 50's and early 60's, was that in California I was amazed at almost everything was against the law out there. Texas you needed only a hunting license to hunt deer and turkey and everything else you can hunt without a license. You could hunt doves and things in your own county without a license. And in California you needed to have a license to—to hunt rabbits that do anything and that was quite different for me and—and I was—I was very impressed with the country and the beautiful areas and of course big differences in California and—and the Sierra Nevada out there. A whole lot of it was public land, which was unusual coming from Texas where most everything is private. So, it was a big contrast that very much got me interested. We worked mainly keeping people from—from getting onto the

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basin and having problems coming in contact with our patrols, which were not done military type exercises, so, I did more of that really than—than Game Warden, but started to get the feel for what it was like. When I got out I came back and—and went to Texas A & M and—and discovered—I didn't even know at that time that the Texas Game Warden School wa—was at A & M. And I soon discovered that I could get into the game department as a Game Warden without passing organic chemistry. So, I—that's what I decided to do an—and I did that and—and went to—was accepted into the Game Warden Academy in 1967, January of 67. And got out in—in about July of '67 and went to Duval County in South Texas. Duval County at that time hadn't had a Game Warden for about five years. Duval County had just closed the season in—in the county

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and—and the state had moved their Game Warden out and just left it to the county. So, when I went down there it—it had been opened for quite some time and the old joke was that all you needed was a poll tax to hunt in Duval County. So, it was—they used an old military expression it was “target rich” for a young Game Warden down there. The old Game Warden in Webb County at that time had been there since the 40's and he told me that—he asked me if I knew where the intersection of Highway 59 and 16 was and I told him, “Of course, it was right in the middle of town.” He said, “Well, you go to that intersection, and he says, “No matter which direction you go from there you're going to find somebody violating the game laws.” And he was right. I had an interesting time working cases there. People hunted at night. People hunted without licenses or people

6:37 - 2180

killed deer off the road and—and so, I was quite busy in—in the learning curve was—wasn't very s—very high because you got a lot of experience in a hurry. But, I enjoyed the people. There were excellent people down there and there were a couple of Deputy Sheriff's there that were part time deputies that—that helped me out and helped me meet things and learn the area and—and I just thoroughly enjoyed it.

DT: Did you work alone?

7:08 - 2180

JS: Alone, yes. Once in a while you'd have somebody with you like one of these part time deputies worked with me some. They helped me learn the area. You spent a lot of time, of course, running with your lights out working night hunters and that was in the days before high fences. So, you could go down into that country and find some of the best deer in the United States as far as horns are concerned. So, road hunting was a pretty common thing

and night hunters—spot lighters were common, they were referred to in Texas. We were use to—to going out at night and when they didn't—discovered that they could use our aircraft some, they'd put an aircraft up and night and they could put us

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on spotlights that would work in areas that we, of course, weren't seeing. And one night we had the aircraft up and—and he flew around and he was flying out of Corpus and he decided to get over to Duval because he was seeing lots of lights out there. And he got up there and the guy was talking to him in the radio and said it looks like a landing strip down there. I see so many lights working. We went to work and the Game Warden from Falfurrias came over that night to help me and—and we put 12 people in jail that night; about six different incidents that we got up on. We just had a little small jail cell there in Freer we used. It was standing room only before the night was over.

DT: How do these spot lighters work?

8:20 - 2180

JS: Oh, they just get out at night with—most of them hunting out of a vehicle an—and some of them—the ones that we were catching that we weren't normally catching with the regular routine patrol's were the ones back on the ranches that you didn't necessarily see from the road. That's what the aircraft was doing for us. It was putting us—they would tell us to—to go to a certain gate and then we'd—we'd get to a gate, we wouldn't see anything. And we'd get managed to get through the gate and they'd tell us to go down—follow that dirt road for about a mile and a half and then turn left, and we were

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doing all this with our lights out, of course. And several cases we got up—we didn't actually see the people that had been spotlighting until the last minute there—when we got there. And we were almost as surprised as they were when we got them, but everybody that we caught that night had a deer and—and that was really effective because soon after that they got to where every airplane that went over us worried the night hunters. That was an inc—that—to me that was the first time that that had been done in that part of the country. I don't believe they ever used aircraft and working night hunters in—in that area before.

DT: Was that how you got most of your information was from some of the other law enforcement officials in—in airplanes or did you have a network of people who would tell you about...

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JS: Well, Duval was much more difficult because it was real—a strong political county and most of the law enforcement people in that area of the county, people wouldn't work with you. I had no radios to talk to the county. I had no radio to talk to DPS [Department of Public Safety]. I literally was by myself in Duval County. My radios would only put me in contact with other Game Wardens and the nearest Game Wardens were 60 miles away or more and—and the radio equipment at that time was—was antique when we look at what we use today. We had old high band type radios that—they had a dynamotor in the trunk and a big high antenna and when you keyed the mike to talk the dynamotor would rev up to try to give you more juice out of that old antenna and it would pull so much juice that your

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headlights would go dim at night when you keyed the mike on your radio. If you sat out and you left your radio on for more than 10 or 15 minutes without starting your engine on your

car your battery would be dead. And more than once I've—we had old Plymouths and that's long before we had pick-ups and I had an old '66 Plymouth with standard transmission and three speed on the—the post there and more than once I'd—my battery would be dead and I'd push my old car off the hill and chasing it to jump in and throw it in second and start it. And—that's probably the most dangerous things I've ever done in off—all these years was chasing my car in the dark. But, that was because of the radio  
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equipment and most of the time you were not in contact with anyone. When you went out at night and—and some of that country you could have just left your radio at home because you weren't going to talk to anyone.

DT: You were operating alone. Did this frighten you, worry you or just make you try and ignore those feelings?

11:27 - 2180

JS: I don't think—I don't know I—although you get frightened once in a while but, an old Texas ranger told me one time, he says he never got—gets worried about anything until you hear the—the fourth click on that—when they pull that hammer back. An old Colt clicks four times when you pull that hammer back. He said he never got worried until he heard the fourth click. So, you just basically have to have that attitude. You can't think about what's going to happen. Particularly when you're young, it's exciting to go out and do that kind of thing. Its nearest thing to—to the old age your going to get is being a Game Warden and going out in the back country by yourself to work hunters and you meet a lot of interesting people and—and a few bad ones, just enough to get some excitement going and boiling the impurities out of the blood, probably good for your health.

DT: It sounds like you just learned—other than Game Warden school, but I mean somebody...

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JS: Not really, because when I got there my old supervisor was stationed in Edinburg and if you know that country Edinburg is about a hundred miles away to the South and—and absolutely not anyth—any chance at all of radio range. And so, I went—they basically just—when we came out of school they—they put me in my county and he asked me if I had enough bullets and told me to call him if I had any problems and—and that was it. You learn on the job. So, there wasn't anyone else really that I worked with much. There was an old Game Warden in—in, uh, Hebbronville that helped me a little bit and the one in—in Webb County, but basically it was OJT. It was—it was fun. I—that was when marijuana smuggling was getting to be a big thing. Nixon that came into

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the White House what in 68, I guess, and—and started the War On Drugs. I remember him. They decided that they would have patrols and try to close the borders off for a few years. Well, there I was in Duval and Duval's not on the—on the border but its adjacent to the border counties and they sent Customs Agents and there wasn't any DEA at that time. They sent Customs Agents and border patrol in there and they put up roadblocks on a bunch of our roads. And we—we were getting use to—to looking for those kind of things when we were out. One night I came through town and—and I saw some—some cars parked over at the intersection of Highway 59 and—and 16 there in the middle of town and I recognized them as Customs Agents. They drove unmarked cars, of course, and at that time they had Mustangs. The Mustang was the new car and those Customs Agents were driving those hot

Mustangs and I went over there and talked to him for a  
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little while and—and they were looking for a particular car. They gave me a description of a Oldsmobile. I'll never forget it. It was a purple Oldsmobile and they had the license plate and—and they said that he was hauling a load of marijuana and—and I soon learned that when they gave information to the Game Wardens it was because they had lost the guy and—and they figured you were going to be out all night and may be you would find them. So, I visited with them for a while and I went up North into McMullen County and visited with my old friend, Jim Daughtrey, a Game Warden up there. Came back through town about midnight or a little after and—and I didn't see any of these officers. I mentioned that—that I had no radio channels to talk to anyone else on, so, I went on out south of town and out towards Benavides and that's just a little narrow road out there in—in Duval County and its—by this time its about one o'clock in the morning and I don't think the good Lord himself monitors that country at night. I got out there about eight or nine miles and—and I met several cars running together towards me. What's—it was like a parade out there on that old dark road and the one in the middle was a purple Oldsmobile. So, I turned around on them and passed a van and that's back before vans were real popular. They were mostly work vehicles and I passed an old van, got up behind that car and it—it was the purple Oldsmobile and—and I checked and it was the license number they were looking for and there was a sedan in front of that. So, I reached over and unsnapped my old double barrel shotgun that I carried at that time. And I use to

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carry it with a strap that went—you carried the shotgun broke on the seat like that and you put the strap in it so it wouldn't slide around when your driving. And you carried your shells in the ashtray and reached over, pull the strap out of that old shotgun, put the shells in it and turned my old spotlight up and that was long before red and blue lights. You just had a spotlight with a red lens on it. Put that red lens on that Oldsmobile and it just pulled over onto the side of the road immediately and stopped. And I stopped behind him as—of course, and started to step out with that shotgun and the vehicle in front of the Oldsmobile started stopping and the van stopping behind him. So, I was beginning to think that I wished I had of invested in buying an automatic shotgun instead of that

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double barrel. And the guy that—the Oldsmobile got out and stood up with his hands up like this and didn't say anything and—and the van was stopping behind me and the motor was running and that motor in my car was running and the other vehicle was not coming back to me. And I held the shotgun on the guy in the Oldsmobile and—and told him who I was and he said nothing and—and the doors opened on the van behind me and people got out of both sides. I turned around and—and deviled at—at them and—and told them to put their hands up and—and they were coming towards me with their hand up like this and—and I look and when I got there the guy was—I could see and—and when they got back in my lights a little bit that it was badge. It was—it was Customs Agents and what had happened—the Customs Agents had stopped the Oldsmobile over south of Benavides

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somewhere. He was a customs agent driving the load car—the Oldsmobile. They had the—the bad guy shackled up in the back of the van, Customs Agents driving the van and Customs Agents in the sedan in front. So, I was pleased to see that and we talked for just a

minute and I drove around the county for a while until I calmed down and went home. The next morning I was drinking coffee in the café there in—in Freer and I met one of the Highway Patrolmen. He was laughing and he said I hear you arrested the Customs Agents last night. I says, “yeah.” He said, “Well, let me tell you something funny.” He said, “I’d talked to those Customs Agents in Laredo this morning and—and I asked them and they told me about it and I asked them which Game Warden was it. Was it that little short Game Warden from Freer? He said that Customs Agents who was driving the Oldsmobile he sa—said “I don’t know how tall he was, but he had a shotgun about that

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long.” So, in those days you didn’t—you literally didn’t have any help. You were out without communications and my old—there was a deputy constable in Freer that I would come in late at night and drink coffee with and—and they had an all night café there and he was always complaining because the sheriff wouldn’t give him a radio. He said the sheriff tells me that if I need help I can call him on the phone and he would say, “Do I look like I have a phone on my back?” And he would say, “No, Andres you don’t.” And now days he could have a phone in his pocket, he could have a phone on his belt. I would not have believed it if somebody had told me those days that you could have a

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telephone with you or a—a camera that you could take pictures and come back and show them on your TV. Because literally there we were in the 1960’s and other than being in a car instead of a horse you were just about as much by yourself as you had been 30 years ago when you went out to work. So, communications have basically and computer chips have changed our world very much in law enforcement, and particularly in Game Wardening.

DT: There’s something else that may have changed is the way some of the—the law enforcement issues that got—just been policing normal misdemeanors and felonies, but—but, running drugs and now I guess running immigrants across the border that—that may complicate the game law enforcing.

19:39 – 2180

JS: It does. Our—our people—state Game Wardens when they’re out now working night hunters with it, they’re working on—on the water working water safety, checking fishing licenses and things, they’re out checking hunting campsites—at any time they’re liable to come across people involved in narcotics. So, it happens regularly. We had a case yesterday—day before yesterday where one of our Wardens was out patrolling the inner coastal canal and he stopped a boat that had 966 pounds of marijuana on it—saying that’s—its not uncommon anymore. They arrested the guy and brought him in and about four days ago our Wardens were working commercial fisherman on Falcon Lake down there out of Zapata and they seized 800 and some odd pounds of marijuana from commercial fisherman that were bringing it across.

DT: So, do you find that—that this overlap with narcotics and—and immigration has sort of raised the ante where these encounters become more dangerous?

20:50 – 2180

JS: It has raised the ante some because our people of course, state Game Wardens are peace officers and—and required by law to enforce all laws. But our people—the ones that are sometimes the first response and they’re the ones that are out at night by themselves are much more likely—if somebody is looking for somebody they’ll come to a Game Warden,

“Where do—where do we find this guy?” Its going to be a Game Warden that will know what part of the county and—and how to get there. So, our people get involved in—and the whole spectrum of law enforcement now, particularly in the more rural counties you’ll find the sheriff will call on the Game Wardens a lot. So, when our guys go out to enforce game laws they’re liable to end up enforcing any kind of laws.

DT: You said that when you came down to Duval County you were the first state official that had been down there for a good many years. And I wondered if you could talk a little about what it was like trying to deal with the—the status quo and the regime down there and maybe mention some of your dealings to the Duke of Duval County.

(misc.)

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JS: When I came to Duval County in 1967, George Parr was still very much in charge of Duval County known as the Duke of Duval. His nephew, Archie Parr was the county judge and Carrillos—Opie Carrillo was the county attorney Oscar Carrillo, his brother was the state representative a—and Ramillo Carrillo, another brother was county commissioner. And they very much ran that part of the country. The game—the Game Wardening as it were was not all that popular with them and—and they had had no Game Warden in the county for a good while and I guess what would have been expected of—of a Game Warden by them was to come to them and—and see how they wanted things done and—and arrest only those people they wanted to arrest. But, there I was I was 23

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years old—24 just out of the Marine Corp. and out of Game Warden school and my badge said Texas on it and—and I was going to enforce the law on everyone. And I had a Justice of the Peace named Charlie Rucker—was a neat guy and he was there in—in Freer and—and he worked with me quite well until one dark night when I—I arrested George Parr and that changed the—the way things worked there. And I was out on the Ensenada Highway between Freer and Encinal and a car came by me working a spotlight out of—out of the side of the car and I was up on the side of the hill where—watching the road and I fell in behind the car and followed him with my lights out and they stopped several times and shining their lights out in the pasture and worked the spotlight, but they never did shoot. So, when they went back towards Freer and got pretty close to the

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intersection of—of 59th and—and the Ensenada Highway they looked like they were going back into Freer so I decided to stop them and see if they had shot anything before I had gotten behind them. I was working a light down that part of the country and those days it was conv—it was against the law to use a spotlight where deer were on the range and—and off a public road. I put my light on them and the car stopped and I got out an—and was approaching the vehicle, I walked up behind them until they could see who I was and when they saw who I was, it was a dark colored Chrysler, the car took off at a

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high rate of speed and threw gravel on me and—and took off. So, I got back in my old Plymouth and—and went after them and, of course, I couldn’t call anyone and I chased them through town at a high rate of speed and it was fairly early, maybe 10:30 at night. And one of the deputy sheriffs that I had mentioned—a part time deputy sheriff there saw me chasing the car. He got on his radio and called a—a highway patrol and let them know that the Game Warden was chasing a car towards San Diego. And I’d chased him

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for a pretty good ways and I got up behind him pretty close at about a hundred miles an hour and which for that old Plymouth was—was getting up towards top end. And when I got up close enough to—to shine my spotlight in the car the passenger in the car was turning with a rifle and aiming his rifle over the seat at me. And so I backed off of him a little bit and—and got behind him about 50-60 yards and—and kept my light on him and they proceeded towards San Diego and—and I could see up ahead that—that there was a car up there with a red light on. And the highway patrol had set up a roadblock. So, this car stopped. I stopped behind them and got out and—and when I did I realized it was

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George Parr—was the passenger with—that had been aiming the rifle at me and it was his—one of his body guards driving his car. And they stopped and I took the rifle and took the spotlight, took a pocketknife off of George Parr and—and took him into custody and—and took him to San Diego to the courthouse. The highway patrol disappeared—it—everybody discovered it was George Parr. I got to the courthouse there was a group of—of officers there and I guess on the radio—they—somebody said that the Game Warden had George Parr. So, the county judge was already there. The c—the Justice of the Peace was there. All the deputies that were out were all there and the interesting part was George Parr had a key to the courthouse and the jail and I didn't. So, I came in and I filed my charges, filled out the complaints with the Justice of the Peace and gave him the rifle that was a seven millimeter Remington magnum and the shells, except for one, I—I didn't realize that I had it in my pocket. I have it to this day. And turned it over as evidence and filed my cases with him. I left and—and everybody, of course, I was—was upset because George was there and—and they were—immediately released him and—and on his own recognizance and I went out and went back to work and—and went home two or three o'clock that morning. And when I got up the next morning I was—we were

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receiving calls from people that were worried about what had happened an—and I wasn't—I just—I guess I underestimated how things were in those days. And, so, I worked for another day or two and my supervisor from—from Edinburg came down to work with me and—and said that they were receiving word that there were problems. And so we worked that night and went out and—and patrolled and we got out there on south of Benavides to a ranch in the area where there was a ranch that belonged to a uncle of—of George Parr. And actually a brother I guess of George Parr and out in that area that night there was a spotlight working and so we went out on that ranch and—and chased that spotlight down. We got there—was some younger guys in the back of a pick-up working a light. Well, they didn't have a rifle. That seemed kind of strange and—and

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they said they were just out looking around. Well, so my supervisor and I came back out of the ranch and as we left the ran—we're leaving the ranch, out from the gate there—the entrance gate a vehicle came towards us and we stopped facing each other there and—and I didn't put my light on him when we were inside the ranch and I—we sat there for a minute and tha—that vehicle proceeded on and went by me and—and we went on out. Well, about a day later I—I got a call from my supervisor in—in—asked me to get my wife and—and take her to somewhere where she was safe in the medium in Austin. And my wife was teaching school at that time in Freer and I went down to the—to the school there in



Freer and—and told the principal that I needed to take my wife out of school and—and put her somewhere where she was safe. And the interesting part was

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everybody acted like we—this, oh, yeah, fine no problem go ahead we'll take care of it. And I got my wife and I took her out to a ranch headquarters of a friend of mine that was a foreman out there and left her there and—and went to meet my supervisor and we went to Austin. We got there that night and spent the night and the next morning went in and—and met with the—the guy that was running the Game Department at that time or running the—the division that control the Game Wardens. We met in his office and he told me that the state representative from Duval County said that they were going to kill me down there. That George Parr was going to have me killed and that they had already had one incident that was set up and he described the incident I just described to you and said that when you came out of there the people that were there to—to kill you there was somebody with you and that wasn't in their plans. So, they let you go and, of course,

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that—that—that made me good and mad and—and—and whether that's true or not I don't know. The incident did happen and they told me I was going to be transferred out of there for my own safety and—and he stood up and—and looked at a—showed me a map behind his desk and told me he wanted me to move to San Saba County. And I had not been in San Saba County before so he showed me where it was and he said I want you to re—report to the regional supervisor there in the morning at eight o'clock. And this was about eleven o'clock in the morning and I was in Austin. So, I went home, went with my supervisor—went back to Edinburg where my car was and got my car and

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returned to—to Duval County at almost midnight and got my wife from the ranch headquarters and went back to my home there in Freer that I was renting and the electricity had been turned off down there and when we got into our hou—went in and the lights were out and we went into our dark house there and—and got about a few hour—a few hours of sleep and got about five the next morning and went to San Saba County to report into my new station. So, you've heard of someone being transferred overnight, well I was transferred overnight and I worked there about a year and a half until I—I decided to get into the—the Federal Branch and did and became a—a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And a few years later in 1974 George Parr committed suicide on April Fools Day in 1974 and I changed over in 1971. So, things—

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things change but, that's—I probably would have been a state Game Warden the rest of my career. I loved that job and—and pleased to be here now, but I became a s—agent with the Fish and Wildlife Service and have spent a lot of time around the country doing that type of work in the '70s and '80s and retired in—in the year 2000.

DT: Can you tell us about some of your work as a—as a special agent for the Fish and Wildlife Service?

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JS: Well, soon after I—I went to Laredo, Texas I opened a station in Laredo for the Fish and Wildlife Service. They had never had an agent in that area. Helicopters became—started becoming a problem in Texas. There are a lot of helicopters, of course, in—in Texas and a whole lot of open country and—and the—the Fish and Wildlife Service said The Airborne

Hunting Act that they'd had problems in Montana with the killing of Eagles and killing of antelope as a matter of fact out of helicopters. So, started having—hearing rumors about helicopters and being used to hunt out of, and I made a case there in Laredo on—on a guy that killed a deer out of a helicopter. And seized the deer and—and he ended up in Federal Court and—and I lost that case and on—on a jury trial. I still

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think I should of won it and we had a good case, but I lost that case and, but I learned something. I've never lost a helicopter case since and after I—I left there I went to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I had gotten word about the use of helicopters to kill Eagles over in—in the Texas Hill Country. And I had looked into the case and it was over in the Leakey area where it started, at least where my information started. And it appeared that some county officials and others were involved in hiring a helicopter to—to shoot Eagles. I worked it for a few months and gathered a lot of information, but was not able to get enough information to—to, file charges. And about that time I was asked to move to New Mexico and I was—I was transferred to Albuquerque up there, which was a headquarters—regional headquarters for the Fish and Wildlife Service. While I was there—some months after I was there I was on vacation and I—I got a call to call my

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supervisor and I called him and he said that one of the people that I'd been investigating had called and—and wanted to talk to me about the helicopter case. So, I brought my wife and—and our two small children back to Albuquerque and—and I got in my government car and drove from Albuquerque to Laredo to meet this guy. And he had been working as a pilot for this helicopter company and had been fired by them and now he wanted to talk and he started telling me a bizarre story about killing Eagles all over the Hill Country up there and County Judges being involved and—and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gunners shooting out of the helicopters that worked fam—Animal Damage Control that was called at that time. So, I started taking the things down and started doing interviews in the areas that he gave me the information on. And I worked that case about a year from that time of gathering interviews and had a number of agents down to

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interview people all over the Hill Country. We eventually charged people in—in Real County and several other counties out there with—and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, trapper named Andy Allen with hunting Eagles out of helicopters and—and they killed many, many golden and bald Eagles out of them choppers during that case. This pilot, like most pilots, is very good about keeping a logbook. In this logbook they always keep the hours they flew and things very important to a pilot, of course. He had numbers in these pages where he had worked during the Eagle killings and he had a little number down in the bottom of each page and it was the number of Eagles they killed that day. And in his logbook they had something like 175 Eagles that they had killed and that was what he knew about. And as you probably know the—the bald and golden Eagles that come into our part of the country are migrating through and can't take the kind of

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pressure that's being put on them by that type of hunting and they would literally get out into the canyon country out there, just pursue them out of that helicopter and shoot them down with shotguns. So, we tried them. We filed charges and—in San Antonio in the western district of Texas—I'm going to have to get a drink of water.

DT: Sure. Can you explain so far why they were killing? I guess this is for protecting goats and sheep there.

36:59 - 2180

JS: Sure.

DT: I don't know if that's...

JS: It's...

DT: Will you just—will you just...

JS: I will.

DT: I thought if you could discuss that that would be helpful.

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JS: Sheep and goat ranchers in—in the Hill Country of Texas and Western Texas and...

(misc.)

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JS: Well, sheep and goat ranchers in—in the Hill Country of Texas and Western Texas and in the Western United States, of course, have problems with predators and have always been concerned about Eagles, Eagles taking lambs and kid goats and the truth is that sometimes they do. But, the Eagles have been protected since 1940 for bald Eagles and in the 1960's for golden Eagles. And they just can't take the kind of pressure that's put on them by this type of—of hunting. And in Texas there—there had not been any cases made on—on killing of Eagles, particularly from aircrafts in many years out there. And so when I got into this case it was not something that there was any precedent on—there were no—no cases and the county judge of Real County down there had—was involved in that case and—and we went out to interview him. I remember him—

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interviewed him at his home and—United Sta—the Assisting United States Attorney and—and I went out there with a stenographer to interview him. And we ended up not charging him simply because at that time he was—he was kind of old and—well, we did charge one of the School Board members and one of the county commissioners. We charged a trapper from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that was a gunner in that helicopter with killing Eagles. In—it was—the case was tried in San Antonio and Judge John Wood, who was later assassinated and set the bench in that case. Judge Wood commented after that case was over that he had had more interest in that case than any case he had ever worked in all his years on the bench. That—it was standing room only the whole time and it was on TV every night and that was back in the days before recorders. So, I don't have any of the tapes from those days. But, Walter Cronkite talked

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about that on the news every night, about the Eagle killing from down in Texas and, of course, it made pretty good shots of the people—the big ranchers coming in with their big hats and things to the courthouse every day to—in San Antonio. And it was—it was strange because across the country, people were behind me and—and behind the Fish and Wildlife Service, but in that area it was almost like I was—was a pariah there or someone that was trying to—to ruin a way of life out—by protecting Eagles. So, it was—it's interesting I go back into that country now and everything is fine, but at that time it was quite exciting. And you find yourself looking both ways when you come out of your room and when you stop your car to get out at night, your ears are attuned to noises. And it's strange to think that those kind of things went on but, that was a very controversial trial. And we convicted them

almost two years to the day from the time I started the investigation and the courtroom was full of—of, supporters for those people. I remember

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the whole room was full of people sitting with their resist-all hats in their laps, you know. But, it was—that pretty much put an end to helicopter hunting of Eagles out in that part of the country. And it was in the—the news and the newspapers and the San Angelo Standard Times out there—put one edition after another out about it and, of course, they were very much backing ranchers and not backing the Fish and Wildlife Service. The thing that always bothered me about it was I never felt like I was anti-rancher because their—their ranchers and landowners are people that I identify with. But, literally the—the Eagles that were being killed—it was—it was unjustified in that one norther would take more lambs and kids than all the Eagles that fly through that country. And, but, this was something that always been done. You may not be able to do anything about wool prices; you may not be able to do anything about weather; but you know, you can shoot

41:43 - 2180

an Eagle. So, I feel like that we—we did some good on stopping the killing of—of Eagles out in that part of the country. And some years later I was—I was back station in Texas and...

(misc.)

42:04 - 2180

JS: Back in that area in that part of the country's station in—in San Antonio I was a supervisor of the Southern District of Texas for the Fish and Wildlife Service. I got a call one day from—from some people up out of—of Sonora and said that there were a couple of dead Eagles out there and there was some hunters that had gone back to get their—their hunting stands after the deer season was over sometime in late January. And this guy called me and told me about it, so I went up there and went to the ranch that he had described. I went out and—and found the area and there was a—they had

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moved the birds. There were two Eagles laying, literally spread Eagle on top of a dead sheep and on the sheep I could see that—that opened stomach cavity and I could see some black granules and things on the sheep and—and this was new to me. I—I didn't know exactly what happened, but whatever killed those Eagles they never moved because they were dead right on top of that sheep and I could tell as soon as I saw them they were bald Eagles. Both of them they were two immature bald Eagles. Probably would have been identified by—as golden Eagles by someone else, but there were several easy ways to tell. Anyway, I—I took the Eagles and took them to have them necropsied and seized and I took that—that old nasty sheep and—and took it and—and I gathered up as much as—as I could of that and took the—the things to A & M to have them necropsied. And I got word back pretty quick that—that they were poisoned by something called Aldicarb Temik. It's a poison that's used, um, to kill nematodes and—and bugs and things under the ground on—on cotton crops and—and corn crops and these things. It's an extremely deadly poison and it comes

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in black granules like large granules of black pepper or something. And what happens is I had soon discovered that—that they weren't using helicopters anymore in the Hill Country that people had discovered Temik. You just take a dead animal, a deer or a sheep and you take and sprinkle Temik in some of the stomach areas there then a bird comes down that

lands on him and when he takes a bite of that stuff they don't even leave. They—they're dead right there. They don't fly off to be seen and reported by someone. This had—was being done by one of the people up there and he just didn't think about having hunters coming back out on the ranch. And after he—he started up on his—his poisoning again; I started investigating that and found

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out they were selling, very illegally of course, but selling cans of—of Temik in the wool houses all the way from Brackettville to San Angelo. And we worked that case and finally got that stuff stopped and I hope that—that they're not misusing Temik and some of the other poisons out there, but extremely deadly and—and you just put a dead animal out there that a predator's going to see. And in one case I worked there were dead animals everywhere; dead raccoons, dead skunks, dead buzzards, dead hawks, dead Eagles, everything that will eat carrion. And we—we finally got a lot of that stopped and I worked with the Texas Department of Agriculture at that time and they were very helpful on—on helping me check some of these things. And Temik is a—remember back in Bhopal, India when they had a bunch of people were killed about a plant where there was some escaping—well, that was Temik. And that stuff is very, very deadly and the company that made Temik at that time has since sold to

45:42 - 2180

someone else, but they were very helpful too because they were very concerned that their stuff was being misused like that. The federal act that—that controls pesticides and things—fifth —federal fungicide and insecticide—I don't remember exactly now, but anyway the federal act that controls the use of—of those things makes it very illegal to—FIFRA makes it very illegal to—to even sell something that's not properly labeled let alone take it and pour it into coffee cans and sell it around because handling it is deadly to—possible deadly to the people using it. So, there's no telling how many people got poisoned using that stuff out in the field. I'm sure they were

46:29 - 2180

taking some precaution, wearing gloves and being careful not to breathe it, but Temik smells really bad. You can tell there's something bad about it because it—the odor, but there were a number of—number of Eagles killed with that back in the 19—early 1980's until we got, hopefully, shut down. And I don't know whether it has anything to do with it, but as you know the—the bald Eagle has now been removed at least in—in our part of the world from the—its removed back to—to from The Endangered Species Act as threatened rather than endangered so that bald Eagles are doing much better. And the migrating Eagles through our part of the country—they were being killed—I think were putting a really strong pressure on the Eagle population. Most of the birds that came through our country were immature and so you don't realize that

47:27 - 2180

Eagles don't—are not sexually mature until they're five years old or so and so you don't realize it for several years that you're having a big hole in your—your Eagle populations. So, I feel like that was a worthwhile venture of protecting Eagles down in our part of the country because they—they weren't our Eagles they—they belonged to the people of this—the United States.

DT: While we're—we're on the topic of—of poisoning these Eagles, you—you mentioned that—that Texas A & M did some of the forensic work. Can you tell a little bit about some of

your experiences in—in working with the labs and trying to build a case based on some of the chemical evidence and biological evidence that you collected?

48:13 - 2180

JS: Sure. We—we use the lab a whole lot in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and—and state Game Wardens here in Texas Parks and Wildlife are using them a lot, too. We use DNA. We can—now we can take blood samples and do take blood samples. In many cases we can tell one, that it's a deer and two, whether it's a buck or a doe and—and these kind of cases are being regularly used in—in—by our Game Wardens in investigative techniques. We—our necropsies—many times when I was with the Fish and Wildlife Service were what made the difference in—in winning a prosecution. We got started back in the—the late '80s—middle '80s possibly on—on birds that were killed in oil pits—open pits. In Texas there was an—there is an agent named Rob Lee and still stationed in Lubbock. Rob had worked with me in San

49:09 - 2180

Antonio and when he transferred to Lubbock—I really give him credit for starting the working of these open pits and the birds that are found in them and—and a lady named Midge Urskin is out and middling and—and as a rehabber—rehabbs birds and things. Midge I think got Rob started on looking at birds killed in these pits. Well, when he started realizing that there were large number of open pits all over and when these birds would fly in and land in these pits or all pits while they was killing of them, of course, they weren't getting out. He started getting out and taking these old nasty, oily birds out of these pits and sending them off to—to A & M and to our lab back in Ashland, Oregon—the Fish and Wildlife Service Lab to be necropsied to tell what killed them. And then we started sending out letters to—to different oil

50:04 - 2180

companies and things all over the state of Texas. Eventually the Texas Railroad Commission got involved and worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents with Rob Lee and Texas Parks and Wildlife got involved and—and to encourage all the different companies to net these pits. And most of—that has been done on a very large scale now and the situation is much better all over Texas because of that. Not near as many birds being killed are flying into these oily pits. Of course, it would kill other things. You'd find deer; you'd find all kinds of animals in there. Its—I don't know what it is, but birds, ducks, egrets, hawks, all kinds of things—we never found any of the big cranes and things. That doesn't mean it didn't happen. I guess from the air that, you know, shiny water is water. They don't realize until they get into it that its something that's full of chemicals. Sometimes they can't even get out, but

51:01 - 2180

when—even if they do get out the chemicals on them are going to kill them. So, that particular type of case has helped change and protect migratory birds all over the country that come through Texas from landing in these many, many open pits. Its also being done in New Mexico, Oklahoma and other states and—and I feel like it's been a big boon to the migratory bird population across the country.

DT: You'd also mentioned migratory bird—the cranes and—and I understand that there have been some prosecutions of people who have shot Whooping Cranes.

JS: There have...

DT: I'm curious if you can tell us about some of those cases.

51:44 - 2180

JS: I was sitting at—in my desk in—in San Antonio one day and I got a call from an old friend of mine Jack Reynolds—was state Game Warden from San Saba County. The county that I'd been stationed in when I was State Warden, and Jack said he had a guy that he killed a Whooping Crane and I'm—I'm thinking Whooping Crane now he's in San Saba County, you know, that—that didn't sound right and I asked him to describe it. Well, it's a—it's a big white bird and he's got black wing tips and he's about five feet tall, Jack said. And—sounds like a Whooping Crane and I don't remember what was going on, but I couldn't go up there myself that day and I called and—and sent another agent up there to meet with Jack. And Jack Reynolds passed

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away here a while back. He had cancer but he was a fine Game Warden and Jack had gotten down and investigated the case and—and found the bird. And—and what happened Jack received a call from a school-teacher that lived out in the area of Venn on the Colorado River. A beautiful little area out there, a lot of fisherman and things and she had been at her home that day out there on the river and had seen a group of large birds flying around—circling around, she said. And—and looking like they were going to land on the river and then she heard a shot and thought she saw a bird fall, but it was down in the trees and she couldn't tell and it was off of her property on the other side of the river. And so she called the Game Warden, well, Jack Reynolds got out there and—and he started going around in the camps and he really had nothing to go on and he had no idea what it was. But, like I say Jack was a fine Game

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Warden and he went to the different camps and found nothing and finally he came up on a—on a fishing camp there and there was a young lad walking down—the river. Jack asked him, "Where was the—says, "Where's that big bird somebody shot?" And he said, "You mean the one Uncle Billy shot?" Jack says, "Yeah, the one Uncle Billy shot." He said, "Well, they buried it over here." And Jack said, "Well, lets go find it." And so the boy took him over there and they dug up Uncle Billy's bird and it was a Whooping Crane, of course, Jack, being a good Game Warden, says, "Where's Uncle Billy?" "Well, he's gone back to Burnet." They had a business there and—and obviously they called us and—and one of the Fish and Wildlife Service agents went down there and got with state Warden Jack Reynolds and—and they went to Burnet and—and they interviewed these people and ended up making a case

54:15 - 2180

on killing a Whooping Crane. The guy had literally been down there fishing and—and this was the time of the year—the reason those birds were in that part of the country—they were literally—had left Aransas—refuge down there and were headed back to Canada, decided to spend the night, I guess, there and had been to the Colorado River and these guys were out there and—and he saw these big birds and he went back to his truck and got his Model 12 Winchester and—and shot one of them for no reason at all. And—and when they realized what it was, of course, they were pretty panic stricken and they took it and buried it. So, it was—he was fined very heavily, of course, and—and Jack Reynolds out of San Saba County was—was 100 percent responsible for that case being made and as far as I'm concerned helped make it a lot safer in that part of the country. Because I don't believe you could get anybody to get their Model 12 Winchester out of their pick-up if you saw a

big white

55:13 - 2180

bird any more down in that area. We had one killed in—in the area out near Aransas some years before that and—and that was also in the area I supervised and I sent—I got a call that somebody had killed a Whooping Crane. A group of hunters had been out one morning in that area hunting ducks and one of these Whooping Cranes went over and—and it was shot by one of the hunters and—and when they realized what it was they buried it under a crab trap and were headed back into their hunting camp and this was a group of lawyers—most—mostly corporate attorney's. If you can imagine the conversations that were going on among that group and on their way in a Game Warden, Raymond Hadamillo, a hard charging Game Warden stationed on the coast at that time, stopped their boat, checked their ducks and—and Raymond said he thought they were nervous, but he found nothing wrong. But, it—just something seemed wrong, and he let them go after checking their ducks and after they got back to their camp and talked it all over, they decided that they were going to call and

56:21 - 2180

report what had happened. And they called and called the federal district judge and told them what had happened and they called us, investigated the case and that guy was prosecuted—that attorney was prosecuted for killing a Whooping Crane. I feel sure he didn't get up that morning intending to kill a Whooping Crane, but—and I—I don't know to this day what prompted that gentleman to call and report himself. But if you can imagine the conversation by a bunch of attorneys and endangered species that have been killed near Aransas Pass, I don't think any of the rest of that group wanted any of that. But it was prosecuted in Corpus and he paid a large fine for killing an endangered species. It's—we just can't have an area down there where those birds are—are migrating that's not safe from hunters for shooting those types of things. I think people are a lot more careful now about what they shoot.

57:13 - 2180

DT: Well, how do you handle situations like that where there's a question of intent? I mean, whether he had mens rea—he—whether he—he really meant to harm a Whooping Crane and...

JS: Unfortunately...

DT: How do you prosecute?

57:27 - 2180

JS: Judge have to—have to make that decision, but the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is—is a strict liability law and doesn't require mens rea it—it—it does not require intent to be proved and I'm—the Congress intended it—it that way because they wanted to make sure that—that birds were protected and they didn't want to have every Game Warden to have to prove that a person got up in the morning intending to kill a Red Tail Hawk instead of a Bobwhite Quail. And The Endangered Species Act—I—it—its knew or should have—should have known that what they were doing and I think it was fairly easy to make a case that a person knew or should have known that what they shot was not a duck or a goose. So, that's why they made that case

58:12 - 2180

that knew or should have known and it—that was—it got a lot of publicity and a lot of people, of course, were upset. There were—there were people that wanted that person put



in jail forever and there were people that—they wanted him turned loose because they didn't think that, you know, surely he didn't intend to do it. But deterrent is something that—that we always have to be concerned with and—and the courts are concerned with about the deterrent factor that—you know some of us wouldn't stop at stop signs if you knew that—if you didn't think something was going to happen and you know it's a good idea. But you've got to know that you may

58:47 - 2180

get a ticket if you don't do it and something as important as protecting the endangered species, you have to have deterrent. So, those two cases that I've been involved in in Texas have, I think, have been a whole lot of deterrent or work by—by guys that knew what they were doing and had good backing from the courts.

DT: While were talking about birds I think that you've been involved in some smuggling cases that involve Parrots. Can you—can you give us some idea of what that involved?

59:20 - 2180

JS: Fish and Wildlife agents in—in particularly in South Texas end up doing a lot of—of work on Parrot smugglers and—and they're also assisted by—by a state Game Wardens down in that area from Parks and Wildlife. But, the Parrot business—there's always been a large market for the Parrot trade—the pet trade and because of the—the concern over the diseases—psittacosis and the different diseases that are carried by those birds—some of those—some of that concern is over the—the...

[End of Reel 2180]

DT: Well, let's resume. We were talking earlier about Parrot smuggling case. If you could continue with that...

1:38 - 2181

JS: A Parrot pet trade is a big thing and because—because of our—our border with Mexico well, there are a whole lot of birds brought in from the jungles of Mexico and smuggled in. And—and people from Northern United States would come down and make their contacts in Mexico and then the birds would be smuggled across and sold to them on this side and then transported back to—to—sometimes just as far as Houston and things and—and many of them went to Chicago—different places all over the country. The reason is that these birds can't be brought in without being quarantined because of the danger of disease. Some of the—big problem is whether the Department of Agriculture concerned with the disease and the—the whole industry of chickens and turkeys and all domestic fowl are subject to some of the diseases carried by these birds. Of course, when your talking about quarantining

2:31 - 2181

these birds for the pet trade you run the price way up and so smugglers found that niche and they filled it and—and they'd smuggle. What they'd do was—was knock the baby birds out of the—the nest in the jungles there and they, of course, buy them from—from natives that are going out doing this for practically nothing. And—and they'd gather them up and bring them in and they're eventually smuggled across the border. In our area down there was mostly between Brownsville and Laredo. And they would be little featherless Parrots and I don't even see how a mother Parrot could think they're cute. They're mostly beak and—and no feathers and—and—but they get them at that age because those—those birds for the pet trade need to be raised from young hen—handle it. Once the—the—they're big in the jungles, well they just don't make pets, you know. They'll bite you. So, they need to be

hand raised. So, they bring them in at that age and it's a nasty business. They knock the  
3:36 - 2181

birds out of the nest. They kill the parents, many, many of them, of course, die before they ever get to the staging points in Mexico. Many more of them die in the boxes that they're brought across the river in and while they're being smuggled. The United States Border Patrol has been a big help on catching those guys because at some of the checkpoints, they would catch somebody once in a while that had a load of Parrots in the trunk of their car. And they would call Fish and Wildlife Service agents and we'd go down and, of course, you end up rolling the—the driver or whoever and getting them to admit what they were doing and who they were selling them to. And you start working the cases from there and—and our agents would eventually draw in some of the people from across the river that were selling those birds and so there was a whole lot of work done on the Parrot trade. And many, many thousands of dollars to be made in it so, our guys—I—I feel like the Fish and Wildlife agents were pretty

4:34 - 2181

successful at slowing that trade down. And the pet trade industry—another thing is we encourage them not to buy birds from somebody when they didn't know where they were coming from. Because if somebody comes in and wanting to sell you a television and you—in a box for a hundred—for \$50 you know there's probably something wrong with it. When somebody came into a pet shop in Houston wanting to sell 60 Yellow Nape Parrots for \$50 a piece—they, you know, they should know there's something wrong. And I feel like we've been pretty successful at that in helping to stop the desecration of—particularly the—the Parrots and Macaws in Mexico and down into Central America.

DT: Could you talk a little bit more about how you might work a case that involved a conspiracy with a whole group of people?

5:27 - 2181

JS: Sure. You get—what you try to do, of course, when you—you find out—you get somebody and—and you find out who they're buying them from. You try to work an undercover agent into that area and then you get the undercover agent in and let him start buying them. And you want to get as many people in the chain—just like working narcotics people, no difference. As a matter of fact, a number of times our agent have—when they're working with these people they ask them—they've got Yellow Napes for sale, they've got the different kinds of Parrots and things or, you know, ask them if they want narcotics or whatever. They will—they'll get them for them, but, get your undercover agent in and you make a couple of buys and—and

6:05 - 2181

hopefully you get it on video and tape and—and for evidence. And then on—generally on about the third time you have a takedown and you—you try, of course, to get the people from Mexico that are bringing them in; you try to get the people that are staging them on this side. You want to get as many people in that chain as you can on your—your arrest, because people tend to—to become hard to find and they go back into Mexico if you don't get them on that first swoop. So those things get quite interesting and we a lot of times try to set it up at a motel—somewhere where we can have a number of agents hidden out waiting for them to come in and then swoop down on them like a big Red Tail Hawk and—and take them when they deliver the Parrots. It's not uncommon for Parrots to be delivered to a parking lot

6:56 – 2181

in—in one of the grocery stores or a big Wal-Mart or something and—on one of the border cities. All they got to do is get out of their vehicle with a big cardboard box and hand it to somebody else and—and they put them in a cardboard box in the back of a van and away they go. And its been recorded in video many times and—and people taken down and arrested and a lot of people have gone to prison. The courts are getting a lot better about sentencing people for these types of things. Vehicles are seized, all types of equipment are seized on those cases just like on narcotics cases, so that's strictly trying to protect migratory birds.

DT: I—I understand that one of the cases that—that you and some of the other agents in the Fish and Wildlife Service or actually its Parks and Wildlife, I guess, who were involved in it, was the pronghorn antelope incident that happened recently.

JS: Absolutely.

DT: That involved a whole ring of people.

8:00 – 2181

JS: We received information that—that a large number of antelope had been killed out in—in—near the Dal—near Dalhart in the Panhandle area. And our Warden up there, John Brooks started investigating the case and there was a fire out there and the people out there had either accidentally caught this area on fire or had set it on fire intentionally trying to burn up these carcasses. But, a group of people had gotten out there in—in pick-ups and started running down and shooting antelope and they killed a whole bunch of antelope in—in one afternoon. And our Game Warden up there found out about it and investigated it. Several of these people were from out of state

8:41 – 2181

and he started working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife agent up there from Lubbock named Rob Lee that we mentioned earlier that—that worked the oil pit things. They did a lot of work with the labs. Blood samples and different things and they made interviews in several other states and worked for a solid year on it just about before they finally got all these people in. They all ended up pleading guilty and the court system, I think, did an excellent job of sentencing these people and made it obvious it was taken very serious. So, I was real proud of our—our Wardens for being able to make this case after the people were long gone from the area and—and the—the pressure that was put on antelope up there well, the drought that we got going right

9:29 – 2181

now and to just have a bunch of antelope killed in—in one afternoon by people drinking beer and—and shooting and run—some of them were run over; just literally run over with pick-ups. If you see that big flat area up there in the panhandle where those antelope are, they must of caught them in just an area where they couldn't get away from them and ran them down out there just like a pack of wild dogs killing antelope one day. But, that case was—was recently finished and everybody has been sentenced and some good strong sentences. I was pleased with what the court system did.

DT: You mentioned running with dogs and I'm curious if you ever have had prosecuted cases for people that hunt with dogs?

10:14 – 2181

JS: No, my—I have not worked one of those cases. That's East Texas cases and right now I'm working with our guys. We still have those problems in a number of counties. Newton

County is one of the main ones over in East Texas and the dog runners over there just—they just don't seem to want to give up their sport and a lot of those areas the deer populations are—have been hurt pretty badly and they get up there and run those dogs and shoot everything that the dogs run out of the woods. Our Game Wardens are—have had a number of confrontations with them. I worry about our Wardens up there with—with some of these people. I'm hoping that people

10:50 - 2181

of some of those counties will—will start putting pressure on—on these people to—to quit doing this type of thing. Because its basically unpopular with a lot of people, but its still a problem in—in parts of East Texas.

DT: I understand that—that there's been a kind of a change in the culture and the attitude in East Texas as fences have been put up in a lot of these areas that for years were hunted with dogs and the areas were considered quasi public. Although, they probably belong to a large timber company or to other private landowners. Have you seen any kind of a change?

11:30 - 2181

JS: I have seen, of course, I've seen a change in attitudes all over the state of Texas. But, because hunting is—is such a big thing economically now to—to people, many landowners help support their land very much so by—by hunting. And they're a number of co-ops that are working over in East Texas of people that are banding together and trying to manage their properties and put enough property together to—they can really have a management plan and improve wildlife habitat in a larger area. Those people, of course, are very upset with dog runners or people that are getting out and—and not obeying the game laws. So, I'm pleased with the—the citizen reaction to a lot of this stuff in East Texas. In South Texas and West Texas you have such

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large ranches that the ranchers themselves are—are great stewards of the land, of course, it does not hurt to—economically this is a way to help pay for a ranch. Many ranches down there now, I think, are basically kept just for hunting. White tailed deer hunting in South Texas is one of the biggest things that—that's ever happened in Texas hunting and they're magazines just for white tailed in Texas. The Golden Triangle down in South Texas in particular that is a mecca to—to white tailed deer hunters. They want big horns. High fences are everywhere. When I went to work, there were no high fences.

DT: How do you think that's affected your career having these high fences go up and a sort of a sense of privatizing wildlife that was...

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JS: It has changed things. Of course, Texas is—there is no escaping the fact that Texas is—is largely privately owned and no one disputes the fact that people have the right to do what they want. When they put high fences up it just puts pressure on them to make sure that—that they manage their lands well. Because when the—the areas of migration for these things when they—they restrict them, that they have to be very careful about how they're handling things. But, it's being well done and it's changed our—our Game Wardens in that you don't have as much road hunting in some of those areas. Although, even those areas where they're high fenced for miles,

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people would come along and shoot off the road and cut the fence and—and haul things out and—and our Wardens work those things. But, it—it has changed that a little bit, but other

than that it hasn't changed it a whole lot. People are taking a whole lot more interested—interest in—in managing habitat for deer because they're worth so much money. But, the truth is that—that when habitat is managed, it's good for everything. Its right down to—to Quail, songbirds, everything benefits when habitat is managed well regardless of—particularly for deer because you—you need cover and the types of things that are—that are good for all types of wildlife. So, whatever your philosophy is on the privatizing of game this is a privately owned

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state. And I—I'm not sure where we're going to go, but we have a—our job is—is well defined. Our job is to help protect wildlife resources and—and habitat and that's just what we're doing as state Game Wardens.

DT: It seems like I recall maybe five-ten years ago, there was a sort of private property rights movement that caught a lot of attention in the press to take back Texas. And—and some distrust from the private landowner camp towards the nature conservancy and some extent Parks and Wildlife in trying to limit access to private lands and I was wondering if—if you felt like that bled over to distrust with Fish and Wildlife or Parks and Wildlife and, you know, how you—how you work with private landowners, I guess is the question?

15:43 – 2181

JS: I think that you work with them the same way we always have and—and it is true I think that particularly The Endangered Species Act and—and habitat destruction where there were actions being taken at times by the Fish and Wildlife Service that—that I think were blown out of proportion. But, people began to get the idea that because of some small bird or something that—that they might not be able to do what they wanted to on their ranches. In some cases, a habitat was being protected and—and but it—it rose to a peak of people being concerned about government intervention. I think that's much better now. I think people realize that the government, particularly not Texas Parks and Wildlife nor is U.S. Fish and

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Wildlife Service trying to take over anyone's land. And the way you get along with people in Texas is the way you get along with people anywhere. You go out and work with those people and Texans are led much easier than they're pushed, and that's always been my method. Is to get out and meet people and if there's something we want from them I—I don't try to tell them this is what you have to do because the law. This is what I would appreciate you doing and we'd like to work with you on it. And I feel like it's going much better now. We have co-op groups. We have landowner groups all over Texas that are starting to look at—at protecting habitat and many of them are looking at the eco-tourism business, which I think is great. It's good for habitat and its—its good for the landowners and its good for the people of

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Texas to have more places to get out. So, I'm—I'm very encouraged that landowners and—and this department, Parks and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I think, are—are doing a good job—a much better job of getting along with landowners after the big endangered species scares of the early '90s.

DT: You mentioned the—the little birds and I—I gather you're talking about the—the Vireos and the Warblers and the...

JS: Golden Cheeked Warblers and Black-Capped Vireos...

DT: As a—as a agent with Fish and Wildlife, did you ever get involved in things that weren't hunting related but were more habitat development, you know, incidental-taking issues. Is that within your jurisdiction?

18:03 - 2181

JS: It was and—and we worked cases like that in—in particularly in the Austin area. One of the agents that was stationed in Austin worked for me out of San Antonio. And we never—we never filed any charges, although, the—some of the—on any one for cutting cedar trees, although, the newspapers and things had people believing that, you know, they could be arrested for cutting a cedar tree. And I think the Fish and Wildlife Service at that time was—was working real hard to work with landowners. But, because of groups suing the Fish and Wildlife Service fairly regularly to get them to stop people from—from cutting cedar and things—they—it was—the

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muddy—the water was so muddy that—that nobody knew exactly what was going on. And then there was—something came out in the paper saying that a large number of counties were going to be declared critical habitat and you wouldn't be able to cut a tree anywhere in those counties and that's when it kind of peaked. But, I was supervisor of federal agents at that time in this part of the country and there was never a charge filed on anyone for habitat destruction. The whole time we were trying to get people to work with the service and protecting enough habitat for Golden-Cheeked Warblers and Black-Capped Vireos and they did, in fact. There's a whole

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lot of land has been set aside just particularly for those birds and I feel like—that they're—they're doing pretty well in that I hope that people are feeling a lot more trustful in this part of the country that the government is—is working with them to protect their rights.

DT: It sounds like we—we've discussed a lot of game and non-game cases involving birds and deer and antelope. I'm curious if you've got any thoughts or experiences regarding fish and the protection of aquatic species.

19:58 - 2181

JS: Texas Parks and Wildlife, of course, spends a lot of time working on the fisheries industry and—and the—the angler that gets out and goes fishing. We—everything from checking fishing licenses to—to working the shrimp industry and the oyster industry in Texas and we work with some of the federal agencies all the way out into the—past the Bays and work with the National Marine Fisheries people to protect fish out in the—off the coast. So, our people are constantly out checking fishing boats, oyster boats, and things working with those industries to try to protect aquatic thing.

DT: Can you maybe give us some ideas of some—some cases that you felt were pretty outstanding?

20:51 - 2181

JS: It's funny because as—as an officer you tend to think of—of a big case where something of particular egregious was done and that was caught. When, in fact, something happened just recently to one of our Game Wardens down in the inner coastal canal. He was just coming back from checking oyster fisherman out in the bays and he and another Warden were running side by side and a couple of boats and they met a houseboat and one went on one side and one went on the other and when our Warden hit the wake of that boat, which is—he does it everyday. When he hit that wake, he broke a steering cable on his boat and it

threw him out of that boat and

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the prop on a 200 horsepower engine just about took his—his leg off and it would have killed him had he not been able to get back out of the way just a little bit. And his partner came back and got him out of the water and needless to say, but the point being that he had been out working oyster fisherman. And working—protecting the—the oysters and the oyster industry in Texas and our guys do that everyday when—when the rest of us at home in our warm beds, some state Game Warden is out there in that old dark water somewhere checking netters or are getting ready to board shrimp boat and oyster boat somewhere in a—in a cold murky night and that goes on all the time. If you've never done that—my—invite you to go out sometime on—on the Bay in a 22-foot boat checking oyster boats and things. They—it can get quite

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exciting and—and that's part of what our Game Wardens do and I—I'm just real proud of them when I read about—its not just when I read about them giving tickets. It's the fact that they're out there doing what they do and working particularly with—there a number of organization that have started on the coast that are trying to—I can—I'm sure you can think of several that have started up, GCCA and others. But, working with Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens to try to protect the—the fishing industry and fishing for—for sportsmen, sometimes those people come head to head. But, basically they're interests are the same and—and we—we get in there and try and treat everyone the same and—and protect fish for commercial people as well as for the sportsman.

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DT: It seems like I recall that—that in the—the—it may have been the early '80s a number of Vietnamese came to Texas and other Gulf States and they became shrimpers and they were very successful, but they didn't always understand the laws. I was wondering if you could talk about the...

23:45 - 2181

JS: It became quite a challenge for our Wardens, of course. Language barrier and people that were not use to regulations and people that were use to taking everything they could out of the environment and—and living on it. And our Wardens, of course, filed a lot of cases on those kinds of people and learned some Vietnamese and the Vietnamese people learned—some English. But, I think it's interesting to note that that's all. I think they've assimilated quite well and—and they're doing well on the coast and they're still a lot of them in the fishing industry. And you don't hear much about it now, and I'd like to think that's because they've assimilated and get along with our fisherman. And there's a number of them that are doing really well

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here in Texas. But it was—it was challenging particularly to state Game Wardens when—when those folks showed up and started working the fishing industry. I'm sure some Game Wardens from the coast could tell you a lot of interesting stories about—about working the—the—not just the Vietnamese but others. But, particular the Vietnamese when they first came as—as a large group and then its not unusual that our people got involved with the—the fights with the people that were unhappy and upset and—and trying to keep both sides calmed down and I think they did a pretty good job of it. Because here we are some years later and people getting along pretty well and as far as I know there never was

anybody killed over all that and there was a time when people certainly thought there would be.

25:15 – 2181

DT: This was when the (?) got involved and...

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JS: All of us. There were a whole lot of things that weren't good going on in that time and our—your state Game Wardens were right out there in the middle of it all the time just trying to protect wildlife. And they took it on as they do everything else. Its just part of their duties and—and years later I think things were going quite well and—and we all talk about something else. We're not talking about the—the shrimp wars on the coast over there.

DT: Could you tell us about some of these Game Wardens that you admired over the years?

25:53 – 2181

JS: Sure. They were—when I first went to work in—in the '60s the Wardens that were as old as I am now, of course, had been working since before World War II. And—and which put them back to a really interesting time and I enjoyed getting to know as many of them as I could. There's one named Herbert Ward who was down in—he worked in Carrizo Springs and—and Laredo, Crystal City in that part of the country. He was a supervisor and its not pretty I suppose, but the first Game Warden—first time I ever heard of a Game Warden was—was Herbert. And Herbert killed one of my classmates' father and that—an incident there that he had attacked the

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Game Warden or whatever, but that's the first Game Warden I ever heard of. And Herbert was a Game Warden for many years and well known down in that part of the country and I was fortunate enough to meet him in his later years. Jim Pawn was a Game Warden down in that country, retired now and—and Jim was a colorful Game Warden that—that worked down there was a Texas Ranger and—and many exciting things happened in that area. Jim was about six foot five and—and was back from a stand as a paratrooper in World War II and—and everybody knew Jim Pawn. I—including me—when I was in High School I could spot his old Pontiac two counties away. Everybody respected Jim. He was the kind of guy that—that had his hat off when a lady was within a hundred yards, but a bad guy to cross. So, he was a fine Game Warden. Raymond Custer was a Game Warden up in Uvalde and raconteur deluxe, he could tell stories that he loved to listen to and—and he had grown up in Rocksprings and worked Uvalde and that country down there for years.

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Later was in San Angelo before he retired and there were just a lot of interesting characters. Joe Matlock was a Game Warden. I think Joe started about 1947 and he was a pilot—Army Air Corp pilot in World War II and came back and went to work as a Game Warden in Junction, Texas. Joe later became an instructor at the Game Warden Academy and then went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a pilot. And Joe was at the end of his career when I went to work and he was a mentor to me when I first went to work in the Fish and Wildlife Service. And Joe and I worked that Eagle Case together in the Texas Hill Country and very interesting guy. Joe had—use to fly an old Cessna 2180 and he would strap that old Cessna on down

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in—in Victoria, Texas and fly all the way to Canada to do surveys—duck and goose surveys up in that country and—and he'd fly there in Canada for a couple of months and then fly



that old Cessna 2182 all the way back to Victoria. Did that year after year. He flew into Mexico and many times he did the Eagle surveys out in—in West Texas with biologists from Texas Parks and Wildlife and sometimes U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There's Dr. Guthrie as a professor, I think it—it—I know in Oklahoma I'm not sure which University, but he's written several books on Quail. He's got one out now on Quail and I met him at a symposium a while back and he asked me if I knew Joe Matlock and I told him I did. And he said well, a number of years ago he had flown with Joe doing Eagle surveys and he said that man could see an Eagle two

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counties away. He said I never could understand it. He said he'd spot one before me every time and—and was invariably right about what it was and that pleased me because I'd known Joe for years and Joe is way up in his 80's now, lives in Victoria. Very interesting guy and has worked many dark nights and long hot days as a Game Warden, both state and federal.

DT: So the—the state wildlife management areas in East Texas, I think, are named after Wardens that were killed in the line of duty.

30:07 - 2181

JS: Yes.

DT: Do you...

30:10 - 2181

JS: The Murphy area—J.D. Murphy was killed by a duck hunter, a guy that literally just shot him up over something quite simple. We still don't know this day why would he—he was murdered by that guy and the Choke Canyon area down there that the Daughtrey Wildlife Management Area was named after Jim Daughtrey—that was a good friend of mine. Jim was working in McMullen County when I was in Duval County. And I use to work with him many nights and he—after I had left that area to become a Federal Warden Jim was out one dark night, an area we'd worked together many times down on the Nueces River on Highway 624 in McMullen County working night hunters and he was out, had his lights off and the night hunters had

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theirs off too and they met head on on a bridge there, killed Jim. We'd worked together many times and there was a prime night hunting road out there and—and Daughtrey caught a many of them. Took them into the courthouse in McMullen County. McMullen County is an interesting County. There—that time there was only two officers in the county, the sheriff and the Game Warden there, but no deputies and there was one judge, a county judge. So, a bad county to—to mess up in and particularly for hunting, but I thoroughly enjoyed it and—and things haven't changed a whole lot down there to this day. There—I'm not sure there's a Justice of

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the Peace, there's a county judge. And still a good county, but of course now where Jim lived and they built the Choke Canyon Reservoir and flooded that area and there's a big nice lake there now that wasn't back there in those days. It's a big tourist area and—and excellent area for people to go. Jim Daughtrey spent many a dark cold night out there protecting deer and—and everything else in that part of the country by himself and now that thing's named after Jim. There were—there have been others, but not any that I knew well. We had a Warden killed recently, Michael Polling, over in the Beaumont area when he stopped about

midnight to help a lady in

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distress on the side of the road and I'd rather not talk about it much because that trial is being held in the next few weeks, as a matter of fact. But, he's—he got killed when he stopped to help someone on the side of the road. So, that's not uncommon for our Game Wardens to get in—they will be out there. They're the ones that are out there late at night and—and along way from the old back-up calls you see on TV all the time where the guy gets on his radio and calls for back-up on. Our back up is generally a long way away. Even though today, the—we do have radios where you can get somebody. It's going to take them a while to get there.

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DT: Are—are there any—there—I—I guess stewards or—or private Wardens that you've worked with, pasture riders or...

33:08 - 2181

JS: There are.

DT: Some of the Audubon coastal sanctuary Wardens that...

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JS: I've not worked with the Audubon people, although I'm familiar with some of the—the sanctuary Wardens. They have an excellent reputation. We have a deputy program and there's some deputies—Texas Parks and Wildlife deputy Wardens that have done an excellent job over the years. There's one down in—I don't know if I'll mention him by name, but he works Farr Ranch down in Duval County and—and is a deputy for us and his name turns up in the reports I get every week as helping our Wardens regularly. I'm just really—it's funny, he doesn't get paid by us. I—I wrote him a letter recently and told him he was doing such a good job I was going to double his salary. And he was involved in a big case over in Falcon Lake, which is a pretty

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good way from where he was helping the Game Wardens there at that time. So, I'm going to write him another letter and I'm going to triple his salary this time. But he's—there are several of them that—there's one out on Eagle Lake area, deputy Warden that worked for some ranchers and he worked with our Wardens and still does just like he was a full time paid Texas Game Warden and does excellent work out there, basically a volunteer type thing.

DT: How do you recruit some of these private deputies or—or perhaps undercover people and how do you work with...

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JS: Well, that's two very different things, of course, but generally these people come to us. They're interested in working for us and its—because of liability and those type of things we have to be very careful who we hire. And—and as time goes on it gets more and more difficult to—to hire people and—and give Deputy Commissions—unpaid Deputy Commissions, even though we've had much success with some of them over the years. Our undercover branch of Parks and Wildlife—a very important branch, but those are our—we put only experienced Wardens doing that and they basically spend a few years working the—under a different cover and

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their names are not used. They attend meetings with regular Wardens once in a while but

they have to be very careful, of course. And—and they go out and get into different situations and sometimes work for months or even years getting in with—with elements that our normal patrol methods don't get us into. They worked the Venado Macho Case. The killing of—where people were killing white tailed deer and things down in—particularly in South Texas, taking people on trophy hunts at night and—and sneaking into ranches. And some cases they were using automatic weapons, they were using night vision things and our undercover people worked that case and—and took it down successfully a couple of years ago. And they worked a

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fishing—commercial fishing industry, particularly inland a number of times. Any time we get a complaint from fish camps or whatever where they're a lot of violations and its not feasible to do much good with normal patrol methods, our undercover Wardens work those cases. And that's a tough job and it can be quite dangerous, of course.

DT: Have some of them gotten involved in some of the canned hunt prosecutions?

36:28 - 2181

JS: Not—most of the canned hunt prosecutions have been done by the federal agents. I worked several of those before I retired. The infamous killing of the black—that was a black leopard over in the Leakey area. That things been on TV from all over the world, I guess, where they turned that cat out and he—with the dogs in front of him and ran him up under a pick-up and—and a guy from Louisiana shot him. There was a canned hunt of a bengal tiger up in the Fredericksburg area that we worked and—and a doctor from Louisiana came down and killed him and the guy setting up the hunt was a—he wasn't a practicing veterinarian, but he was a

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veterinarian. And he was selling basically a hunt site they had some tigers out in the—a couple acre pasture—high fenced pasture, (inaudible) in there with their video and video them shooting the tiger sleeping up under an oak tree out there. So, those things got a lot of publicity and, of course, the hunting population is very much and very adamantly against that kind of thing. And hunters and hunting organizations were a lot—very supportive of prosecutions of those kinds of things. So, I'd like to think that there was a time when you could come in and go down to certain areas in the Texas Hill Country and you could ask about a—somewhere to kill a lion or a tiger

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and you could find it, but I'd like to think you couldn't do that now because of some of those prosecutions. They were prosecuting in Federal Court and—and got very serious sentences out of it and several of these people were—were very important people in their communities and—and to be convicted of these type of things of a certainly a service as a deterrent to others.

DT: You—you've talked just recently about Bengal tigers and these black jaguars, you know, animals that really aren't native to this part of the world. I understand that you were the Executive Director of a group that the Exotic Wildlife Association.

38:42 - 2181

JS: Yes.

DT: That dealt with, you know, far different kind of hunting operation and wildlife management operation, but dealt with these nogai and axis deer and I was—I realize its not a long chapter in your career, but could you explain a little bit about how that industry got

started and—and what its like now from...

39:05 – 2181

JS: I know a little bit about the history from working with them. They started in 1967, as a matter of fact; the same year I became a Game Warden. And they banded together to—I—to start an industry of bri—of hunting exotics in Texas, and Charlie Shriner from down in the Wild Ranch was big in starting that organization. And Charlie had basically shifted the Wild Ranch Charlie III, who passed away here a while back, but shifting the Wild Ranch from—from cattle and sheep and goats to hunting to exotics and exotic hunting and—and, which it still is to this day, as you probably know. And he basically started that organization and they have been—

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grown quite a bit over the years and—and more and more people in Texas have—have gone to exotics. One of the main reasons is with the wool and mohair industry falling on hard times, well particularly with the removal of the federal subsidies on these things, people were needing a way to—to help pay for their ranches and being able to—to hunt exotic—raise exotics both for eco-tourism and—and for hunting was something that could be done on some of these areas. And a lot of that Hill Country wasn't all that susceptible just to change over to a cattle operation. So, the exotic industry had gotten to be quite big and—and they'd gotten a considerable amount of

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publicity, some of it good and some of it bad. And then the can hunt businesses that I got into a couple of times, of course, had been particularly bad for them because they were accusing in a lot quarters of running can hunts because they were behind high fences. Of course, high fences are part of our way of life in Texas and a big part of the people that don't have exotics have high fences. So, as it became more important to help hold Hill Country ranches together to have exotics and that's something, of course, that—that there are no hunting seasons and things on exotics. They're raised basically as—as livestock on these ranches. It gave people an opportunity to hunt

41:27 – 2181

year round, unlike our deer seasons; they run a couple of months and short turkey seasons and things. So, this was an economic thing that would help ranchers a lot. Well, I had not been involved with those people other than sometimes with the endangered species issue when some of them had captive bred endangered species. And about two months before I retired and it was fairly well known down in that area that I was going to retire because federal agents have to retire at age 57. And as I approached my 57th birthday, the people in that part of the country knew about it and I got a call one day about two months before my retirement date and invited me to—to go to work for the Exotic Wildlife Association. Well, I—I had talked to their

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Executive Director on one—at one point but I didn't know him well and I didn't know the other people involved. And at first I said no and they talked to me and said that they were very interested in bringing their industry into mid stream and they wanted people to know that they were trying to do things right. And I finally—I talked to them and went over and talked to them and met with them in Kerrville and—and Charlie Shriner—Charlie III, sat down with me and Charlie III and I had locked horns back during the Eagle killing days because he was, of course, very strong member of the Texas Hill Country. And I have a

letter in my file that Charlie wrote to the—the Secretary of the Interior at that time while that trial was going on

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telling him to send his agents down to his ranch and get those Eagles off his ranch. And Charlie had been very vocal about fighting us and Charlie said that he had realized they needed to work with us and basically I—I took that job because of Charlie Shriner. I was im—impressed with him. I liked him and—and we sat up in his gunroom one night and talked for a long time. He had an extensive collection of—of guns and particularly Texas Ranger memorabilia. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I finally came to an agreement with them that we wouldn't—we wouldn't have any contract, that I would go to work for him and—and if I couldn't represent him I'd take my pictures down off the wall and go home and if they didn't like what I was

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doing I'd be gone the same day. And that's what we did and I went to work for them in September of 2000 and worked for them until August of 2001. And when I was offered this job—and I got to know a lot of those people out in the Texas Hill Country and like them. It's a—there are—there were things I—they were very nervous about publicity and I told them that the only way they're going to survive is if there's anything going on they don't want a TV camera to see, they shouldn't be doing it. If you don't want somebody knowing what you're doing there must be something wrong with what you're doing. And I tried to pull them into the mainstream and—and make sure that those few people that were doing things that they didn't want anybody to know about that they as an industry did everything they could to get them

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shut down. And—and I think they did a good job of that and the short time I was there, we spent our time trying to work with the government agency's rather than fighting them. And I feel like that it was—it was successful and I enjoyed it. There were a whole lot of—of species from India and Africa that are raised in—in not just the Texas Hill Country but South Texas and West Texas that—there are many more of those animals here than there are in their native countries; black bok antelope, shimmertarhararics, all these different—a number of different species; letchwes and things that—that are more prolific here than they are in their country of origin. And

45:24 – 2181

no doubt would be more prolific as long as people are allowed to make money on them. Just as like—just—no doubt that—that some day when I was liable to get a 300 H&H magnum around through the shoulders, but they're not going to be eaten by a lions and they're not going to starve to death and they're not going die at a water hole without water. So, in the cold hard facts of life it was no difference in their industry than—than our hunting industry with white tailed deer and things. The animals were well cared for—cared for, well fed and hunted.

45:56 – 2181

DT: What do you think the affect was on the native populations on the exotics and do you think that they had any impact on white tail and mule deer?

46:07 – 2181

JS: They did and I'm not a biologist as I've told you up front, but a number of studies have shown that if there's real direct competition that sometimes the exotics will—will push out

the white tailed, but that can be controlled by any landowner. If he decides that they're causing his white tailed problems they get out there and start taking their fallow deer and their—their axis deer and different things and—and take them off the land. So, its become a moot point really about exotics in Texas because they're so well established that now it's—it's just added variety to Texas and it remains to be seen what it's going to do overall. But, they're still easily controlled in that there's no—they're no seasons and—and in fact people are worried about deer populations in—in areas they can go out and remove the—the exotics. And I think that the record shows that—that our deer herd in Texas is—is strongest it's ever been. We're constantly taking deer off areas where there are too many deer. So, at least the competition is—is not hurting the white tailed deer.

DT: What were some of the other problems that the exotic wildlife owners and managers were worried about? You said there were some problems they were trying to stamp out.  
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JS: Well, of course, they were worried about the public reception of—of their business and—and of course there are some people that are just against hunting. Hunting as a—as a Game Warden, I see and I think most of us see hunting as a—a tool—a conservation tool where you—you crop excess animals just like you do in any industry, the livestock industry. If you don't, then you have an over population and your caring capacity is—is what you learn, and day one at—at—in college when you take a wildlife course—any course in agriculture about how many head of animals that any piece of country will carry, and if they are not—with the predators being removed in so much of Texas that if you don't hunt, then you have die offs

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from—from animals and its just—just real simple. And—and the people that are against hunting I—I'm—I guess I can sympathize with them at somewhat, but literally you—you just have to—you can only carry a certain number of animals and hunting is—is a very humane way and a very viable way to—to control the piece of country. Instead of taking cattle off the range and putting them in truck and sending them to the slaughter house, they—some of the—the exotics, of course, are—and deer are trapped and moved, but most of them are hunted. And so its something that's ingrained in Texas for many, many generations and—and I—I think will continue for a long time. And I don't think it's to the detriment of their wildlife herds. I know

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you've interviewed some people like my old friend Al Brothers and nobody knows more about white tailed deer or the hunting industry than Al Brothers does. And—and I bet you Al Brothers wouldn't tell you that—that hunting is bad for wildlife.

DT: We've covered a lot of ground and I thank you for that. I'm curious if you—when you look back over many years and you think about all these different issues. What do you think the big challenges are for—for the future of conservation?

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JS: The biggest challenge right now for—for wildlife, of course, in Texas more than anywhere else probably is fragmentation of the land—cutting up of the land. There's generations of people gone in Texas—it's privately owned and as landholdings get smaller it's harder to—to keep—to control habitat. And there—therefore I see more and more Co-ops building up in those areas where large landings—landholdings are not held together to try to band together and—and make agreements among themselves about how they're

going to hunt and leaving of certain things and protecting habitat. That's something the Wardens are having to get use to is—is

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working with—with Co-ops across the state. I believe that's going to be something that's going to be more important. The large landholdings—as long as they hold together and—and with the wildlife being worth what it is for recreation and—and for economic purposes, I believe they will continue to do well. I don't see a problem with that. Offering hunting ap—hunting opportunity for people that don't have lots of money, public hunting opp—hunting opportunities in Texas are something that are a challenge to this agency and are being looked at and—as much as possible. While you continue to protect land for people that are non consumptive users, they just want to get out and—and see things, so, our Game Wardens get out and they're liable to—to be talking to someone with a pair of binoculars looking at golden cheeked warblers

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one day and that night they're going to stop somebody that—that maybe hauling heroin or marijuana. And it's—so its gets us quite a challenging job in that you—you meet a lot of nice people and—and a few bad ones. So, I—looking back over the years I tend to feel sorry for everybody that hasn't got to be a Game Warden for 35 years like I have. And its—I see a future of young Game Wardens that will see different things than—than I saw, but the challenges are always going to be there to try to protect habitat against encroaching humans. And how they'll be doing it, I'm not sure, but regardless they're going to have to be somebody out there that enforce regulations. The legislature can make all kinds of laws that make sense, but somebody is going to have to go out there and make sure that people are doing what

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the legislature says they're suppose to be doing. And that's going to be about much more working with—with the different conservation groups, with the public; and it's a—it's a job that you have to get along with a lot of diverse groups, which as far as I'm concerned makes it interesting. I talked to somebody that's a bird rehabber before you got here a while ago and has worked for years with us rehabbing wounded Eagles and Owls and Hawks and I give talks to Audubon Sierra Nature Conservancy and then we get out and—and chase guys that are getting up in the morning intending to violate the law. So, you get to meet a variety of people.

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DT: I guess as—as supervisor of the Game Wardens and Parks and Wildlife, one of your big jobs is to keep recruiting in new—new Wardens and—and keep the moral high of those that you have and I'm curious how you make the case to them that this is—is important and valuable work.

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JS: It's really— It's easy I—it's—to me it's—when you're trying to—to sell something you love is pretty ea—it's not difficult and we go out—we do some proactive work. We go out to colleges and things and recruit, but we generally always had a large pool of people when we hire Game Wardens. The last time we hired we had 270 or so and we were going to hire 35 and its—its changed some in that we're hiring only people with degrees now where—we're the only state agency in Texas that's hiring only degreed law enforcement officers. And so if you get 275 people that are well qualified with degrees to pick 35 people from

well, you've got a pretty good pool and I don't think we're going to have any problem doing that. People that want to work in the outdoors, want to have more freedom than you'd have in a lot of other jobs and work with animals and work with people, and I don't think  
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we're going to have any problem recruiting people. There's always—they're always a number of people that—that like excitement and like going to bed at night feeling like they've done some good. When you finish being a Game Warden and you're getting ready to retire like I have once and I will again here one of these days, you get down at the end of the road you want to have gathered up a whole lot of this world's good, but you will have lived an interesting life and that's not hard to sell even in this day and time to our young college folks.

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DT: Well, it does sound like it's been an interesting life. It—it sounds like a pretty adventurous life too for many of us who are—have lot tamer lives. I'm curious when, you know, you've had some exciting times, is there a place in the outdoors that you like to—to return to that's a pleasant place that you saw in peace and quiet?

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JS: I love—I love West Texas in particular. I own a little piece of property over in Medina County and, but I love West Texas because its got lots of country and not many people, and that's always good for relaxing and you can get out and—and see for miles and hear your heart beat. The Big Bend of Texas is one of the best places in the world. Fort Davis, Alpine, Marfa, if I could move this desk to any one of those three towns, I'd be operating out of there. Texas has, as—as you well know—it's a diverse state. But, I just got back from Lake Fork over at the equipment area yesterday and visiting with some of my people in West Texas—East Texas rather, and I love that country, but the open country of West Texas is—is where I go when—when I want to be by myself and take my red headed wife and go out and spend a few days and the worlds always right when you get back.

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DT: Well, I hope you have lots of opportunities to do that despite your—your busy job here.

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JS: Well, this—this has been fun. It—it—just a whole lot of things happening and unfortunately I'm going to try to write a book one of these days and you—the old business about names—protect—you don't want—want to protect the innocent as protecting the guilty that you got to worry about. But, I hire a number of people here in Austin that I haven't mentioned that got involved with things like the Day Case, but it might be better if we didn't go over that—that stolen horns and all of that. But—but people that get—you're not familiar with that?

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DT: No, sir.

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JS: Well, that's a well publicized case and I was sitting at my desk in Fort Worth, I was a supervisor in North Texas district for a while before I came down to South Texas and I got a call from—from Canada. And the guy had told me he was calling me from Alberta, Canada and he says I'm sitting here looking at the Outdoor Life, eh, he says, "There's a guy here that's killed the biggest deer ever killed in Mexico," he says, "I don't know where the deer came from," he says, "But, the horns came from my shop." So, I took my feet down off the



taxpayer's desk and asked him to tell

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me that again. And he told me that the horns were stolen from his shop and there was a picture in Outdoor Life of a deer killed in Mexico. He says, "I'm going fax—I'm going to overnight mail this to you, eh," he says, "And I've got a case report here on the stolen horns from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and I'll put a copy of that in with you." And he says, "Go out and buy a copy of the Outdoor Life for this month and you will see." So, I did. Forthwith, I went out to—bought a copy of Outdoor Life and found what he was talking about and there was a gentleman from Austin that was named in the piece there. He was posing with a deer. There was about a two—I don't remember now, but about a 230 something point of a monster deer. The biggest white tailed deer ever killed in Mexico and a big story about the—

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the killing of the deer and it was written by Ray Sasser and the—he writes for Dallas Morning News, I believe it is. Ray's a big outdoor writer and—and had put that story in Outdoor Life. The next morning I got the overnight mail. I got the picture of the—of the deer horns stolen from him and—and looked at that picture. It wasn't any doubt. It was the same horns, but they were on a deer being posed with by a hunter from Mexico. So, this is new to me. I'd been at it a long time, but that time, well, I'd never seen anything like that. So, I called an agent and asked him to run down to Austin and—and find this guy. I said it shouldn't be that hard to do. He's named in the piece and—and see—see if you can get a hold of the deer head and we've got pictures and—and ask him—tell him about this story and ask him what he has to say

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about it and give me a call. Well, he called me that evening and said he found the guy, he talked to him and the guy says he doesn't know anything about this ridiculous charges from this Canadian, but he wouldn't let us have the deer head and he's hired a law firm from Austin. And when he named the law firm it was a well known law firm in Austin, a criminal law firm and so, that really piqued my interest and—and so I came down and—and this agent and I started investigating the case and we found where he had been killed in Mexico. And that the guy that ran the ranch down there was from Houston and that one of the guys that worked for him was back in my old stomping grounds of Duval County. And that he lived out there and—and he was a hunting guide for him in Mexico and different areas. So, I went down to Freer with

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this other agent and—and we found out where the guy lived, of course pretty soon, and—and when the sun came up the next morning we were waiting outside of his gate for him when he came off the ranch. We had a long visit there and I convinced him that—that we were going to make this case and that everybody in—concerned had lots of money except him and—and that—it didn't look to me like he had a very strong position in this matter. And he finally ended up telling me that a guide from Canada—a hunting guide in Canada had taken this gentlemen from Austin hunting in Canada because he wanted to kill a Boone and Crockett Deer. He'd hunted in South

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Texas, he had hunted in—in Canada and other places, but he had never killed a—a really good Boone and Crockett Deer. Well, this hunting guide in Canada knew where there was a

Boone and Crockett class deer that had—was—the horns were on the wall in a taxidermy shop over there to be taxidermied, but it was never entered in Boone and Crockett. And he contacted our gentleman from Austin and told him that he had a set of deer horns that were certainly Boone and Crockett, was he interested in them. And the guy told him he was, so he had them stolen. I don't think he stole them to this day, but he had them stolen, broke into the shop, stole the horns, he smuggled the horns from Canada into the United States, flew to Houston, met with a

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guy from Houston, drove to Mexico, went down to—between Laredo and Eagle Pass in Mexico and stayed at Coahuilla. And this guy that I was interviewing there by the side of the road got there in Duval County said that he showed them the horns and his head—his eyes bugged out.

[End of Reel 2181]

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JS: So, the hunting guide from Canada had the horns stolen and—and smuggled them across the border in Canada and flew them down to—in a big trunk to Houston and got with the gentleman from Houston that had the ranch leased in Mexico. They drove it down and he crossed the border into Mexico violating the—the Federal Lacey Act everywhere they went, from the importation to the transportation and then into Mexico in violation of Mexican Law, United States Law. And got down there and—and the hunting guide that—I was interviewing was there that night and he said he saw them. The guy from Canada—showed him the horns and his eyes bugged out

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and—and they offered him twenty thousand dollars and he said I seen him give him two checks, ten thousand dollars each. And—said okay, well, anyway, he said that that we needed a deer—they—for Boone and Crockett to be in the Boone and Crockett Record Book you have to prove fair chase, which is kind of strange in this case. And—and, so, he said we went out with a spotlight that night and—and on the ranch there in Mexico and we killed two deer. We brought them in and picked the best one out and we cut the horns off, skinned the—the deer's cape back, we set the Canadian horns down on the skull cap of this deer and pulled the cape back over it and—and tried to make it look like the horns were part of that deer. And they had

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rubbed these big Canadian horns and the—the wahilla and the cactus over there to put some green on him and things, some mesquite brush and then they took their pictures that they would need to prove fair chase for the hunting of that old pictures of the hunting guide shaking hands and the guy with his monster deer. And—and they brought it back to Texas. They crossed the river in Eagle Pass and the Customs Agents and the customs inspectors were so impressed; all the customs inspectors came over to see the horns and there were several pictures taken with the customs inspectors posing with this guy. In this tremendous story of the killing of the monster deer he told how he had found out from a cowboy on the ranch that there was this big deer in this tremendous big pasture had been seen once or twice, how he dug a hole

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out there and covered himself with skunk musk and spent several days, you know, going back and forth spending all day in that—that pit he had dug waiting for this monster deer,

and quite an interesting story. He got back and he—he went immediately to a Boone and Crockett Official Score and had him score Boone and Crockett. Well, the guy was amazed, of course, because it was a tremendous deer. Obviously, the biggest white tailed horns that had ever come out of Mexico that anybody knew about. So, the Austin Woods and Waters Club here in Austin, which he was a member of, was quite excited and—and he later won the—the an award, you know, Austin Woods and Waters Club that—for the biggest white tailed ever taken.

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Ray Sasser picked up the story and he was carried in the Austin papers; it was carried in the Dallas papers, it was in Outdoor Life and had a lot of notoriety. I don't know what all kind of awards he won, but when we started tracking this story down and I—I went to a Grand Jury, he had hired—he had hired an attorney, as I mentioned. The attorney said that we weren't going to get our hands on that head that it was in a safe place and we weren't going to see it that they had nothing to hide, but, you know, that we had no reason to get a warrant. Well, after we got—after our—got the story from this hunting guide and the money that was involved, the assistant U.S. Attorney working this case, again the same assistant U.S. attorney that had worked the Eagle case with me years ago, had contacted the attorney and told him we were going to

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charge this client with interstate transportation of stolen property. And, which it in fact was and the charges were building up—they were felony level and getting bigger all the time for someone that was just wanting to be in the Boone and Crockett Record Book. So, within a couple of weeks, I presented it to the Grand Jury and a couple of weeks that attorney had his runner deliver that head to me in my office in San Antonio. They—people ended up pleading out and—and I seized the Buick—the new Buick that he drove across the border in hauling those horns. I managed to find at the La Quinta Inn where he stayed in—in Eagle Pass, his card that he filled out with the license plate of his—of his vehicle and that vehicle was seized. We seized and forfeited the pick-up that that hunting guide used because he had—that's what they

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used that night. It was all involved in the conspiracy that had to do with this case and they were conspiracy charges for filing everyone to viol—that violate the Lacy Act, which has to do with this, interstate transportation stol—of illegally taking game and of the customs laws. They plead out and paid big fines and forfeited vehicles over that deer head and one of the—part of the sentence from the judge was that this gentleman from Austin would have to give speeches around the country. He was on probation for a couple of years talking about the error of his ways and how hunting—he had gotten off the trail in hunting and—and forgotten what hunting was suppose to

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be all about rather than the ultimate prize of—of having the biggest that—that—and he did. He made a number of speeches to groups around Texas and I don't know where all else about what he had done and—and how people ought to remember that—that hunting was—was for the experience and not for the—for what you brought back. And I felt like it was a pretty good deterrent across the country for this type of thing and—and the Dallas papers and the Austin papers just roasted him over what happened. I—I felt sorry for him after a while because I—I always felt like his wife probably didn't know and those kind of

things. And—and he had won the awards and they had families—some family had been with them at some of the award

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ceremonies. So, that's a ultimate of what can happen when people forget what things are all about and think that you can buy anything you want and that's—that's happened one more time in Texas where a guy killed a big deer and tried to take some horns and—and claim they were killed. And—and they backed off of it pretty quick after that happened and that guy—that case was worked by Texas Game Wardens. It was down the river in the city area. But, to my knowledge it hasn't happened since and the hunting industry is well aware of it.

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DT: Do you have any—some general comments about—as—as hunting has gone from being a way to put food in your pantry to being one often for trophies, why people do these things? How do people explain it to you when you—you interview them?

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JS: People generally say that—that they lost perspective. They—they got—they weren't involved with reality anymore when—when—they forgot that its more important to—to try to—to kill a trophy deer all their life and never haven't done it than to have done it illegally—than done it immorally as much as anything. That to have something on your wall you should be proud of it if—if you want to hang horns on the wall and I have no idea what the people that would have done something like this would have told people. I know what they told in newspaper stories, but over the years after you've gotten old and gray headed what you would told about that deer on the wall that you paid twenty thousand dollars for the horns and told a great big lie

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about what happened. If was, of course, a very unpopular with the hunting industry and—and they were very supportive in—in our prosecutions and sent out letters to everyone. And—and it was the hunting industry more than—than the general public that was really—wanted these people strongly prosecuted. I feel like that—that's been good in the hunting industry because the peer pressure to have people continue to abide by game laws and do everything they can to help people do what they know is right to—is—does a lot more good for wildlife preservation than Game Wardens with badges do. I always try to promote peer pressure. Go out and do the right thing and try to convince your people to do the right thing and not because I may be hiding behind a tree over there watching you. And I think that a large segment of people that hunt feel that way. They want to be able to do that and have their children go out and

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see a tom turkey come to a call and—and see a good deer sometime from a sand or wherever. And the people that care about getting out and—and having those experiences, they know that the only way they're going to be able to continue to do that is to protect wildlife and—and that comes right down to regulations that we'd all like to live maybe back some day like the mountain Indian. But, those days are long gone and I think most people that hunt are more aware of that than—than most anybody else.

DT: Thank you very much. You're very generous with your time. I like history.

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[End of Reel 2182]

[Interview with Jim Stinebaugh]

