

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: John Dorsett.

INTERVIEWER: David Todd

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Google Voice [00:00:00] This call is now being recorded.

David Todd [00:00:04] Mr. Dorsett, this is David Todd.

John Dorsett [00:00:07] Hello, David. This is John, how are you today?

David Todd [00:00:10] I'm fine. I'm fine. Thank you. Thank you.

John Dorsett [00:00:14] Pardon me?

David Todd [00:00:16] I realized you called just a moment ago and I was about to call you back and I just wanted to see if there's any housekeeping or questions you might have before we, we chat about the red wolf.

John Dorsett [00:00:30] No, I don't think so. You know, after our emails between each other and then after I looked at y'all's website, I kind of got an idea of what you're doing now.

David Todd [00:00:40] OK, good, good. Well, I hope that helped give a little clarity about what's our goal here and how we're trying to pull together some stories about different interesting animals in the state's history.

John Dorsett [00:00:57] Yes, sir.

David Todd [00:00:58] You know, especially through this sort of first-person kind of view when people who have actually been engaged with it.

John Dorsett [00:01:07] Really? Yeah.

David Todd [00:01:08] Yeah, yeah. I mean, people like yourself. That's, that's our goal.

John Dorsett [00:01:13] Yeah. I've thought about this and I was wishing that, it's a shame that Curtis...I wish he was still here, that he could do it, you know, because he was, well, you know, the lead and the backbone of the program there.

David Todd [00:01:29] Well, I hear you. Yeah, that's a shame. But I think you'll do great. And I hope that we could spend a little time today and learn more about what you recall and, you know, we'll piece it together from other people if you feel like there are things you can't speak to. But I think we'll learn a lot from you.

John Dorsett [00:01:55] Yeah, well, it'll be interesting. It's, it's been interesting just kind of thinking about it since you first called and reliving some of that that we did and hadn't thought about it in a long time.

David Todd [00:02:09] Oh I bet. I bet will. Thank you for going down. I guess you'd call memory lane. Yeah.

John Dorsett [00:02:15] Yeah.

David Todd [00:02:17] Well let me, just for the record, I think you may have heard that we were recording this and I want to make sure that, you know, we are on the same page about we're doing and it's all agreeable to you. So let me just map out what our plan is today.

John Dorsett [00:02:38] OK.

David Todd [00:02:38] And see if that fits well. So, all contingent on your approval, what we're planning on doing is recording this interview for research and educational work on behalf of a nonprofit group, the Conservation History Association of Texas, for a website and a book for Texas A&M University Press, and for a archive that exists over at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas here in Austin.

John Dorsett [00:03:10] Mhhmm.

David Todd [00:03:10] And that's, that's sort of what our plan was on our end. But, of course, this is your interview and the records of it belong to you as well.

John Dorsett [00:03:19] Yes.

David Todd [00:03:19] And you are welcome to use whatever you'd like.

John Dorsett [00:03:23] Yeah, well, I doubt that I'll be using it for anything, but.

David Todd [00:03:30] Well, it's available. And..

John Dorsett [00:03:32] Yes, sir.

David Todd [00:03:33] And I wanted to make sure you understood that. And, and I just want to ask it if that's agreeable to you.

John Dorsett [00:03:38] Yes, sir, it is.

David Todd [00:03:40] OK. Well great. Well, let's, let's get started. And I will try to give a little context to when and where this is happening.

David Todd [00:03:51] It is June 14th, 2021. And my name is David Todd. I'm representing the Conservation History Association of Texas and I'm here in Austin. And we are fortunate to be conducting an interview with John Dawson, who worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in southeast Texas, as I understand it, during the time of the '70s and maybe into the early '80s (we'll learn more about that), when red wolves were being collected in the state as part of their restoration program. He's based in Athens, Texas. And so this interview is being done by telephone.

David Todd [00:04:34] We usually start these interviews by just asking a little bit about your childhood, and I was curious if there was any, any event or any people that might have been a big influence in your interest in working with animals and, of course, these red wolves in particular?

John Dorsett [00:04:53] Well, I guess the reason I got into wildlife, we got to go back when I was born, my dad had just bought 88 acres south of San Antonio. He had been in the grocery store business with another man and they'd sold that store and he had used the money to buy that land and the materials. He built him a concrete block house. Anyway, from the time I was an infant until I was about 10 years old, we lived out there on that 88 acres and I loved it. But then he was, I guess, going to make a living, farming and raising chickens and a few cows.

John Dorsett [00:05:32] But the drought of the '50s pretty much changed that, you know, it was, got to be hard times. So he went to work as a carpenter and then he got on as a civil service employee at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. We had a '48 Plymouth and that drive back and forth, he just knew he couldn't stay up there at the place and continue with the job he had. He had to, you know, make a living for the family. He had to keep that job. So anyway, that man he had been a partner with made him a deal on two old apartment houses in down, almost downtown San Antonio. I could walk to the Alamo in 15 minutes from where we lived. And so we moved from an 88-acre little farm to a quarter-acre in downtown San Antonio.

John Dorsett [00:06:23] And it was my goal, I guess from then on, that I wanted a job where I could get back outside. I knew that. I watched my dad. He wasn't happy doing the clerk work at Fort Sam. And, and I, I don't know. I wondered if we'd have stayed out there, what if I'd have got into wildlife, or if I had some, some other route, I might have gone into some kind of agriculture. I don't know what, you know, you never know where. I might have not even been able to go to school.

John Dorsett [00:06:53] But, anyway, we got to San Antonio and I was, I spent the rest of my teenage years there. But I was fortunate that I had some uncles and that would take me hunting. And, and then later on, after my dad kind of caught up (we had a lot of work on those apartments), but, you know, we'd go hunting together. So I got to hunt. So I got to go out. But, you know, I'd kind of lost that being out in the country. And so anyway, that's how I decided to get into wildlife and really not that I was, you know, I enjoyed hunting and that kind of thing, and but I didn't know anything about wolves, that's for sure, at that time.

David Todd [00:07:38] Sure. Well, and was there's something about living on this 88 acres south of San Antonio that you recall that that really was, was fun and interesting for you?

John Dorsett [00:07:53] Well, I just liked being out. You know, I could plant a garden and had animals. We had, you know, a few farm animals. And of course, there was, we didn't have any deer out there. It was south east of San Antonio towards Floresville that time. There's a few deer there now, I guess, and even some hogs there now, like everywhere. But, you know, we had coyotes and rabbits and we'd go rabbit hunting and, and, you know, there was always varmints coming around my house. And I just, I just really enjoyed it. You know, to me, it was a disgrace if you were a city kid. I had a cousin that lived in the city. And when he'd come out, you know, I don't know. I just liked being a country kid.

David Todd [00:08:42] Yeah, I understand. Well, and aside from your, your dad and uncles and just, you know, having a home in the country when you were very young, were there any

teachers or people during your schooling who might have said, you know, things that were inspiring or encouraging for you to pursue wildlife?

John Dorsett [00:09:09] Yeah, well. I liked biology, and when I was at high school, I went to Jefferson High School there in San Antonio and had a biology teacher, Charles Bender, and I did pretty good. And he, I was his, he made me his little assistant, you know, lab assistant, I guess they called it. And he was kind of active in the Audubon Society. And I went out with him a few times on winter Christmas bird counts. But I don't know, he really didn't push me towards wildlife. You know, I'm trying to think on how I determined. I guess, you know, I knew about biologists, Parks and Wildlife folks and stuff and, and I just can't remember what it was, I guess, in high school. Yeah, I knew I was in high school because I remember telling a girl that's what I was going to do: I was going to major in wildlife. But how I determined that, I don't remember.

David Todd [00:10:10] Sometimes it's just something you pick up by osmosis, you know?

John Dorsett [00:10:15] Yeah. Like, I think I was wanting something where I could work out. I didn't want to be stuck in an office like my dad was. And I didn't figure I could make it in agriculture because I just didn't have the you know, of course, I didn't have experience in wildlife either, but, but, you know, I didn't figure I'd be able to make it in agriculture anyway, so I just chose the wildlife field and pursued it.

David Todd [00:10:41] You know, some people have a book or even a movie or TV show that they remember was just a real big impact on them. Is that the case with you or?

John Dorsett [00:10:56] No.

David Todd [00:10:56] Or not so much?

John Dorsett [00:10:58] No, I don't I don't recall any, any movie that I watched that influenced me to go into wildlife. Really don't.

David Todd [00:11:07] Yeah. All right. Well, you know, maybe the next stage would be just to talk about how you found your way to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in particular, getting involved with the red wolf project, which I guess went on from '75 through '80, if I'm not mistaken.

John Dorsett [00:11:28] Yes. Well, start back on how I got on. I ended up, I went to San Antonio Junior College for a couple years and got a bachelor's, I mean, not a bachelor's, an associate degree in biology and then transferred those hours to A&M and got my wildlife science degree up there, Bachelor of Science at A&M and got out December of '71 is when I graduated. And I remember at A&M, well, I don't ever remember anybody even mentioning the red wolf in classes. If they did, it passed by me. But I did remember reading an article about them and I just, you know, I didn't ever feel I'd have the opportunity to work with them. In fact, when I was at A&M, we'd have these job seminars and it was kind of depressing. They'd just tell us - people are not, you know, they're just not hiring. Parks and Wildlife wasn't hiring. I'd worked one summer as an intern at Columbus, Texas, for Parks and Wildlife, but it was just pretty depressing on the job situation.

John Dorsett [00:12:36] So I decided I'd better get something out of this degree. So I started taking electives towards teaching, and then stayed an extra semester and did my student

teaching at the high school there at College Station. But after I did that, I knew I wasn't cut out to be a teacher. So I put my teaching certificate in the lockbox and that's where it stayed in.

John Dorsett [00:13:01] Anyway, I went back home. And the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Rodent and Predatory Animal Control Service were a cooperative program to do animal damage management in Texas. They worked, they were all across most of the western United States and part of the east. And they had an office there: state office was in San Antonio. So when I got home, I took my resume (which wasn't much: I'd worked at Parks and Wildlife), and my transcript down to their office. And the state director at that time was Milton Caroline. The day I went in, he wasn't there, but I left, left it with his administrative assistant and told him I was, you know, looking to see if they had any jobs. Anyway, it was just a few days later, Mr. Caroline called me and asked me to come in for an interview, and I did. And he said he was going to have a rodent control specialist job open in Victoria in July. This was probably in May. And, you know, he said, "if you're interested, I'll hire you." And I said, "well, yeah, I was." I was going to go for anything.

John Dorsett [00:14:19] Anyway, it was interesting. That day, Curtis Carley, who was doing coyote research down in South Texas and he and Fred Knowlton were in the office. So I met Curtis that day that I interviewed. Didn't know he's going to be my boss in a couple of years or so. And so anyway, Mr. Caroline, he asked me what I was doing in the meantime, and I said, "Well, you know, nothing." So he said, "Well, you want to work in the warehouse for a couple of months and then when we're ready, send you to Victoria, we will." So anyway then I worked in the warehouse.

John Dorsett [00:14:50] And then when I moved to Victoria in July, I was there a few months, and then they moved me up to College Station because we had a district office in the administration building there at A&M. A fellow named Virgil Parsons was the district supervisor. There was nine districts in Texas. In this animal damage control work, it was, you know, everything from predators to rodents at that time, mainly. And of course, now it is, the name has changed to Wildlife Services. And we're now not under Fish and Wildlife anymore. It's what - agriculture - USDA. And the, but the Texas part of it, the Rodent Predator Animal Control was kind of an offshoot with, it was tied in with A&M Extension Service. So it was a cooperative program. Mr. Caroline was a Fish and Wildlife employee, a federal employee.

John Dorsett [00:15:43] And so anyway, they sent me to Victoria and I started out helping pass out anticoagulant rat bait down on the border in low-income areas. And I worked on gophers and beavers up in East Texas. And then they, we were doing, Fish and Wildlife was doing a coyote census all across the West. They would, it was set up, I was trying to remember, I think it's about like a, I know it was pretty long lines. I think it might have even been 15 miles. But I know it was long because they wanted a straight line. That was kind of hard to do. And about every, can't remember if it was every quarter-mile or half-mile, we'd scratch out a three-foot circle, where you could see tracks. And then put a, it was a fermented egg capsule in the middle for bait. And this was supposed to be standardized all across the West. And anyway, they were doing one in southeast Texas, and Mr. Caroline sent me down there to work with Glynn Riley on that census line, help him out with it.

John Dorsett [00:16:45] So I went down there. And that's when (I had met Glynn on going at a meeting one time before that), but anyway, that's when I guess I first really got introduced to red wolves is when I went down there on that and talked to him about it. And then Glynn, it's 1968, I guess they declared the red wolf endangered. And there was a fellow named John Steele. I never did meet him. He was down there about a year. Then he left and Glynn was up

in Lubbock working, as a specialist. Anyway, Mr. Caroline knew that Glynn Riley was really interested in wolves. I mean, he had, I guess, studied them all for a long time. He'd started trapping when he was nine years old. Anyway, he sent Glynn down to Liberty, Southeast Texas and try to get a handle on what was going on with wolves. You know, they knew there was a problem, that there wasn't very many, they didn't think, many left, but they weren't sure what was, how many was there. And, and so Glynn was down there kind of doing that, plus answering predator problems that the ranchers had. And then, you know, of course, if he caught any wolves, he was, he, I think he actually sent some to Tacoma already.

John Dorsett [00:18:07] But Glynn was also, he got to know Dave Mech that was doing the gray wolf study up in Minnesota on Isle Royale, and Dave would have him come up a couple of months every fall and trap gray wolves for him, for their studies. They were doing, putting radios on them. And Glynn was kind of thinking about going up there, transferring up there permanent. So then Mr. Caroline decided he would, he called me and asked if I was interested in going down there as a technician and would get on as federal. So I said, "Sure".

John Dorsett [00:18:47] And so the next, I guess that was in May of '73, I got on as a federal employee, as a biological technician, and they sent me down to Liberty to work with Glynn. And the idea was that if Glynn left and I guess Mr. Caroline was going to move me into that position, which would have - I wasn't ready for that. Glynn didn't go, thank goodness. And things changed because I didn't know, I never had set a trap in my life. I didn't know anything about wolves.

John Dorsett [00:19:20] So anyway, I helped Glynn there for the next year or so, and then I guess in '74 is when, well in '73, the Endangered Species Act was passed and Fish and Wildlife decided that the red wolf was a, was a priority animal that they wanted to try to do something with. And that's when they selected Curtis Carley to head up the program. And he came in '74, I think it was. And we moved, of course, Glynn and I were at Liberty, but they decided to put the office in Beaumont, and so I moved from Liberty over to Fannett, which is a little town just about 10 miles out of Beaumont and Glynn stayed in Liberty, though we were working under the Beaumont office, at that time. So, anyway, that's how I got on the wolf, the wolf program. I just kind of happened to be at the right place at the right time.

David Todd [00:20:20] That's interesting.

John Dorsett [00:20:21] Yeah, I know there was probably a lot of guys that were more qualified than me that could have gotten that job. But I was just lucky Mr. Caroline, I don't know, I guess he took a liking to me. And anyway he selected, asked me if I wanted to do it. Well, I jumped at it.

David Todd [00:20:41] Yeah, yeah. So sort of to set the stage, this is about 1974 when you get moved to, well near Beaumont, to work on this. And can you help us understand a little bit of the background to why the red wolf populations and range had declined so much, and why it was declared endangered and why, you know, y'all were working on this effort to capture and help start restoring them.

John Dorsett [00:21:17] Well, you know, from the historical records, it looked like the red wolf, you know, went up in central Texas and up into the southeast United States at one time. Apparently, they were found in those areas. You know, predators, of course, you know, what you read in the literature was that there was, you know, bounties on them, there was hunting pressure, there was habitat loss, and then, which caused some decline. And but apparently

this I guess what was the biggest detriment to them was that they would interbreed with coyotes and there was getting to be a lot of coyotes in that area. And, of course, it caused to be hybrids. And then apparently with the, you know, you get more animals - it just dilutes the species.

John Dorsett [00:22:15] And apparently, when I got on the program, just the last few wolves were down there in pretty much southern Liberty, kind of, really if you took Interstate 10 as your northern boundary, most all the wolves we caught were south of that, down towards the coast. And mainly, and kind of started off, we were even working some over towards Angleton in that area, but they were, we didn't find any there. So it's pretty much from Chambers County, where Anahuac is, and then Jefferson County, where Beaumont is, and then some over in southwest Louisiana in Calcasieu Parish and Cameron Parish. I never did work in Cameron Parish, but Calcasieu, which is right across the Sabine River, we did find some animals over there that were wolves.

John Dorsett [00:23:14] But anyway, I guess the hybridization was the biggest threat. And when we started, when I first got down there, they had kind of talked about trying to establish a buffer zone where you would try to trap out the hybrids and coyotes, you know, north of that area where the wolves were. But that, that was just an impossible task. You couldn't have had enough trappers. And even if you had, you couldn't, you know, caught enough to stop them from influxing into the rest of the red wolf area. And plus, there was already some hybrids down there, already. So they decided pretty quick that a buffer zone wasn't going to work. And it probably be the best bet would be a captive breeding program.

David Todd [00:23:59] Why do you think the coyotes were so successful and spreading so fast and so far during those years?

John Dorsett [00:24:09] Oh, I don't know. When I talked to, you know, of course, I didn't know a whole lot about them at that time, but I think coyote's just a real adaptable animal. You know, they live in cities. I have a nephew, lives up in Richardson, in Dallas, and he's got coyotes in that neighborhood. I mean, they just adapt. You know, Austin, a few years ago, we had a specialist that worked in Austin catching urban coyotes. So they're an adaptable animal and of course, you know, canines can crossbreed and I guess they just, you know, I don't like it. I guess that's just they're just so adaptable that then they became prolific and wolves and coyotes at times interbreed, and that kind of started this hybrid swarm, they talked, that they would call it.

David Todd [00:25:12] You know, another question I had, I think that you mentioned that you all tried trapping as far south and west as Angleton. Was there any effort to trap on some of the coastal barrier islands like Galveston?

John Dorsett [00:25:35] I don't know if Glynn had done any trapping down there or not, but not while I was there. We didn't go towards Galveston at all. Of course, Galveston, you know, it didn't have a whole lot of area. But, no, we limited all, most of our work, like I say, was in Chambers, Jefferson and Calcasieu Parish, for the most part, and a little bit in southern Liberty. And, but no, we didn't, I don't ever remember going into Galveston County.

David Todd [00:26:07] And so tell us a little about when you're seeking out these, these red wolves and they're pretty secretive, from what I've heard, and there weren't many to begin with. How would you find them to then capture them?

John Dorsett [00:26:23] Well, we would, of course, look for tracks and they left a pretty good-sized track, and when you found those, you had, you know, that you probably had a wolf in the area. We also use siren census. We would blow sirens to get them to howl. And you know, it's hard for me to describe the difference in the howls, but you could kind of tell it wasn't a coyote, and we didn't concentrate on those areas.

John Dorsett [00:26:57] And there was quite a few good-sized ranches down there. And Glynn had done a lot of work and got along well with the ranchers. And they would let us in. Of course, they wanted them. You know, they, some of them, they lost some calves and stuff to them and to the other animals, hybrids or coyotes that were there. So they were willing for us to trap them.

John Dorsett [00:27:24] And, but mainly, you know, we'd look for tracks. In southeast Texas, you know, that prairie grass is tall and it's thick, but you got ranch roads, canals, crossings on dikes and where the roads crossed the canals and cow trails. And like Glynn used to say, he said, "coyotes and wolves, they're going to follow the easiest path." So that's where we'd look for our tracks and stuff, you know, down. We'd have to get up early and beat the traffic where the cows, before they tromped up the tracks, but and look on those roads and find where tracks were. And then, of course, it rained down there a lot and you could find tracks in the mud. And then, that's, you know, we'd find, that's where we'd set our traps along those roads, canal crossings and dikes, wherever, you know. Places where we would find a sign of the wolves or coyotes or whatever.

David Todd [00:28:25] That's interesting. And, and say you start getting a sense of where they are by looking for tracks, as you say, on the roads or the canal crossings. Did you have some sort of, a kind of, a system for mapping them or how would you know keep track of all these?

John Dorsett [00:28:46] Primitive! Kind of primitive then. We had a map and I guess Curtis had gridded it off. And when we would catch an animal, we would mark on that map, you know, where it was caught, with a pin. And of course, every animal we caught, no matter what it was coyote, hybrid we thought, or if we thought it was a wolf, we kept those animals. At the beginning, everything we caught, we kept alive until, you know, Curtis and some of us could look at it. Later on is when, you know, we obviously could tell it was a coyote, we'd kill it in the field. But, we would save the skull. We'd take measurements on it. We'd measure the shoulder, the ear, the muzzles, the tail, weigh it, describe its appearance. And then if we killed the animal, we kept the skull. We put, and those skulls were tagged, so they would correspond, you know, each animal was assigned a number. That number would go with whatever specimen we saved. And those were usually put in the freezer until we had time to clean them.

John Dorsett [00:30:03] If the animal appeared to be a wolf, of course we did, you know, we did all the data collection. And then we came up with the idea of X-raying the skulls. And because we needed, the skull gave you a lot of information about whether an animal's a wolf or a coyote. There's some differences, there are size differences and things that other researchers had done in the past, that come up with these parameters.

John Dorsett [00:30:33] So, of course, live animal, we can't see his skull, so we started X-raying these animals and I don't remember who it was, somebody donated us an X-ray machine. It was pretty old, but it worked. And we had it in our office. And the animals that we thought might be wolves, we would X-ray their head. We'd take a superior view with their head laying, you know, flat from up above, and we'd also take a lateral view. And of course, the

X-rays, when you measured them, were a little different than the actual skull, so we had what we had done, we'd X-rayed some skulls of animals that we'd had, and then compared the X-ray with the actual skull and try to get, you know, so we could kind of give you the what differences you had. And, anyway, the local hospital would develop the X-rays for us. We'd take them down to St. Elizabeth Hospital there in Beaumont and they would develop it for us. And of course, you know, each one of those X-rays had the number of the wolf on it.

John Dorsett [00:31:43] And we, I think I worried more about X-raying those animals than anything, because we wore, you know, the aprons and gloves, but we pretty much had our heads right up there close to that X-ray machine, especially when after later in life, I started getting X-rays and I see the technician leave the room when she clicked the button. But I guess we all survived it.

David Todd [00:32:11] Yeah, yeah. Well, this is fascinating - this whole challenge of trying to sort out the coyotes and the hybrids and the feral dogs and the wolves. Can you talk a little bit about what it was that you were looking for to distinguish a wolf from all the animals that you really weren't interested in?

John Dorsett [00:32:40] A lot of it was size. You know, they had to meet, Curtis had established some, over time, what the size of a wolf should be, what was the minimum standards on it and also like the skull, the length, the width, the different parts of the skull, the appearance of the animal. They kind of had, they were, eyes were more wide-set. Their muzzles, I don't know, their muzzles, they had a lighter color that came up higher on their snout than on the coyote. The coyotes just had a thin white kind of, more along their lips, where the wolf was, was lighter-colored further up the muzzle. Some coloration, but, you know, coloration varied. You really, that wasn't the prime thing. It was mostly, I think, skull measurements. And that's why the X-ray became important. And and then if they met the external measurements and weight, we were looking for animals that were maybe in the 50-pound range for males and in least high 40s for females, somewhere in that area, I can't remember exactly. But they were, you know, if they were adults and they, they only weighed 40 pounds or 30 pounds, they probably weren't a wolf. But of course you had to age them, because you could have young animals that would not be as big yet. So if ..

David Todd [00:34:17] And you'd age them.

John Dorsett [00:34:18] Some of it I guess... Pardon me?

David Todd [00:34:19] No, I was just curious if you'd age them by their, their teeth structure or what.

John Dorsett [00:34:24] Yeah. Well, yeah, tooth. And of course, you know, if you kill the animal and look at the skull, you could tell a lot more on the age because the sutures would be solidified. On a younger animal, they're real loose, you know, and they, and especially under I can't remember exactly, underneath there's a bone that takes several years, but you can't see that on a live animal. So we'd have to look at their teeth, especially the incisors and how much they were worn. If they had sharp cusps on them, they were still pretty young. But if they were wore down, starting getting to be flat at the front, that was a good indication that they had some years on them.

David Todd [00:35:09] OK.

John Dorsett [00:35:09] So it was just mostly skull measurements though. And it's, you know, and leg and that sort of thing.

David Todd [00:35:19] You know, I'd read somewhere that some of the identification used electrophoresis.

John Dorsett [00:35:29] Yeah.

David Todd [00:35:30] To look at the DNA. Had that, started when you were there or was that later?

John Dorsett [00:35:34] But I think it was just barely started. I didn't have anything, any activity with that. I think Curtis maybe had gone over and talked to some folks in Houston at the Medical Center about it or somebody. But it wasn't, it's a shame it wasn't available then because that, I mean, I'd guess DNA would be the definitive answer, but we didn't have that. So we were pretty much had to make decisions on measurements.

David Todd [00:36:04] Well, so you talked a little bit about how you would find these, these animals and how you'd sort them. Well how would you go about actually capturing them? How did you trap them? I understand there's also a helicopter darting that was being done. And maybe you can talk about that.

John Dorsett [00:36:23] Well, we did do some helicopter work a little later. When we first started, of course, when Glynn was down there, you know, it was all traps. And we, we caught most of, I guess, a lot of our animals with traps because helicopter time was expensive. And we didn't we didn't have, we might have got 20 hours a year, which is not much. So we would, we mainly trapped them and we used, of course, you know, we were trying to, we didn't want to hurt these wolves as much as possible, but you had, you couldn't catch them in live traps. And we used number four Newhouse traps with a chain, about a six-eight foot chain with a drag on it. And the Newhouse trap has a rounded jaw. It's a, if people are familiar with traps know that a Victor trap has got a real thin jaw and it'll cut a lot worse than a Newhouse. The broader jaw, you know, put more, you know, you had a wider space to hold onto the foot. They did get foot damage. I mean, I'm not going to say they never did, but they did.

John Dorsett [00:37:35] But we also, we would make tranquillizer tabs out of cloth and we had a chemical called Tranvet that we used, and I don't remember exactly the dosage, but I kind of remember we had a .38 capsule, a .38 shell that we had a wire on it. That was what we dipped with. And I think Glynn determined that was the right amount, probably he'd weighed it out in the past, put it in that cloth and we had a way that we folded it up, folded it over, and then used high-tensile wire to tie it together and left two tails on it that we could tie it to the trap. And then we would dip those capsules that we'd made in paraffin to make it waterproof and make them hard too. Anyway, and then we would tie them, you know, you had to tie them pretty securely on to the back jaw and we'd put one on each side of the back jaw. And that way when the animal was caught, about one of the first things they did, they would start biting those tabs because we'd find them, you know, pieces of them laying right there by the trap hole. And if they got a good dose of it, it wouldn't knock them out completely though it would make them groggy enough that they may drag off a little ways and then lay down and we could find them.

John Dorsett [00:39:02] The reason we didn't, we used drags is because we didn't want them, if we had, if you staked that trap where the animal's caught and he's pulling against a solid

object, he's going to do more damage to his foot. Whereas if you have a drag and he gets hung in the brush, you know, when they jerk that that brush will kind of give. Plus it allows them to get off the roadways and things where we were trapping. And, you know, ranch roads, we didn't trap on public roads, but ranch roads. And in that way, people didn't see them and the animal felt more secure, you know. And but there were times when they didn't get a good dose and sometimes you had to hunt the trap for a good while to try to find them. You had to follow the drag marks. And so we spent a lot of time sometime hunting them after they got in the trap. But anyway, that was it.

David Todd [00:39:56] Mm hmm. So you would trap mostly at night. Is that right?

John Dorsett [00:40:00] Well.

David Todd [00:40:00] Do your rounds in the morning and try to find them?

John Dorsett [00:40:04] Yeah you'd set your traps and then we had, of course, down there, because since we were working with an endangered species, we were trying to save the wolves, we had to run those traps every day. We couldn't allow them to stay. Because of one thing, the tranquilizer would wear off. And then, you know, so we were running our traps every day. If we couldn't get to them on a weekend then we'd pull them up or cover them and then, you know, start the next week again. But we would set the traps wherever we had found areas we wanted to, you know, trap, looking for signs, trying to find the right places to set the trap. Canal crossings made it pretty easy down there because that narrowed down the, when they were using those canal crossings, it was, you know, it would narrow them down pretty good and it was a good place to catch them. Like I say, we caught them, you know, ranch roads, cow trails, and a lot of different places. But, yeah, we had, they would normally get caught, you know, during the night or early morning when they were active.

David Todd [00:41:16] And I think you did mention that, from time to time, you had access to a helicopter, not often, but how would you do the darting from the helicopter?

John Dorsett [00:41:27] Well, yeah, we, I guess, I can't remember what year we started that probably, and I know we were doing in '76. We contracted with a helicopter company called Saber Helicopter out of San Antonio. The fellow that owned it and operated it, by the name of Durwood Blasingame. I don't know if Durwood had ever flown, done that kind of work or not. I kind of think he hadn't. But anyway, I don't know how Curtis, you know, found him, but he did. And he would trailer his helicopter over to our area there. He flew a Bell 47. It's like the old helicopters they used in Korea and well, the ones you'd see on this television show, MASH? That's what it looked like. Anyway, we'd, it had an area on the side and we could, we would strap a cage on to it and we would use some dart guns that, I guess they still do, I don't know. I'm sure they've advanced a lot since we'd used those.

John Dorsett [00:42:38] But they had CO2 cartridges, was your propellant. And the dart had a little, oh, kind of, I don't know, I call it a cloth end, kind of like a, little strings of cloth at the back of it to help it fly straight. And it was a pretty good gauge needle. I mean, it was pretty good size. And you'd fill your case, the dart case, which was probably three, I don't know how big around it was, but kind of like about the size of my little finger, I guess, with the chemical in it. And I can't remember what we were using at that time to tranquilize them with.

John Dorsett [00:43:26] And then we would of course, we would do ground work again, just like for trapping. We'd look for areas where we thought wolves were because with only a

limited amount of flying, you didn't want to waste it on areas where you didn't think you were going to find anything. And we would, you know, then look. But after, then we also started using an airplane as a, since airplanes were cheaper to rent. We would take off in the airplane in the morning and, because we would do most of this starting in early morning when the animals were still kind of active, right after daylight. We would fly with the airplane and see if we could spot anything moving.

John Dorsett [00:44:07] And, and if we spotted an animal, then we could radio the helicopter that would be sitting within the area we wanted to fly. And we would direct them to the, to where we saw the animal. And then we would just sit up there and circle and keep our, try to keep our eye on the animal until the helicopter got there.

John Dorsett [00:44:28] And then if we, if we didn't see anything with the airplane, then the helicopter would go ahead and take off and the airplane would also, would fly "cover", we called it, and stay above the helicopter because we could stay up a lot higher and see more area than what you can on a helicopter when you're flying, flying low, you know, when things might move out ahead of you or to the side. And so we'd use that to try to make the most out of our helicopter time. And those were those were the kind of methods that animal damage control had been using in their aerial, you know, predator work.

John Dorsett [00:45:04] So when we saw an animal you wanted to dart, you'd try to get him in a open area, and there we would get behind him and start chasing him and he would get us pretty close. We would be flying, oh, I bet you we weren't 20 feet off the ground. And then we'd get a shot that was, you know, just right out in front of the helicopter because these dart guns are not going to reach out long range. And we would try to hit him in the hip or upper area. And we did pretty good at it, to tell you the truth. We, Curtis, he started darting, and then he let another fellow that worked with us - Bill Wagner. And he would let us all have a chance at doing it and, you know, so we'd get training. And so I think I darted a couple, three animals or so. But it was, it was pretty exciting at that time.

David Todd [00:46:05] I bet.

John Dorsett [00:46:08] And when we, after we we'd darted the animal, of course we'd follow it then. It'd take it, you know, a few minutes to finally be tranquilized. And when it was, then he would land close to it and we'd go out and had a catch pole on there too and put on it. Of course it'd be pretty well knocked out and then load it in that cage and they would fly it back to the ground crew where we had some other cages and we could transfer it to another cage and then they could go off look for another one.

David Todd [00:46:42] And so once you've got these animals, what did you see, you know, were they in good health? Poor health?

John Dorsett [00:46:54] Some of them were in real good health, I mean, they just looked like beautiful wolves. Of course, southeast Texas, hot area, and they didn't ever have a lot of, you know, fur on them and stuff like you would, like a northern wolf. But yeah, we had some animals that looked real healthy. And we had some that, the biggest ones that looked the worst, were those that had sarcoptic mange. There was mange down there. And we would, I don't know if you've seen them, I know you've probably seen these pictures, what people call "chupacabras", which is a mangey coyote. Well, we had chupacabra wolves, I guess, because we had a few of them that had that. And, oh, they were, I mean they were in horrible shape.

There's, they don't, you know, they just have scraggly hair. Their skin is dry and crusty. And it was caused, that sarcoptic mange, is caused by a mite.

John Dorsett [00:47:52] And they, one time a rancher, a rice farmer, brought in some pups that he had found. They were just covered with mange and we kept them in. And we had a veterinarian, Buddy Long, who lived at Winnie, that was, I mean, he was interested in the wolf program and he donated all his time. He had two big pens behind his house that were about 50 by 50 that we would keep wolves in at times. And he was, he provided lots of medical attention to these wolves at no charge just because he liked the project. And I always, a picture somewhere of Buddy and, and Curtis and myself bathing one of these wolves with some kind of antiparasitic shampoo that Buddy had. And you do that two or three times, they would finally start healing up and hair'd start coming back. And those pups that the guy brought in, we were able to save them. They didn't. I remember I don't think they went in the captive breeding program, but we did put some, I think, radio transmitters on them one time releasing them again.

John Dorsett [00:49:06] But anyway and then, of course, heartworms. There are a lot of mosquitoes down on the coast. They had, some of them, had heartworms. Pups would get distemper. But the thing, I guess the sarcoptic mange was the thing that wolves would really look unhealthy. If they had heart worms and stuff, you know, unless they were just about to die, you really couldn't tell it. And we didn't treat them for heartworms. The heartworm medicine, they had a big bunch of heartworms in their hearts, if you treated it and killed those heartworms, you'd probably kill the animal. And we would look at, you know, some of the animals that we had taken and killed, we'd cut their hearts open and look, and oh gosh, there'd be heartworms all in them. So that was kind of a, you know, they had just a lot of parasites along the coast, hot climate.

David Todd [00:50:09] So I gather you had to hold these animals for a good while. How would you feed them?

John Dorsett [00:50:18] Well, we started out, when I first got down there, there was just a big population of nutria. And Anahuac refuge, they would let us use their marsh buggy and go out in the marsh on the refuge and we would, we would shoot nutria. You know, we might take a day or two and go shoot nutria, and just fill the freezer up. They had some freezers there at the refuge that we kept rabbits and nutria in. And because we also had some holding pens there at the refuge that had been built, I guess maybe when John Steel first biologist was there. I'm not sure when they were built, but they were there when I was there. And we kept some animals there so we would, we had food available. But later on, when the nutria kind of died out, it was harder to come by and we had to start feeding them, you know, dog food.

John Dorsett [00:51:16] And of course, when you have animals in pens, the pens down at the refuge were probably, there was two sets of them. They sat on a concrete slab. And there were probably four, four or five, pens in each one of those sets. And they were probably four foot by eight or four foot by ten, something like that. We'd have a, put a doghouse in the back, a wooden house for him to get back there. And of course, you, and then on those pens, they had a side door that you could go in and kind of had a walkway in front of the other pens, so you had a kind of a double enclosure, so you'd walk in and close that door and then you could open the individual pens. And, you know, if you're holding animals and you got to feed them, you know, about every day or every other day, and make sure they have water.

John Dorsett [00:52:10] And then you had to clean those pens. So I spent a lot of time cleaning pens with a, we'd use a hose with high pressure. When you fed them nutria and rabbits, it was easier to clean up because they had hair in the scats. But when they started to feed them dog food, it got to be kind of a mess that, you know, they didn't have much area and they'd pack it on their paws and it would, oh gosh, you know, you really had to work, you know, keep them clean.

John Dorsett [00:52:38] And then Buddy Long had his pens. He had, like I say, about two. I think they were about 50 by 50 or so. They were pretty good-sized pens and we kept a few animals there. And then we had some holding cages at our office that we'd actually hold some animals there for short times, for different reasons. Sometimes when they had the mange, when we were treating them, sometimes when we were fixing to put radios on them, or fixing to ship them off or whatever. So we had animals scattered around at Anahuac refuge, at Winney and then at Beaumont.

David Todd [00:53:13] I see, well, you mentioned about shipping these wolves. I gather that you developed some of the first systems for, for shipping and handling wolves that were going either to Tacoma to be bred or to, I guess, Bulls Island, or elsewhere to be released. How did you go about handling these animals?

John Dorsett [00:53:40] Well, I guess Curtis actually made the arrangements, but we had, we had some shipping cages that I don't know if they had come from the military or if where he got them. They were aluminum shipping cages and had doors with, you know, had bars, you know, small openings and you could see in there. And the sides of the cages had holes in them, probably a couple of inches in diameter or maybe a little smaller. But they had, you know, where you could get air circulation and everything. They were three foot by two and a half or so. They're pretty good-sized shipping cages.

John Dorsett [00:54:24] And we would, we would take them to Houston Intercontinental Airport and send them on Continental air freight. In fact, they'd go on airliners that were going up to Tacoma and they'd just have them in the freight compartment, you know, underneath all the passengers, I guess. And usually we'd ship one, one or two at a time - a lot of times, two. I know we'd take them over to the airport and meet the airport personnel and they'd load them and they'd kind of, you know. Curtis kind of arranged all that. But and, like I say, I can't remember where we got all those cages from, but we got to, like I say, I think they were army surplus or they were, somehow, they'd come up with these animal cages for shipping

David Todd [00:55:15] And, you know, I understood that, that pretty early on the decision was made to not just trap some of the red wolves, but to remove all of them and take them from the wild in southeast Texas and Louisiana. That must have been a pretty unusual decision. Do you know how that decision came about?

John Dorsett [00:55:40] No. I'm not exactly sure. I wasn't in on that. I was more of a technician and didn't get in on all the decision-making. But I think, what I would guess, and I think would be true, is that, you know, to have a captive breeding program, you wanted as much genetic material as you could in the, in the program to make a diversity of pure wolves. And so we were trying to catch as many good wolves as we could to put in the program. And I'm sure we didn't get them all. I imagine when we closed it off, they were somewhere, was down there, there was a few wolves left, I guess. But, you know, you kind of have the law of diminishing returns as you, when you start hunting something, and you start catching them out, eventually you're going to get down, where it's really hard to pick up those last few. But I

think that's, I think they just knew that, or they had pretty much determined that the hybridization was going to be the end of the wolf down there, so they just wanted to get as many as they could to put in the captive program. And then, you know, I think there, then the plan was to try to reintroduce them someday into their former range.

David Todd [00:57:03] You know, I've heard some folks who've sort of looked at the, the trends with these red wolves and they, they've written that you all started at a very difficult time because there are just so few wolves left and many of those were hybrids. Did y'all get the sense that it was a late-stage effort or did you have a sense of, you know, where you were in that arc of the population, the range?

John Dorsett [00:57:39] Yeah, I think, I think pretty quickly that when Curtis got down there and evaluated the situation, that he determined that we were getting down to the, down to the end of the wolf. You know, I don't know how many years they'd have lasted, you know, it's hard to say, you know, that you would keep a pure population down there. But I don't remember exactly how many wolves we put in the captive breeding program. But it, I mean, it wasn't a high number. So we were, I think we were getting pretty much to the end of the line on the wolf deal if we hadn't done anything.

David Todd [00:58:18] All right, I think that during this time you were there, so there was, there was interest in trying to educate people about what you were doing and why it was important and to try to, you know, get public support. And I think that a professor named James Kroll at Sam Houston State organized a film crew with Robert Blackwell and I guess some other folks who came down and documented what you were doing. Do you recall much about that episode?

John Dorsett [00:58:59] Yeah, Dr. Kroll. I think it was Stephen F. Austin, I believe.

David Todd [00:59:04] Oh. It very well could be.

John Dorsett [00:59:06] So I'm pretty sure. Yeah. Stephen F. Austin over in Nacogdoches. Yeah. He'd, he'd been at a meeting with, with Curtis and heard Curtis give a talk about the wolf. And I don't know, they got in a conversation. And of course, you know, this is the early stages of the endangered species program, and red wolf is one of the first animals that the Fish and Wildlife started, I guess, putting a lot of effort into. You know, and wolves are kind of a controversial animal, especially with hunters and landowners and, you know, rancher types and a lot of misunderstanding with them sometimes. So you, you know, they were trying to build a public relations program, and not just with the local people down where we were, but with, you know, just the whole country, I think, getting them educated to endangered species.

John Dorsett [01:00:04] So Dr. Kroll knew, I guess, a student, Robert Blackwell, that was doing photography. Anyway, they decided to make a movie about the red wolf that could be shown on television. I remember it, it could only be so many minutes long because they had to fit in a 30-minute time schedule, you know, with how TV has commercials and everything. And so we, we worked on that for a while. I can't remember how long, but they would come down and film us doing different things. Sirens - blowing the sirens, and, you know, trying to get wolves to howl, radio telemetry work, the X-ray, the measuring the animals, just all kinds of different things. Just kind of showed the program in general to get people educated about it.

John Dorsett [01:00:52] And I, I think, I remember seeing it one time. I can't even remember if it was actually on TV or not. But, anyway, that was, that was what that turned out to be. And I had known Dr. Kroll. It was kind of interesting. He was a graduate student at A&M when I was there and he was doing a study on, I think it was with snakes, and me and another fellow who were undergraduates, helped him with that for a little bit. And so I'd met him there. And then he came on and became a professor at Stephen F. Austin. And then, you know, ran into him down there when he was working on that film crew.

David Todd [01:01:34] Interesting. I guess it helps to do this diplomacy. You know, when you were working on this wolf program, what sort of reaction did you get? I think you mentioned a while ago that some of the landowners welcomed the idea of you collecting these wolves and taking them elsewhere. But did, can you talk a little bit about any other sort of reactions that you got, you know, either positive or negative, to the idea of saving wolves?

John Dorsett [01:02:12] Now from the local ranchers down there? Of course, Glynn had been down there a while and he, he just has a natural way with ranchers and those kind of people. And Buddy Long, who's a veterinarian at Winnie, he had a lot of contact with them. And Russ Clapper, who was the Anahuac refuge manager, had a good relationship with these ranchers. And they, we just had really good cooperation with them. And I don't, I know, you know, some of the ones that when they'd lose a calf or something, they'd be upset about it and they'd want us to come trap whatever it was, coyote or wolf, you know, they didn't care. They wanted it out of there. But then a lot of the bigger ranchers, you know, when we'd catch some and we'd wanted to do some radio telemetry work, they would let us put them back out there. Of course, we assured them they'd have radios and if we needed to catch them again, well, you know, we could find them if we had to. And, but I don't really remember a lot of resistance down there to the program. You know, Curtis might have run into some and he was more in the public relations, you know, met more people than I did on that program. But I don't remember a lot of rancher resistance or the local resistance when we were there.

David Todd [01:03:30] OK. You know, you've mentioned a couple times, in passing, radio telemetry. How did that play a part in what you were doing?

John Dorsett [01:03:43] Well, I guess, you know, the plan, the long-term plan, was to try to reintroduce wolves back into their former home range. So we were, some of the animals that were wolves that we didn't feel like would be suitable for the breeding program for various reasons, maybe the age or, or maybe they were just right on the minimum standards. So we would put radios on them and try to get some, learn about home range, travel patterns, and that sort of things that maybe it could be useful for these reintroductions in the future. So, of course, I had, Curtis had done some, I guess, some radio work in his past and Glynn had done a little bit. I think there was a graduate student who had been down there in the '70s named Robert Shaw or Jim Shaw. I can't remember.

John Dorsett [01:04:37] Anyway, Curtis, you know, set us up with radios. And we had antennas mounted on our trucks. We had hand antennas. We also, at times, would mount antennas on airplanes. We would rent and get a pilot to fly us so we could find the animals we were looking for. And he taught us how to use all that. And we'd spend, a lot of times, you know, when we'd start tracking, we'd work in relays and therefore maybe for a week tracking 24 hours, you know, different shifts and just trying to get some information. And of course, at that time you didn't have computers, you didn't have GPS. So everything had to be logged by hand on charts and things. So it was interesting, though. And we did get some data that I guess maybe somebody used in the future.

David Todd [01:05:33] So let me see if I've got a picture of this. You, say, you're in your truck or you're on foot and it's handheld, you're in a plane and, the device, your antenna, is telling you how close or far you are from the radiocollar. But is it telling you directions as well? Or how do you map where this animal is?

John Dorsett [01:05:58] Well, yes, if I can remember all this. Curtis, when he set up our antennas in the back of our truck, it put, we had a long pole that and it went through, we had like a compass wheel that, it wasn't a compass, but it was in degrees, you know, had your 360 degrees. Then the pole went up and then you had a cross pole and you had your two antennas. And, as far as distance, it was, you would kind of just have to tell on the strength of the signal, you know. If you had a real loud signal, you'd figure, well, he's pretty close. You know, if it was dim, then you figured he was far. It was kind of, I don't think, I don't remember that we could tell exactly the distance.

John Dorsett [01:06:43] But as far as direction. You'd turn those antennas, when you, when you hit a "null", they called it, a blank spot when you quit hearing the signal, then that's where you're pointed at the animal, if I remember correctly. I mean, it's been a long time. And then we would look at our little degree wheel down there and mark, you know, how many degrees, whatever, from north it was, and log that in. And then we would take readings, you know, whenever. I can't remember how often during the night, maybe every 15 minutes, or I can't remember exactly, and kind of track where the animal was going.

John Dorsett [01:07:27] And then, you know, at times, like, say, if we couldn't find them, if there's some reason we couldn't find them by our trucks, we would we would go to the air services and they would rent like a Cessna and mount antennas on their struts and then take off and look for it from the air because you get more range, that sort of thing. You know, I, I can't remember exactly, in the airplane, how we then pinpointed them. It is a little different than what we did on the ground, I just can't - it's been too long.

David Todd [01:08:07] Well, I understand. No, I'd ... thank you for reaching back this 40-plus years.

John Dorsett [01:08:13] Yes.

David Todd [01:08:16] Well, you know, one of the things I think has been interesting, just over the last decade or so, and I'm sure you've read about this as well, that that these, these hybrids have been showing up, I think most on Galveston Island. I've heard reports, some of them in southwest Louisiana, that are apparently carrying some kind of red wolf genetic material - half red wolf. And I'd be really curious to hear what your thoughts are about those sort of hybrids that have still persisted, you know, 40 plus years after the wolves were collected.

John Dorsett [01:09:06] Yes, that's interesting. I don't know if I'm smart enough to answer that one. Well, like I said earlier, I know we didn't get all the wolves and apparently there had to be some red wolf genetic material down there. Of course, now I have read that, you know, they've done some DNA work and now they're not even sure that the red wolf was a pure species or not. So, yes, I really don't know. I remember a few years ago when somebody reported that there were some animals down in Galveston that they thought might have some red wolf in them. And but then I never did really hear that they had done any DNA testing on them or anything. So I don't know. It's interesting, though, that after that many years, you

know, I don't know how long it takes to dilute genetic material over time. You know, I'm just not, I'm not that expertise on that area.

David Todd [01:10:04] Well, it's such an interesting animal because I guess there's still a lot that's not totally understood about them. Well, when you go back and you sort of look at this whole episode of your life with the red wolf, does anything else really stand out for you, any sort of take-home message that stays with you?

John Dorsett [01:10:31] Well, I mean, I was just really fortunate that I was able to work on them. I mean, that was like a, it wasn't a dream that I had, but it turned out to be a dream come true, I guess, that I didn't know I was going to get. But I enjoyed working with the animal. Well, you know, they were, even if they were, they turn out that they weren't pure species, whatever, they were a unique animal. And it was really a very good experience for me to get to work on them and, and the red wolf program, really, I mean, it helped, helped my career. And Curtis really helped, Curtis Carley, really helped my career because I started out as a technician and then he helped me get my what they call the "486 rating". That was for the civil service for biologists. And I was able to do all that while I was down there on that program. And then that helped me in the future of my career.

John Dorsett [01:11:28] So. Yeah, I'm just glad I got to work on them and it's a, it's a shame. I hope that, I don't know if the reintroduction's going to ever be successful or not because there's just so many coyotes everywhere. I don't know if you can kind of, would ever find a place you could put them where they could, you know, not have the problem with interbreeding. And so it's hard to tell what the future's going to be for them.

David Todd [01:12:00] You know, the future is always hard to read. Well, thanks for helping us understand a good deal about the history. And it's there's nothing you'd want to add, I think we could just end it there. Anything you'd like to mention before we sign off?

John Dorsett [01:12:24] Well, there was, you know, a lot of people that worked on it that I think needs some credit. And that was, of course, Glynn Riley and Curtis Carley. And Roy McBride was another one that worked on them with Glynn at times. And they, I think they were the ones that really got the program and interest in the wolf started. And, and that when it so that, you know, of course, Curtis is gone now. And Glynn's up in his 80s and so is Roy McBride and all the other folks are gone: Buddy Long who worked on them, Russ Clapper. They're all folks that spent a lot of time, devoted their lives to wildlife and to the red wolf down there have passed on. So I guess that's just, just our fate. But maybe, maybe the wolf will outlive us.

David Todd [01:13:24] Well that is a really interesting note to end on. Maybe he will. They're wily. They're wily.

John Dorsett [01:13:32] Yeah. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

David Todd [01:13:34] You know better than I.

David Todd [01:13:38] Well, thank you so much, Mr. Dorsett, for your time today. I really appreciate it and learned a lot.

John Dorsett [01:13:44] And well, I appreciate you giving me an opportunity, like I say, I hadn't thought about them in a long time. And it was kind of interesting to relive some of that.

David Todd [01:13:56] Well, good, good. I'm glad it was worthwhile for you. It certainly was really valuable for us. And I again, I wanted to thank you.

John Dorsett [01:14:02] Okey doke.

David Todd [01:14:02] All right. Well you have a good day and take care of yourself.

John Dorsett [01:14:08] All right. You too. Thank you.

David Todd [01:14:10] Bye now.

John Dorsett [01:14:11] Bye