

Interview with

**William Delmar Vickers**

Texas Ranger Captain, Retired

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Transcript corrected for clarity and abridged for relevance.  
Full transcript on file at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas.

William Vickers

Interviewer: Please tell us your full name and where you live.

William Vickers: William Delmar Vickers, I live in East Texas.

Interviewer: Most people call you?

William Vickers: I am known as D; just the initial D.

Interviewer: Was it when you were a child or just as you started in the Rangers or... ?

William Vickers: Always.

Interviewer: And you are married to Judy?

William Vickers: I am married to Judy Hyde.

Interviewer: Any children?

William Vickers: There is a total of four children and a bucket load of grandchildren.

Interviewer: They are great, aren't they? And where do your children live? Let's start with the oldest.

William Vickers: The oldest lives in India.

Interviewer: Girl or boy?

William Vickers: Girl, in Ahmedabad, India; they are Southern Baptist Missionaries.

Interviewer: Life missionaries?

William Vickers: Life missionaries. Served in Tanzania and Kenya and are now in India.

Interviewer: Do you worry about their safety?

William Vickers: Always.

Interviewer: ... and the second one?

William Vickers: The second one lives at --- and he has been there for a long time. I can't remember how long he has been there.

Interviewer: And the third one?

William Vickers: The third one is a stepdaughter and she lives in ---, Kentucky, and the fourth one is also a stepdaughter and she lives here.

Interviewer: Does that work out well?

William Vickers: Works out well, though twin granddaughters are 13 now.

Interviewer: Oh! How special, they need grandparents pretty close by, don't they?

William Vickers: Well, they have had, we have been there since they were 5.

Interviewer: Oh, that's wonderful. What a sense of security that gives them, somebody to talk to when they can't talk to mother.

William Vickers: Oh, do they talk!

Interviewer: Do you have siblings?

William Vickers: I have a sister living, Carlene is her name. She lives in Kingsland, Texas. She is the oldest child and I had a sister Ann, and she passed away 7 years ago.

Interviewer: Sorry, that's always difficult isn't it?

William Vickers: Yeah.

Interviewer: You went to high school where then?

William Vickers: I went to Andrews in Texas.

Interviewer: 30 miles out of Odessa.

William Vickers: And Odessa a time or two.

Interviewer: What was your favorite subject?

William Vickers: History.

Interviewer: Why?

William Vickers: I don't know it's always been there, history has always been –

Interviewer: Think that's because of the teacher?

William Vickers: It could be because we always had history, when I went to elementary school, there was history taught.

Interviewer: Texas history.

William Vickers: Texas history. And it was always interesting.

Interviewer: Did you play sports in high school?

William Vickers: No.

Interviewer: What did you like to do?

William Vickers: In high school, mostly after school on weekends I worked. My dad was a contractor in concrete, so I got to work.

Interviewer: Pouring concrete?

William Vickers: Pouring concrete.

Interviewer: I bet you learned a lot with that, didn't you? Were you ever in the service?

William Vickers: No.

Interviewer: What inspired you to want to be a Texas Ranger?

William Vickers: I don't know. That history is always there.: The legacy. The family members that apparently were Rangers, don't really know, not immediate family but past relatives.

Interviewer: In order to be a Ranger you have to spend how many years with DPS?

William Vickers: Well, when I came into Rangers, you did not have to be in DPS.

Interviewer: Great.

William Vickers: Mostly it was Sheriff or District Attorney investigators that were able to make it in from outside DPS.

Interviewer: And how did you do that?

William Vickers: I went to DPS in 1964 and was on highway patrol for 10 years and took a test in '74, and was promoted.

Interviewer: And when you took the test was it just written, was it physical, did they do an interview, what was the process?

William Vickers: I did written, there was an extensive written test and the people, not that I recall the number, selected for interview, maybe 50 or more, went for interview and 12 were hired out of that.

Interviewer: The Rangers are such an elite law enforcement group. What was training for the Rangers like? Did you just kind of walk into the job?

William Vickers: I didn't have any training after I got into Rangers *per se*.

Interviewer: So it was on the job training?

William Vickers: Yeah, you grow up here, your assignment is at least four counties; they are yours, take care of them.

Interviewer: Who was your captain and lieutenant?

William Vickers: Captain was Captain Rollins that brought me – he was my first captain if you will, but he died the day I showed up for work.

William Vickers: And Jay Pete Lynch was the Sergeant and he became the captain.

Interviewer: Where was your first assignment?

William Vickers: My first assignment was Snyder.

Interviewer: That's out by Humble, isn't it?

Interviewer: Were you married at that time?

William Vickers: I was.

Interviewer: And you were living where?

William Vickers: At that time I was promoted to Rangers, Georgetown.

Interviewer: And so what did your wife think of Humble and Snyder?

William Vickers: It brought us closer to home for both of us, at that time. Judy was not my wife at that time and her folks lived I think in Andrews, either in Odessa or Andrews at that time.

Interviewer: So there was a sense of coming home there?

William Vickers: Yes. We knew the country.

Interviewer: When you became a Ranger, in '74?

William Vickers: Actually first in '75.

Interviewer: What was it like? What did your job entail?

William Vickers: It entailed investigations of all sorts. We run the gamut. Depending on where you lived you had the option of working with any of the departments that's needed you, and I had four counties aside and generally they called you only on stuff that they were having problems with.

Interviewer: This was the Sheriff department or the city chief of police, something like that?

William Vickers: Whoever or the district attorney if he wanted something done.

Interviewer: Did you have a type of case that you enjoyed more than others?

William Vickers: I enjoyed all of it, but I did enjoy working paper crimes too, which most people don't like.

Interviewer: You mean like 'paper hanging'.

William Vickers: Forgeries and that kind of stuff because they do so much damage to the society and it's not really paid attention to.

Interviewer: I think that's the reason you now have to present two pieces of ID when you cash a check, isn't it?

William Vickers: It's very good reason, and there was a lot of that in West Texas.

Interviewer: Really? Why do you think that is?

William Vickers: I think it's because people move in and out so much and towns are far apart and just feel like they can get away with it.

Interviewer: Who taught you how to investigate?

William Vickers: Really there was no teaching for it. As a highway patrolman I started in level and for almost a year and moved to Williamson County which is Taylor and Georgetown, and I lived at Taylor. There were no Sheriff's office investigators or officers that worked East county or Williamson County. It was left up to a single constable and we did lot of criminal investigations, the constable died right after I got there in – there was an open opportunity.

Interviewer: What's the first big case that you remember?

William Vickers: We had fatal hit and run investigation as highway patrol and some were intriguing, the federal investigators out of Fort Hood one time asked me to help them work on a murder case that they could not spend the time they needed. And I was able to give them enough information that a murder on base, and I was able to gather enough information that I could tell them you need to be at this address and a certain time on Friday evening and they called me Monday and said your information is wrong, he was 15 minutes early.

Interviewer: Were they 30 minutes early, I hope?

William Vickers: Well, they were waiting a long time.

Interviewer: Good, that had to make you feel really good.

William Vickers: I felt really good. He is the first large crime of punishment at that time, federal it did hurt to get parole and he got 40 years; that means he is going to be there 40 years.

Interviewer: And that's a good thing and so from there where did you go next, after you spent the time doing paper hanging work?

William Vickers: You do everything. There was not as many murders in the rural areas like Snyder and Sweetwater, and I got to work on most of them that occurred in the general area, some of them out of my areas, some went off duty for vacation or whatever reason.

Interviewer: Just unique things about the Texas Rangers, isn't that, they have the freedom to go all over Texas, do they not?

William Vickers: You have the freedom to go just about anywhere and Captain Rollins was very good and his instructions were to take care of my territory and let him know if I needed anything, and he of course passed away that day. Captain Lynch followed him and gave no more instructions other than take care of business.

Interviewer: So he had the same leadership style, if you will.

William Vickers: And if I needed to go to Oklahoma just call him and tell him I am on my way to Oklahoma.

Interviewer: I have noticed that the Rangers have a certain style about them, that when they put on their badge and their gun and the belt and their hat, something changes, there seems to be a tremendous amount of authority that goes with them. Did you sense that?

William Vickers: I don't know if it was authority *per se*, but you thought you could not let down the people that had built the reputation, so you had to take care of business, whether it was investigating a minor crime that some people thought forgery was or that was a capital murder case, you felt like you couldn't let the ones before you suffer a loss if you would.

Interviewer: Standing on pretty high shoulders, uh?

William Vickers: Very.

Interviewer: How did you instill that in your people, people who come under you?

William Vickers: You don't instill it, it's there. There is a feel that slips through the cracks that you can say don't have that feeling about them, but they are few and far in between and they have already got in their mind when they get there.

Interviewer: So in essence they are perpetuating not only an image but also a responsibility?

William Vickers: Absolutely.

Interviewer: What's the most important case you remember?

William Vickers: I don't know; personally, or in my career?

Interviewer: Let's do both.

William Vickers: You couldn't say one case, one murder case was more important than another.

Interviewer: Which one was most rewarding?

William Vickers: There was one out of Fisher County, a pharmacist gave his wife some medication and put her out, put her in a bathtub of water, put an exposed electric cord under her arm and electrocuted her, and there was an ongoing fight with the police department and Justice of the Peace. JP wouldn't let the city come on the scene and they didn't know what they could do, so anyway that wasn't investigated. I was called in about a month later.

Interviewer: After the fact.

William Vickers: After the fact, everything was gone, the family was very distraught, very outraged, and they would get angry at everybody and we went on and on with this and we knew he did it.

Interviewer: Is that a gut feeling or did you have any –

William Vickers: It's just there, when they just grabbed everything that happened you knew that he was the only one that could have done this and anyway I argued the point and prevented Grand Jury from indicting him until – actually the parents of the deceased girl talked to a pathologist that was a specialist in electrocution, and he could explain everything and we thought we could get a conviction and we did.

Interviewer: That's confusing I think, because I am assuming he wanted it to look like suicide.

William Vickers: He wanted it to look like an accident.

Interviewer: That she was drowsy and –

William Vickers: There was a radio in the bathroom and it fell in the water and had the burns not been noted, the particular burns where the wires had been cut and exposed and wired back



together, it was an obvious burn but you didn't have the evidence to go with it, so it was a circumstantial case but it was worth 99 years.

Interviewer: So what did you do to break all of this open?

William Vickers: Actually the pathologist did it with his expertise.

Interviewer: Did you go to him?

William Vickers: No, the parents actually talked to him first. He was a retired military man and had in fact, just gone to work in the civilian life as a pathologist, he was able to explain all of it to the satisfaction of all of us, where he could present his testimony and what other witnesses – I couldn't testify to anything that happened because I wasn't there.

Interviewer: And a month later too.

William Vickers: And didn't have any of the scene evidence, radio was gone, everything was gone. In fact the house had been vacated and cleaned and somebody else was living in at that time. That was very satisfying.

Interviewer: I would think so, I am sure he thought he had really gotten away with something.

William Vickers: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: And he ended up in prison for how long?

William Vickers: 99 years.

Interviewer: Good

William Vickers: There is probably a possibility of parole in there.

Interviewer: At some point?

William Vickers: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you think of a case that was just humorous?

William Vickers: Lots of them are.

Interviewer: As in stupid criminals.

William Vickers: They get that way. A friend of mine son got into narcotics and that leads to other stuff and he went to penitentiary and he came back home on parole. And he got back in jail and he had let another guy talk him into escaping and we searched the town, caught the other guy

pretty quick. I actually missed him, he was hidden in a rose bush, if you can believe it and he couldn't be seen.

Interviewer: It must have been sticky.

William Vickers: And I couldn't see him in there at all. Anyway I went to a friend's house later and got information that he was there. He was full of tears, and we had lot of funny stuff. One of the kids went and hid behind the shower in the bathtub.

Interviewer: That wasn't going to be helpful.

William Vickers: He wasn't wanted for anything, he didn't have any drugs, he didn't have anything; he was just scared. Anyway I went to the bedroom and opened the closet and there was a huge pile of clothes, and I said stick your hands out now. He put his hands out; I grabbed one of them and jerked real hard. He shot out of that closet and surprisingly there was a girl sitting in his lap under those clothes.

Interviewer: Gosh and he was how old?

William Vickers: He was about 20 years old.

Interviewer: And she was how old, do you think?

William Vickers: 16, if I remember.

Interviewer: Gosh.

William Vickers: But there is lot of such things.

Interviewer: And I am sure you have seen most of them.

William Vickers: All kinds of stuff.

Interviewer: Is there a case that caused you a great deal of heart ache.

William Vickers: The ones that you can't solve, it was an 8-year-old girl that was found drowned in a small stream. Actually she was choked to death and put in a stream and it was a difficult case because of the child to begin with, and the fact that everyone involved including the child were illegal immigrants. None of them spoke English and I don't recall the part of Mexico they were from but they weren't border Mexicans, their language was different. And we thought that an uncle did it but couldn't prove it. I even had Al Clay, a Ranger out of San Antonio come up and talk to the people and he couldn't get anything out of it, and Al was good at his job and he was polygraphed, the uncle was polygraphed and we thought probably he was being untruthful but they weren't definite with it and that man actually confessed in Mexico when he was dying of AIDS, and I believe AP Davidson Ranger out of McKinney, went to Mexico and took that statement.

Interviewer: Some people do that on death bed, just to clean their pages if you will. You have a very gentle and soft manner about you, very kind, very caring and yet there has to be a toughness to instruct men, to lead men. Where does that come from?

William Vickers: Actually, you don't do much instructing in Rangers. They did as much schooling as they could but some of the supervisors at the time I came in didn't feel like you necessarily had to have a lot of schooling to do the work. Now they train a lot better, they are better prepared when they get out there. Captain Lynch called and said come to Midland I want you to go through some reports and maybe work with somebody. I went to Midland, things were very hectic because Captain had just died and I stayed there, I think 1-1/2 days, no one was available for anything. I read some reports and he said just go back and go to work.

Interviewer: It had to be really frustrating.

William Vickers: But it worked out very well as far as I had good people to work with in the territory.

Interviewer: So you were in Snyder, where did you go after that?

William Vickers: After Snyder I went to Garland.

Interviewer: That's a change.

William Vickers: It is a change and we had to be ready for that.

Interviewer: How different were things there, compared to a small town like Snyder?

William Vickers: Well, very different.

Interviewer: In what ways?

William Vickers: First off, what you were called to do was different at that time, I worked in nothing but Dallas County initially and most of those people didn't need a lot of help. They would call them for special things, you might go talk to them about what's happening in this place over here that you know about and you know, it's going on in their territory, you got lot of calls from other Rangers and other departments needing help in investigations.

David came to Garland as Sergeant and he called me one day and said, go do this for Shelby County, I think it was. They had a capital murder done and they needed some help and they had some good information and they were able to gather enough that they had to find stolen evidence from the victim and also find out where the two people involved were working. And David Barnes and myself set him up and arrested him that night, those kind of things you got to do. Statements were taken from both of them that night admitting what they had done. That was one that was a real horrendous crime. The man involved was a very vicious person.

Interviewer: Just evil, uh?

William Vickers: Absolutely evil.

Interviewer: When you began to work as a Ranger did you have certain idols or models or people that you wanted to be like? As you went through all of this did you find people that, Wow! I would like to take that personality or quality from that person?

William Vickers: I am probably not a deep thinker. Women think most stuff like that, I guess. I knew a lot of people that I thought were very good at work, excellent at their work but I never did adopt anybody else's methods. I always did what I thought was right.

Interviewer: And that's what I heard from a lot of Rangers, just do what you think is right.

William Vickers: It usually works.

Interviewer: Helps a lot and they don't have to remember all those lies. Were you were in Dallas, Dallas County when JFK was shot?

William Vickers: Oh, no!

Interviewer: That was later or earlier?

William Vickers: That was before my DPS times.

Interviewer: That was in '63 when that –

William Vickers: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you know a police officer named Jay Williams?

William Vickers: In Andrews?

Interviewer: No, in Dallas County, police officer and motorcycle cop.

William Vickers: No, did not.

Interviewer: Well, he was my uncle. Did you watch the Lone Ranger?

William Vickers: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: What did you think about him?

William Vickers: I thought it was a good child's Western.

Interviewer: But never thought about, Wow! That's what I want to do, kind of thing?

William Vickers: No.

Interviewer: How would you describe your leadership style?

William Vickers: Very laid back, you tell people you are going to work this area and for the most part that's all you have to tell Rangers. There is a couple of them I had that didn't reach that quality. One of them had the ability, I think was lacking in... maybe he wasn't positive about himself, and wouldn't go out and get the work. He did excellent work when he went out but he wouldn't go do what he needed.

Interviewer: No self-driving or self-initiating, uh?

Interviewer: There is always one or two like that.

William Vickers: Always one or two, was promoted against no issues and it happened anyway, and I inherited one when I transferred from Houston back to Dallas and...

Interviewer: Same kind of deal.

William Vickers: Same kind of deal. Very capable, wouldn't do it. No self-confidence, I think. There's some that shouldn't be promoted. And they did all right with a partner on highway patrol site and a supervisor that's right there, but when they go on their own it's different.

Interviewer: When you were a Ranger how many Rangers were there?

William Vickers: I started – there were 88, when they gave our test and they increased [the number] to 94 on that test at that time.

Interviewer: Along with that test, was there an interview; was there a physical test as well?

William Vickers: The interview, yes, and that was extensive course. It was a standardized type written test initially, two phases if I remember, one was the psychological test and then job knowledge test, separate.

Interviewer: So the job knowledge test had to come from DPS office?

William Vickers: Well, you had an advantage I would say, but they did promote someone from the outside in the same test.

Interviewer: When did they initiate the requirement of being a DPS officer?

William Vickers: Shortly after that within a few years.

Interviewer: So, you snuck in, I am kidding, do you have a hobby?

William Vickers: Doing what my boss [wife] tells me.

Interviewer: What do you all do together, do you enjoy travel?

William Vickers: We do some; not a lot, grand kids take a lot of time.

Interviewer: Do you play 42?

William Vickers: Haven't in a long time. Head up Dominos. My father almost did not lose at Dominos.

Interviewer: Really? He was that good, uh?

William Vickers: He went to the Dominos hall to play Dominos and it was a dime if he lost, he didn't lose a dime. He had Dominos that were given to him by the owner to get out of those things [not come back].

Interviewer: Please don't come back kind of thing. When did you retire?

William Vickers: Retired in 2002.

Interviewer: When you would go into some place in the full Ranger dress, did you sense that people were respectful, watching you?

William Vickers: Most people were respectful. Of course children are drawn to it, with the gun and the badge and all of this –

Interviewer: But there is also an aura there of trust or something like that.

William Vickers: Probably, but you could go just nearly anywhere dressing like we dressed, and department somewhere else, like Tucson, Arizona one time, walked into Sheriff's office and a guy hollered, hey, Texas.

Interviewer: Isn't that great?

William Vickers: yeah, I thought so.

Interviewer: Well, it is a very unique and very, very, special law enforcement agency and there seems to be that sense of do the right thing, act right, be right, do right and think right and just a real clean curtness about everyone.

William Vickers: That's true.

Interviewer: Once the influence flows downhill then you as a lieutenant, captain, whatever have to have that kind of sense, right?

William Vickers: You should have, you must have, or not as effective if you don't.

Interviewer: Where does that come from?

William Vickers: Internally I think, I never – I didn't always agree with my bosses but they were always able to express what they felt, and I never had one get upset with me for disagreeing with him, they expressed and sometimes I would win, not always.

Interviewer: So, both of them knew how to disagree without being disagreeable if you will.

William Vickers: Well, I have been disagreeable at times but it did work out.

Interviewer: The problem was the problem, not each other.

William Vickers: Yes.

Interviewer: That takes a lot of skill and maturity.

William Vickers: By the time you get into Rangers with at least 8 years law enforcement experience, you are getting up towards 30 years old at least, and so you are already gaining maturity. And if you work from DPS you work in uniform on road, you have to gain some maturity or you won't make it, there is too many variables for the uniform people, they have to group.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think it would be very difficult to approach somebody at night by yourself, as a DPS officer and not know what's going to happen with that.

William Vickers: I don't think majority, I never think about unless there is something that they see wrong with the situation.

Interviewer: There is another difference between men and women, women would always think about that.

William Vickers: I think so.

Interviewer: That's why you like them so well, that balance there. How would you describe the Rangers, what is the first question people ask you when they find out you have been a Ranger?

William Vickers: I don't know, a lot of them is just you know, so and so, a lot of people especially kids, want to know how many people you have ever killed. That's surprising how many children want to know that, a lot of children and adult boys, that's the first question.

Interviewer: I wouldn't have thought that, were you surprised by that?

William Vickers: Yes, but a lot of that is how did you get where you are.

Interviewer: Do you see a lot of people who want to go into law enforcement or go so far as to be a Texas Ranger?

William Vickers: I used to, I don't get out enough now to say that I see a lot of them now but used to, yes.

Interviewer: You have been retired now for 9 years, right?

William Vickers: Right.

Interviewer: Do you do any speaking in say, social clubs or Rotarians.

William Vickers: I haven't in a long time.

Interviewer: Well, you need to come to Odessa and do that, of course.

William Vickers: We did that, I got a lot of calls on that working and – I let somebody else do that, they need the fun of doing that.

Interviewer: So, now that you are retired, how do you spend your day?

William Vickers: It varies. I have had a number of back surgeries that limits what I can do, so a lot of my time is spent reading.

Interviewer: What do you like to read?

William Vickers: I like history.

Interviewer: Of course.

William Vickers: and believe it or not mysteries.

Interviewer: Who is your favorite author then in the mysteries?

William Vickers: There are so many of them now, that write a good mystery, a writer named Kellerman is real good.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, Jonathan.

William Vickers: Yes.

Interviewer: Psychiatric mysteries.

William Vickers: He does a good job, don't you think?



Interviewer: Very much so, I like his better than his wife's. She also writes mysteries, and his son, his son has started writing mysteries.

William Vickers: Yeah, there is a writer, and I keep saying his name right now that wrote stories about oceanographic people and it's all mystery stuff.

Interviewer: Is that [Clive Cussler]?

William Vickers: Yes.

William Vickers: I do sometimes and that's something that the family has always done, mother and sister still does. I remember trying to do things when daddy was in the navy and I was very young.

Interviewer: Let's go back again to some of the cases that you covered or you worked with, was there a particular Ranger that you enjoyed working with or perhaps out of your district, you had to interact with?

William Vickers: Not a particular one more than others. When I went to Snyder there was a lot of older folks, Charlie Hodges. You know Charlie, I am sure, you can respect Charlie for his work any day of the week and if he needed – if he someone asked him to do it and he would do it right now, you wouldn't find a better investigator than Charlie Hodges.

Interviewer: Did you work with him on a case?

William Vickers: Worked on more than one with Charlie.

Interviewer: Do you remember one that stands out for you?

William Vickers: It was theft cases, having to do with the whole field and one case Charlie called me on and he said "I need some assistance; I have informants that I cannot put out [expose]." So we moved the case if you would, and started information from my end, and it was working very good. We spent a lot of time in Odessa going from crook to crook, and every crook was in a bigger house, every move we made and the informants that could put it there initially; they both died in a plane crash.

Interviewer: Really? Were they both from Odessa?

William Vickers: They were from Midland.

Interviewer: Private plane crash.

William Vickers: Private and there was nothing sinister about it, it just happened, if I remember right. Their last name was Lowe and Son, you remember that?

Interviewer: And where did you stay in Odessa, do you remember?

William Vickers: Stayed in a lot of places in Odessa.

Interviewer: There weren't that many.

William Vickers: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: It was the Holiday Inn at one point.

William Vickers: You know where The Antler is?

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, The Antler.

William Vickers: Charlie and I did some work in the Antlers, setting up crooks, some of those paper hangers if you would, that had operated in 9 different states. We caught one of them and information was she was coming there that night, and she showed up a small U-Haul trailer full of stuff that they wrote checks for.

Interviewer: Did you find that a lot of the check writers, 'paper hangers' were women?

William Vickers: Both. Usually there is a woman involved but their leader was frequently a man. And one particular case that I thoroughly enjoyed was four brothers. They operated out of Lompoc, California, out of Big Springs, a place in Idaho, and I can almost say the word. It's a place in Washington State and they went everywhere and what caught them actually was a clerk in a store.

Interviewer: How?

William Vickers: She said something is not right about this, so she wrote down the license plate and we were able to get three of the four of them in a penitentiary.

Interviewer: Just kind of a woman's intuition.

William Vickers: Yeah, it works that way a lot. You may go in a grocery store and think well, the clerks are dumb people—they are *not*. One particular case a man and a woman were operating all over Texas, and then it got real quiet and the man walked back in the store near Amarillo, Hereford, and the clerk recognized him. It had been a little over one year, and wrote a bad check. And I am saying bad checks but they were checks that were burglarized out of business and they were very good at it and they made a lot of money at it. The brothers usually made \$5000 or \$6000 a day after a burglary, so there is a lot of money in it.

Interviewer: When you would talk to these people who had committed a crime or were suspected as such, how do you get them to talk to you?

William Vickers: I don't think I would want to answer that.

Interviewer: How would you get to start to get them to talk to you?

William Vickers: You just talk to them and it varies. Some people will never give you any information regardless. One of those brothers was very nice. He would talk about what he did, he would never give up a brother, he said what I needed, don't expect an answer.

Interviewer: What about the others?

William Vickers: They were not like him. They were a different breed.

Interviewer: Was he the oldest?

William Vickers: Yes.

Interviewer: So, you just begin to talk to them, did most people want to confess?

William Vickers: No. It varies, people own to different things like a capital murder case at Sweetwater, where you caught the guy. He was from Big Springs and he never worked, he was a dope dealer and he murdered a guy at the service station. And the Sheriff and I went to Mississippi and talked to a witness and got an identification. Anyway, got him put in jail in Fisher county because Sweetwater jail had been torn down to build a new one. And every day for 11 days I went and talked to this guy. Never would he talk but I think it was the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> day, I missed a day, anyway he sent a word, come talk to me. So Sheriff and I went over there and he said he didn't want to talk to but one. And I said, well, Sheriff. He said, no, I want to talk to you. So he sat down and gave a detailed statement of what he had done.

Interviewer: What changed?

William Vickers: I think a lot of it, I will tell you. I had a photograph of the victim that I made him look at before I locked him up first time and I think that made the difference, it just kept bothering him.

Interviewer: Did you bring it in every day or just one time?

William Vickers: Just one time.

Interviewer: do you think in your career as a Ranger what are the things that stand out to you?

William Vickers: The personal association that you have with people, the officers, the court officials that you work with, the citizens that you come in contact with, there is so much that goes into it. It might not work with for a little while with someone but they make some kind of impression on you. You may just talk to someone about a case and they would keep talking to you later, they are witnesses, might not even have been a witness.

Interviewer: They just know something.

William Vickers: You just make contacts. Most people are decent. There is that percentage that is not but most people are decent.

Interviewer: Did it ever depress you to work with that percentage that is not decent?

William Vickers: Never did, never let that bother me what they were.

Interviewer: You are stable in duty.

William Vickers: You have to be.

Interviewer: You worked pretty extensively with the criminals that broke out of the pen and came and dealt with that in Dallas.

William Vickers: Yeah, what were they called, something seven?

Interviewer: Yeah, you were pretty involved in that.

William Vickers: We were very involved in the investigation, North Texas what went on after they killed a policeman in Irving.

Interviewer: I am not familiar with that, would you tell us about it?

William Vickers: There were seven convicts broke out of prison, was that around Beeville?

Interviewer: Yeah, Beeville.

William Vickers: They went to Houston first and burglarized some stores. We figured basically, because some of them were from El Paso that they would go toward the border. But they didn't, they went to first Houston, then they came and wound up in Irving which is of course a suburb of Dallas, and hit in the Academy store, if I remember right, and a police officer happened to be eating with his family right across the street when an alarm sounded. So he drove over there to see what was going on and was ambushed, shot many times as he drove up to the store. We had a taskforce operating out of DPS office in Garland and I don't remember how many days went around that.

William Vickers: It was several days anyway, we did extensive work, we didn't find them. We found a lot of other things during that time. One of the Rangers was able to get a very detailed list of the white supremacists, The Aryan Brotherhood stuff out of the prison. The people that run that, he was able to get a list of those people as a result of interviewing some people about this particular group.

Interviewer: Did that often happen? You were looking for one thing and found another?

William Vickers: Very often. You always find something, unless they have only done one thing.

Interviewer: How many cases do you think you worked?

William Vickers: Never thought about keeping numbers. I know some people, I found out later kept their own statistics, I never thought about.

Interviewer: Just thought about getting the job done.

William Vickers: That was it.

Interviewer: Would you encourage your grandchildren to go into law enforcement today?

William Vickers: If it was their desire only. I wouldn't try to steer them because although it's an admirable profession, it's different than what it was back in the 60s and what have you. Whole society's outlook is different today.

Interviewer: How do you see it changing? How did it change?

William Vickers: There are so many people that are so self-centered now, that they don't see it the way they used to.

Interviewer: What do you do about it?

William Vickers: Don't know that you can do anything. Most police officers are conservative people and I look at it as a liberalized society. It's not about me, not anything about society. You say that and you look at all the other people that are joining the military, and they are young people. Got a grandson in the navy and step granddaughter is in the army both stationed overseas. Those people are out there, there are still a lot of people that are conservative, good citizens but I feel like we lost a lot in the last umpteen years.

Interviewer: Since the 60s particularly.

William Vickers: Yes. You could definitely see a change.

Interviewer: Yeah, I remember that they had a march, freedom march or peace march, at Baylor, can you imagine that? At Baylor, they were going around with their fingers upon – and everything. And how does the Rangers differ today from when you went in as far as discipline or training, you had mentioned that they were –

William Vickers: Training is extensive now.

Interviewer: And ongoing.

William Vickers: Yeah, lot of that was implemented by Lefty Block and Maurice Cook. They started more training and more frequent training and it's been followed up by other people that had come along. Better training we had while I was in company B, we had 8 TF come work with us on bomb explosions investigations and fire investigations which was almost an unheard of thing, but it's a necessary thing.

Interviewer: It's amazing what they can do now.

William Vickers: Yes, just they work with so many agencies now, and the outlook is different. DPS director now has a big outlook on taking care of business from what I hear from other Rangers now.

Interviewer: That's what I hear from him too.

William Vickers: As in the last little gun battle on the river last – was it this week?

Interviewer: Was this week, yes.

William Vickers: And they got total support from the commissioner and the director, which I am not sure they would have always had that much support, probably from the director but not necessarily from the commissioner.

Interviewer: Did you find a lot of politics in being a Ranger?

William Vickers: Yes, not from being a Ranger but from investigations you do.

Interviewer: Because there is a lot of pressure to do things a certain way or not do something?

William Vickers: You run into some of it, we had an investigation or district judges tried to intercede. Prior to my time I know senators have tried to intercede and personally I have had some harsh discussion with a state senator over a couple of things, [indiscernible] he supports DPS because he just didn't like what was happening.

Interviewer: Or the fact that he got picked up? I am kidding.

William Vickers: It wasn't that there was a family member involved but he is still a strong supporter of DPS still.

Interviewer: He just got kind of heated, uh?

William Vickers: Uh-umm.

Interviewer: But you did the right thing, didn't you?

William Vickers: I thought I did. He did never complain, so it must be good.

Interviewer: What would you like to tell us about your time as a Ranger?

William Vickers: Enjoyable. Very enjoyable time, in fact the whole 37-1/2 years in DPS was very enjoyable.

Interviewer: That's high praise, if like in a 100 years someone comes back and says, okay, where we have this great man, Texas Ranger, then what would you put after that?

William Vickers: I don't know.

Interviewer: What do you think Judy would put after that?

William Vickers: I wouldn't dare try to say what Judy would say.

Interviewer: Guess.

William Vickers: Judy likes me, she might put my name in there.

Interviewer: And then she would put here is D, Texas Ranger, then what would she put?

William Vickers: Father, grandfather, I think.

Interviewer: All round good man.

William Vickers: I hope, husband. I feel very blessed with what I got.

Interviewer: I can tell that, you seem to be a happy man.

William Vickers: I am very happy.

Interviewer: Contented. I think that's great. And I appreciate your time. Anything else you want to say? Judy, anything else you want to prompt him with?

Judy Vickers: No. I think he has been pleased with his career and if his health had been better and his back had been better, he would still be working.

Interviewer: Do you miss it?

William Vickers: Oh, yes, you always miss that, you don't miss the – what I call politics, when you're promoted you miss the actual street work, which is the best time.

Interviewer: So, when you promote do you do more paper work than street work?

William Vickers: Paper work, when I was sergeant in Houston I was the only one so that left me doing all the reports, answering the phones. Of course we had secretaries, all kind of stuff.

Interviewer: Everything, jack of all trades.

William Vickers: Frequently no time to leave the office for lunch or anything else. Now they have more lieutenants, which sergeants became lieutenants and we have more of them and they are able to devote more time to maybe going out and assisting Rangers if such is needed.

Interviewer: If you could change one thing about the Rangers today what would it be?

William Vickers: Actually been retired 9 years, I am going to have to say that I wouldn't even dare try that.

Interviewer: Okay, what would you have changed while you were a Ranger?

William Vickers: The one thing we lacked almost the entire time I worked for the state was sufficient funds to do the job. We had times you can't make a long distance call because you didn't have the money, you couldn't drive cars enough. You need to go to another state, we didn't have money for plane tickets, it was always a shortage of funds and if I had the power to have done it, I would have added funds to state, somewhere and I know we weren't the only agency needing funds but that was a big barrier for getting our job done.

Interviewer: But you did what you could.

William Vickers: Yes.

Interviewer: And did it with honor.

William Vickers: Yes.

[END]