



## **The Oral History of Jeffrey Lang**

July 24, 2002

Interview conducted by Dorothe Norton

Geneseo, Illinois

# Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name:** Jeffrey Lang

**Date:** July 24, 2002

**Location of Interview:** Geneseo, IL

**Interviewer:** Dorothe Norton

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** 6 years. 1977-1983.

**Offices and Field Stations Worked and Positions Held:** Special Agent, Detroit, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois.

**Most Important Projects:** Wildlife commercialization cases such as market hunting in Michigan, Operation Gill Net which involved lake trout, and Operation Quackscam which involved waterfowl hunting.

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Kevin Adams, Don Burger, Rich Elliott, Dick Gordon, Dick Marx, Bob Hodgins, Gary Jagodzinski, Walt Kocal, Rick Leach, Tom Love, Dorothe Norton, John Peterson, John Robinson, and Gerry Sommers.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Jeffrey was born in DeKalb, Illinois in 1954 and grew up initially on a farm where his father was the manager. When he was 5 years old, he moved into town with his parents and was interested in bug and feather collecting, hunting and fishing. He started working at the age of 13 for an entomologist in pesticide research. While a junior in college, he took advanced ornithology courses and decided that wildlife law enforcement would be the vocation he decided to pursue. Jeff graduated from Northern Illinois University with an undergraduate degree in biological sciences.

Soon after college, he was offered a job with the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) for several months. However, before starting his career at the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a special agent. He reported to Detroit, Michigan in 1978 and spent 3 years here before reporting to Chicago, Illinois, close to his hometown. While in Chicago, he started law school and accepted a position with the FBI where he transferred to Cincinnati, Ohio and completed law school. He worked in Ohio for several years. Thereafter, he transferred to Miami, Florida where he worked on major cases including becoming the case agent on Manuel Noriega, the dictator of Panama. He spent several years in Florida before relocating back to Illinois in 1995 as the Assistant U.S. Attorney. He did prosecute a number of FWS wildlife cases as the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Illinois, and he taught prosecution to new agents as part of their training.

Jeff highlights several of the cases he worked on including in an undercover capacity and his respect for his supervisors and coworkers, in particular Rick Leach who he considers the finest special agent he ever worked with.

Jeff is married to his wife, Nancy, and has one son named Colby.

## THE INTERVIEW:

DOROTHE: Hi Jeff Lang. It's good to see you again. It's been a while.

JEFFREY LANG: Well, it's good to see you, Dorothe.

DOROTHE: I know that you started with the Fish and Wildlife some time ago and then went on to bigger and better things, so I thought I would do a little interview.

JEFF: I wouldn't say bigger and better, just different.

DOROTHE: Okay. Can you tell me first of all your birthplace and date?

JEFF: Yes. I was born in DeKalb, Illinois in 1954.

DOROTHE: Your parents' names were?

JEFF: Clarence and Helen Lang.

DOROTHE: What were their jobs and education?

JEFF: Well, both graduated from high school. My father farmed and was the farm manager ultimately for Del Monte Corporation, which was in Rochelle, Illinois. And my mother - she began working once my brothers and sister and I were all in school. She worked for the Del Monte Midwest Federal Credit Union and did that until she retired.

DOROTHE: Very good. How did you spend your early years? Where and what hobbies, books or events influenced you?

JEFF: When I was a kid?

DOROTHE: Yes.

JEFF: I lived on a farm until I was about 5. Then we moved into town. I was always collecting bugs, bird feathers, nests, hunting, fishing. Couldn't get enough of it. My dad was a hunter and a fisherman. That was in me and still is.

DOROTHE: Okay. What high school did you go to and where?

JEFF: Big city of Rochelle, Illinois, population about 9,000. Rochelle Township High School - graduated in 1972.

DOROTHE: Okay. Then what university did you attend?

JEFF: I went to Northern Illinois University, and I graduated with a degree in biological sciences. I spent a lot of time in ornithology classes but graduated with the general B.S. in biological sciences.

DOROTHE: You didn't go on for a master's?

JEFF: I did not.

DOROTHE: Okay. What aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future?

JEFF: Well, I think a general biology background equips anybody for any kind of job in the future. It's fairly broad based with chemistry, math and for me in particular, I took mammalogy and ornithology courses. I ultimately got a job with the Fish and Wildlife Service so that certainly helped.

DOROTHE: Oh, that's pretty good. Who most influenced your education and career track?

JEFF: Oh, well education wise, I think my father probably influenced me more there with his love of the outdoors. I wanted to study biology. I didn't really know what I wanted. I knew I wanted to work in some wildlife context, and then I think I was probably a junior or so in college when I finally decided I wanted to be in wildlife law enforcement.

DOROTHE: Good. Did you have mentors or courses that especially stuck with you?

JEFF: Well, I think the ornithology courses were important. I had one, an ornithology professor who was brilliant at Northern and that was my interest. I also had a pretty good professor for mammalogy and some of the other ecological sciences courses that I took.

DOROTHE: Okay. Were there ever any adverse influences?

JEFFREY: I don't think so.

DOROTHE: That's good.

JEFF: Not that I can think of. Having to work. (laughter) I worked from the time I was about 13. I also worked for Del Monte and fortunately, it was a great company at the time. In Rochelle, they had not only the production of agriculture - the sweet corn canning facilities and grew thousands of acres of sweet corn and peas and even pumpkins – but their Midwest Region Research Department was there. When I was a teenager, I started working for the entomologist in pesticide research. I did that all the way till the day that I graduated from college. I worked pretty much round the year studying different pesticides; a little bit of fertilizer stuff, but mainly it was herbicides and insecticides.

DOROTHE: Very good. Were you ever in the armed services?

JEFF: No. I wanted to be, but no one would take someone with not exactly perfect eyesight. I wanted to fly jets. I became a pilot right out of high school. All my friends were pilots. I had two friends who went to the Air Force and flew jets, and I wanted to do that, but my eyesight wasn't perfect. I could be an agent. I wasn't good enough to be a pilot at the time.

DOROTHE: Okay. Now when, where and how did you meet your spouse?

JEFFREY: Nancy and I were friends in high school, and she dated a very close friend of mine. We stayed in touch through college and then a few years after college even. Then after a number of years went by, I

hadn't talked to Nancy for a long time, and it was actually the Persian Gulf War. This friend of mine, one I mentioned earlier, being a pilot - he was a doctor, an M.D. He was the first Air Force pilot killed in the Persian Gulf War. He was one of the bodies returned after the Persian Gulf War. He was an F-15E pilot, meaning two-seat pilot, two-seat jet. He was shot down over Basra. He was missing throughout the war. I ended up calling Nancy and saw her again at that point, and we dated for a year and got married.

DOROTHE: Very good. Where and when did you marry?

JEFF: Put me on the spot here, February 1st, 1992.

DOROTHE: Do you have any children?

JEFF: Yes, we have a 9-year-old boy now. He was born in 1993.

DOROTHE: Okay. What is he doing now?

JEFF: He's a fourth grader. Right now, he's down in the basement playing Legos. He's in fourth grade, 9 years old. His name's Colby C-O-L-B-Y.

DOROTHE: Good. Okay. Now, why did you ever want to work for the Service?

JEFF: This may sound kind of hokey, but about my junior year in college, I was taking advanced ornithology classes and wildlife classes, and for whatever reason, I decided that wildlife law enforcement was my thing.

DOROTHE: That's good.

JEFF: Believe it or not, I wrote to every state in the country, including Alaska and Hawaii, trying to get on as a conservation officer. I also wrote to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DOROTHE: Wow.

JEFF: I actually filled out the SF-171 or whatever it was. Then I took the Treasury Enforcement Exam. Actually, shortly after I graduated from college, I got a phone call from ATF, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. I still wanted to be a wildlife law enforcement officer, but the ATF was an interesting possibility. So, I never gave up on the Fish and Wildlife Service. Back when ATF inquired after I took the exam and I went to Chicago, had an interview. I called, I think it was Dick Gordon at the time and just said, "Look, are you going to hire somebody or not?" I had been in touch with him. At the time I was told, "It doesn't look like we're going to have a class or group or whatever." So, I took the job with ATF. November of 1976.

DOROTHE: That was your first professional position?

JEFF: Yes.

DOROTHE: With the federal government. Okay. Where did you go from there?

JEFF: I was hired by ATF, and I reported to Peoria, and I had worked just a few months. I was going through training and just learning the ropes. I think it was probably Dick Gordon who called and said, "Guess what? We're putting a class together. Are you still interested?" This is just a few months into my career. I'd already been sent for one training course with ATF, and then, I remember getting a phone call from Dave Swendsen. He flew down to Peoria. I met him at the airport, and we sat down, and he interviewed me. It was a short time after that that somebody called and said, "We'd like you to think about it. Are you really interested?" I said, "Absolutely."

DOROTHE: Oh good.

JEFF: I was delighted. Then after I got the letter or whatever, I was going to be a grade 5 Fish and Wildlife Service special agent. I had to tell ATF. I just remember that was probably one of the hardest things to do after having people invest in you telling them, *thanks a lot, but I'm out of here*.

DOROTHE: What did you do in your first job with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife?

JEFF: With Fish and Wildlife Service? I reported to Detroit, worked for Rick Leach in the Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Office. I think by the time I went through Glynco and training and all that, I'm trying to remember when it was, I arrived in Detroit, but I think it was around February or March, which would have been in '78.

At that time, Rick Leach had a huge market hunting case underway. He needed help so I jumped right into that with both feet and worked 7 days a week and drove Rick nuts and his wife trying to...I was just totally consumed by it. It was just the greatest thing that ever happened. We worked round the clock. I have no idea how his family ever put up with it and put up with me, but I was there every night. Even after we're done working, to sit down and drink a beer and talk about work some more. He and his wife never threw me out. I think back about that. It was just a tremendous time, and I was just tremendously grateful to Rick for showing me the ropes. He sent me in the right direction.

DOROTHE: That's good. What other duty stations did you have and kinds of positions from then on?

JEFF: I stayed in Detroit for several years. Rick moved to Springfield, and I know from talking to you, Dorothe, became a possibility, I could move to Chicago, which was close to home. At some point, I transferred to Chicago, and I think I'd spent about 3 years in Detroit. Came to Chicago then.

DOROTHE: Okay. What were pay and benefits like when you started with the Fish and Wildlife Service?

JEFF: Oh, I think I was way up there at, I was a grade 5, and I think the base pay. I know when I started with ATF as a grade 5, it was \$7,909 a year. \$7,909. I do remember I went up to like \$8,125 or something like that. For a year or two, I carried a gun and a badge making under \$10,000 a year.

DOROTHE: Okay. Were there promotion opportunities?

JEFFREY: Well, not for a young whippersnapper like me at that time. I was about 24 years old. I'm sure there were, and I guess I was looking forward to that.

DOROTHE: Did you socialize with any of the people that you worked with?

JEFF: Oh, sure. Absolutely. Great people.

DOROTHE: Well, that's good. What did you do for recreation in the field?

JEFF: Well, recreation...

DOROTHE: While you were working out in the field?

JEFF: Well, all the usual social things, I was still interested in hunting and fishing, and I would come home and go hunting and fishing with my dad. I enjoyed that. Sports, sporting events, playing a little softball, things like that.

DOROTHE: How did your career affect your family?

JEFF: Well, I can say that I worked pretty hard, and I wasn't around very much for family.

DOROTHE: Your mom and your dad, were they pleased with what you were doing?

JEFF: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Oh, my dad absolutely loved the war stories and traveling a little bit and training.

DOROTHE: Okay. When and why did you leave the Service?

JEFF: Okay. That was one of the hardest decisions I made. When I was in Detroit, there were actually two different cases that I worked where I...became cooperative cases with the FBI. I had several felony trials with the Fish and Wildlife Service, major trials. I really liked the courtroom. Actually, when I came to Chicago, I had started law school in the evenings and went to Chicago, Kent College of Law, and I had about 2 or 3 semesters in.

One of the FBI agents I worked with, Tom Love, up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, had encouraged me to apply for the FBI. I just thought it was an interesting concept. I didn't do that out of anything negative about Fish and Wildlife. I just thought it was fascinating to go from an agency with a couple hundred agents to an agency with, I think at the time, the FBI had just broken through about 8,000 agents, 7 or 8,000 agents.

So, I went ahead and applied, and I tested, and it was another change in goals or objectives. I went ahead and did that. I applied and lo and behold, I moved to Chicago in about 1983. It was May of 1983 or just before that, probably April of '83. An FBI agent called me from Detroit and said, hey, you had applied back then. Are you still interested? I talked to Bob Hodgins, the SAC for Fish and Wildlife, and we kicked around the pluses and minuses and I'll never forget how supportive he was. He just said, "Look, do what you have to do. He says you won't go very far away from wildlife law enforcement. That's your dedication, your commitment, one of your goals." He says, "It's really not that big of a loss to the Fish and Wildlife Service." That was an interesting comment, and I'll explain that.

DOROTHE: Then you did finish the...you did go to the FBI?

JEFF: I did. May of 1983, I reported to the FBI, did the training, another police academy, the FBI Quantico training. I was immediately transferred to Cincinnati. I was in Cincinnati from '83 through '87. March of '87, I was transferred to Miami.

DOROTHE: Working for the FBI?

JEFF: Yeah.

DOROTHE: Okay.

JEFF: I did finish law school in Cincinnati and took the Ohio bar exam and became a member of the Ohio Bar. Then when I went to Miami in March of '87, shortly after that, I took the Florida bar. I'm licensed in both states.

DOROTHE: What kind of projects were you involved in?

JEFF: With the FBI? Well, the FBI was an interesting...that was just a great experience. I handled routine stuff in Cincinnati. I had a real interest in wiretaps, so I did 2 or 3 wiretap cases. Drug cases.

When I went to Miami, it was a totally different world. 350 agents in one office, lots of violent crime. I worked on quite a few major projects. I worked both corruption cases, drug cases. I also did special projects, kind of worked for the management down there. As a lawyer, I was involved in the shooting team and things like that.

DOROTHE: Drug cases, would you consider those the major issues that you had to deal with?

JEFF: Drug cases I consider to be...they were major cases involving a lot of drugs and bad people for sure. I also had the chance to work on some unique kind of cases to me and interesting stuff. For example, we had quite a few of us had different involvement in cases, like we had 5 judges, state circuit judges taking payoffs in Dade County. Operation Courtroom. We all worked on that. Wiretaps, searches, things like that. Interviews. That was a fascinating case done by the Public Corruption Squad. I got to help out with that.

My last big case with the FBI was probably the most interesting, most challenging. Manuel Noriega was the dictator of Panama. The DEA actually put together a historical drug case. It was just a straightforward drug case concerning...Once that case was indicted and Operation Just Cause began, the military effort to capture him, there were some other aspects of Noriega and Noriega's prosecution which came to light, and some of them fairly sensitive. I became the case agent for the FBI on Noriega and the Noriega prosecution. I had a squad. I got to hand pick a great bunch of agents. We worked on everything from leaks within and outside the government. We worked on theft of very sensitive information and property and some improper disclosures, propriety issues dealing with how the federal government conducted the investigation, things like that. I got to pick a team of 6 or 8 awfully good agents and worked on that for about a year. That was a fascinating...

DOROTHE: Was that when you...after that, then you left the FBI?

JEFF: Yeah.

DOROTHE: And transferred to...

JEFF: To the U.S. Attorney's office. After Noriega was convicted and sentenced, I was asked by the United States Attorney down there if I'd be interested in a job as a prosecutor, as an Assistant U.S. attorney. After talking to him, I said, "Okay, I'll give that a whirl."

I have to back up a little bit. Just talking about the FBI. Never forget about wildlife stuff. I had a great time in Miami on a couple of different matters where I'd either be involved in a drug case or another kind of case where we'd end up interviewing witnesses and informants and things like that. Or I'd hear about people interviewing people. From my days in the Fish and Wildlife Service, I knew the names of some of the big wildlife importers and players in the wildlife business in Miami. I never missed an opportunity to see what, if I heard a name or had a pet business or wildlife business, to go ahead and ask the extra questions, and that became important in one particular case.

We did a case on a guy named Mario Tabraue. It was actually another wiretap kind of case, a major FBI case. There was an informant killed in a major drug smuggling case. Tabraue was convicted and ultimately sentenced, I think, to a hundred years in prison. We were interviewing him about things; after he was sentenced, he decided to cooperate. It was a long time that he was interviewed about drug and violent crime matters, things like that. At some point, I just decided before we were done with him, I'm going to sit down with this guy and ask him about bird smugglers and wildlife stuff. Lo and behold, he talked about a Chicago guy, a well-respected bird guy and how this person, how Tabraue had shipped birds to this guy in Chicago - a guy named Tony Silva. I think it was hyacinth macaws, a load of hyacinth macaws.

I wrote up a report on what Tabraue had talked about. This is all public information now, and information has been disclosed to the defense and came out at sentencings and things like that. This is nothing that's protected. It's not an ongoing investigation. I think it's pretty much a matter of public record. I'm not making any improper disclosures here. Anyway, I wrote up a report and shipped that off to Rick Leach with a little cover memo saying this guy just talked about Tony Silva in Chicago. Lo and behold, Dick Marks called me a few years later and said, "We're working on this." They ended up prosecuting Tony Silva in Chicago, got a long prison sentence for smuggling parrots and I think for tax evasion or something. That was kind of cool.

DOROTHE: Well, you bet.

JEFF: It was good to...

DOROTHE: How long have you been now, then, as the U.S. Attorney in Rock Island?

JEFF: Well, I went to the U.S. Attorney's office in Miami. I was there for 3 years. That began in September of 1991. In 1994, the Department of Justice opened the U.S. Attorney's office in the Quad Cities here in Illinois, the Central District of Illinois. The Southern District of Iowa created the first and only dual district U.S. Attorney's office that I'm aware of. But it was the first.

I saw an email to that effect that that was going to happen. Made a few phone calls, came up for an interview, and I was selected to be one of two AUSA's opening the office, been here. I moved up here with Nancy and Colby, actually moved up in February of 1995. Been here ever since.

DOROTHE Okay. Now, while you were working with the Service, what did you ever consider your high points?

JEFFREY: Oh, the high points were the conclusions of the major cases assisting the likes of Rick Leach and John Peterson with the market hunting case in Michigan, assisting Rick and Ernie Mayer and working with Kevin Adams and others down in Beardstown - the Quackscam case. Quite a few commercialization kind of cases.

Then I think the last major case that I had of Fish and Wildlife Service was Operation Gill Net in Chicago. I remember buying and handling and selling, working with the Wisconsin and Illinois DNR officers primarily, but also from other states. Well, over 100,000 pounds of fish that we bought. I think we charged dozens of commercial fishermen with taking everything from primarily lake trout and other fish illegally for the commercial markets in Chicago. We also prosecuted the markets in Chicago. Those were kind of the high points.

DOROTHE: What was the low point in your career?

JEFF: Oh, low point with the Fish and Wildlife Service? I wouldn't say there really ever was one.

DOROTHE: That's good. How about danger? Anything that was most dangerous or frightening when you were working?

JEFF: Well, working with Rick Leach and John Peterson and some of the other guys when I first started, I quickly learned the ropes. There were times when we did get nervous. I know when I was nervous for Rick on the Quackscam case. He was actually grabbed and assaulted during one of our investigations. I remember one of the defendants that Kevin Adams and I were out on a blind with ultimately tried to break out a window to get to Rich Elliot, I think. He was charged with assault. So, we were dealing with some roughnecks.

I remember in the Operation Gill Net case, I was working undercover, buying fish. One time being up around, I don't know where it was in Wisconsin, but over on the east coast, I think up at Two Rivers in Wisconsin and buying on one occasion 800 and some pounds of brown trout, which some pretty bad actors had gill netted out of the Kewaunee River. I remember one time, going up there to pick up a load of those fish, and I had an old refuge truck, and I met the bad guys in Kewaunee. They said to follow them in their truck out in the country somewhere to get the fish. I remember having two very fine officers from Wisconsin DNR running surveillance, but they couldn't follow us out into the gravel roads. They just couldn't do it. I remember having a recorder on my body and following these guys, and they walked me, actually, they directed my truck into a corncrib. When I got out, it was several individuals and I went through the line of questioning about, "Are you an agent? Are you a cop or are you wildlife conservation officer?" All that stuff. I was on my own. Just thinking back today when I go up to the U.P. in Michigan by myself, without anybody knowing where I was, contact numbers, things like that, and hanging out with a bunch of bad guys drinking beer and lining up hunts with the chance that they discover something.

Same thing - I made some runs down to Florida and North Carolina, South Carolina with an informant on some snake cases and bird cases and running around Miami going into some of those places working undercover. What happens if somebody discovers you're an agent? There was a few times, but not too bad. I still enjoyed it.

DOROTHE: Did you ever have a humorous experience, and if so, what was it?

JEFF: Humor is something we all thrive on, especially. You've got to have a good sense of humor to be in law enforcement and the Fish and Wildlife Service is no exception. There were always funny things happening. I guess one of the funniest things involved; I go back to working with Rick Leach and John Peterson. Those were some of the best days of my life.

One time, John and I were working undercover down in Stuttgart, Arkansas on some duck baiting. We had gone to this club, and I think we ended up with a bunch of ducks that were hunted over bait. John and I were sneaking out. We had a rental car, and I remember we had the trunk open. We had the ducks in the trunk of the car. We had spread them out, and we were underneath the streetlight, and I had a flash camera, and I'm taking pictures of these things. All I remember is hearing John say something about, "Here comes a car." And then bam! I was on the ground, and he was staring at the car, and he decided to slam the trunk and didn't realize that I was still bent over with my head in the trunk. I remember, although that hurt for a little bit. It hurt bad. Once I got over that, we just laughed about that for years. We still laugh. Just some of the other goofy things that happen. There's always...

DOROTHE: Okay. Who were some of the supervisors that you had when you worked for Fish and Wildlife?

JEFF: Who were some of my supervisors?

DOROTHE: Rick Leach you mentioned.

JEFF: Well, Rick was by far. He was and is a people person. He was a great agent, a great people person. He knew how to deal with young, rambunctious new agents like me. He, by far the best supervisor I ever had. Then he left and went to Springfield. A guy by the name of Don Burger became my supervisor. Then I went to Chicago and ended up with a supervisor named John Robinson.

DOROTHE: Okay. That's when you left the Service then, when you were in Chicago.

JEFF: Yeah.

DOROTHE: Okay. Who were the individuals that you think helped shape your career at Fish and Wildlife?

JEFF: Oh, no doubt about it I mentioned Rick about a dozen times. Rick Leach was the finest agent that the federal government had, regardless of what agency you're talking about. I've seen that going on 26 years now in federal law enforcement. If the government was fortunate enough to have agents like him, whether it's FBI, DEA, or whatever, we would be doing well.

DOROTHE: How do you think changes in the administration affected our work?

JEFF: Well, the Fish and Wildlife Service, at least during the 6 years, I was a part of it, went through changes. It's a very small agency and so it's subject to more, let's say, congressional pressures. What it seems to me [is] that it's subject to more fluctuations in budget matters and policy matters. I guess, vulnerable to pressures from Congress and the public, probably more than most agencies I deal with.

We did see that. There were times when the budget was thin, fortunately with you there, we always seemed to have what we needed to do the job. Dorothe, [you] just did a great job.

DOROTHE: We had to beg sometimes.

JEFF: We may have had to beg, but you always came through. I remember one time we had, and I forget which case it was, Dorothe. It may have been either the Michigan meat case, the market hunting case, or maybe it was Gill Net. It may have been Gill Net, but I remember calling you when the times were really lean and I said, "Dorothe, we really need a camera. A small camera, the smallest one you can get." And you came up with one. I remember that - a little Minox camera. We used it on the undercover things. I remember using that camera. It was the smallest 35-millimeter camera we could get at the time. I remember having that in my pocket up in...I don't know if you remember Kenny Benigni - he was a wolf guy up in Cotton, Minnesota, and he was a very dangerous human being. Rick and I were, we knew that he was steel trapping Timberwolf pups in the spring and then selling them. Rick and I finally got to the point where we could talk to this guy, and we could get into his compound. We wandered around and were able to see what he had at the compound. I remember having that old camera and snapping pictures, and that sure helped when it came time for prosecuting him.

DOROTHE: That's good. What would you like to tell others about your career in the Fish and Wildlife Service?

JEFF: Great challenges, great memories, great accomplishments. Unlike what it may seem with some other law enforcement agencies, you really see the results of the effort. I don't mean to belittle anything other law enforcement agencies do. Maybe it's because what the other agencies do is routine. I mean, the whole objective of law enforcement is to gain compliance by the public and to stop those that aren't behaving, following the law.

Well, in the wildlife law enforcement world, a single case can be an example that has great impact on others in the business. Whether it's falconry, the live bird industry, hunters. We were able to make the cases that we did. Do it well, we thought, and really make a difference. I think making a difference is something. I'm very proud of that. I think that's something that any new Fish and Wildlife Service agent, in fact, I've been teaching new agents. I've been lucky enough to be asked to teach new agents. I think they have a great opportunity, which brings great responsibility when they go about their law enforcement efforts. Great opportunity to make a difference.

DOROTHE: That's good. I hear you've even handled some Fish and Wildlife cases since you've been here in Rock Island for Fish and Wildlife stuff.

JEFF: Oh, you bet. I've great Fish and Wildlife agents like Gerry Sommers and Walt Kocal and Gary Jagodzinski and some others, working wildlife cases here at the Midwest. Now I've got some new matters, too coming up. Oh, I've probably done and been in the Quad Cities for 7 years. I've had 5 or 6 or 7 quality wildlife cases since I've been here.

Probably the biggest is the mussel case where we charged about 8 defendants, including a corporation; got fines like \$250,000 for either taking mussels - Lacey Act - shipping them over the state lines in violation of state laws since they are so highly protected now. Or the main company in Muscatine, Iowa, that was buying them all.

DOROTHE: How do you feel about or see the Service heading in the next decade or so?

JEFF: Well, as there's more demands on the resource as urban sprawl continues. That all creates pressures on our resources. That means that I think different forms of wildlife, particularly endangered stuff, is more and more vulnerable to man disregarding what we do have here. The laws are designed to protect; if we don't enforce the laws, you can see the handwriting on the wall. If we don't protect what we have through the laws, I think the resource is in trouble. The laws have to be enforced and managed.

As far as the Fish and Wildlife Service as a whole...it's going to be the role of Fish and Wildlife Service as the other pressures increases, more and more important every day.

DOROTHE: That's good. Well, Jeff, I certainly want to wish you the very best of everything as you finish your career with the federal government. You're doing a good job here as the U.S. Attorney assistant, whatever. I want to thank you for having this interview with us. When we get through with this, we'll be putting it in the Archives. If you'd like a typed copy of it, we can send you one.

JEFF: Okay. I would.

DOROTHE: Is there anyone else you think we should be interviewing? I mean, they're supposed to be retired or have left the Service, but do you think there's any special people that we should be sure we don't forget?

JEFF: Well, I hope that you do catch up with Rick Leach. I know he's a busy guy. He just recently retired. I think it would be very important to hear his thoughts. He stayed with the Service for decades. I stayed for 6 years. John Peterson, who I worked with. Gerry Sommers - the guys who were out there doing it. I think it's important that some of these things are documented.

DOROTHE: Very good.

JEFF: Thank you. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I don't know if you can tell, but this is one of my...

DOROTHE: I'm glad we have had the chance to interview you. I'm very sure that you're doing a good job now, just like you did when you started.

JEFF: Well, this is great. This is one thing I really enjoy talking about. What's really refreshing to me is twice now I've been asked to go speak to a new class of special agents and to provide some guidance, maybe some insight into how to get cases prosecuted; certain things like using the grand jury. Things like that to give them a little bit of head start. I didn't have that when I started.

DOROTHE: Oh, wow, that's great.

JEFFREY: So far, the reaction has been pretty good. I truly enjoy that. I feel really good about when I come away from that and see the enthused eyes of these young people for the next 20 or 30 years, they're going to be out there. If there's one thing, I've helped them with, that makes me feel awfully good.

DOROTHE: Well, that's good. Well, good luck to you, Jeff, for the rest of your career.

JEFF: Okay. Well thank you.

DOROTHE: Thank you again.

*End of Interview*

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