

Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History  
Special Collections Department  
University of Arkansas Libraries  
365 N. McIlroy Ave.  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
(479) 575-5330

This oral history interview is based on the memories and opinions of the subject being interviewed. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using this interview should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

## **Arkansas State Police Project**

Interview with

Bill Carver  
26 May 2004

Interviewer: Michael Lindsey

Michael Lindsey: Where were you born and raised?

Bill Carver: I was actually born in Benton, Arkansas. My family moved to Harrison when I was one, and that is where I call home.

ML: What year did you graduate?

BC: 1963.

ML: What did you do after you graduated?

BC: I didn't actually graduate with my class. I left school prematurely as a confused kid. I stayed around Harrison and worked for a little while. I went into the navy in 1964. While I was in the service, I completed my requirements for the GED [General Education Development]. I got out of the navy in 1966 and moved back to Harrison. I worked at a couple of different jobs. I worked at the Pepsi Cola bottling plant and at Turney Wood Products. After Pepsi, I went to work as a police officer for the city of Harrison. I started in March 1967 and stayed there almost two years. I left there and started working for the Arkansas State Police on January 1, 1969.

ML: What was the application process you followed to get hired on at the State Police?

BC: I filled out the normal application. At that time, J. E. Dunlap was a State Police commissioner. I was familiar with him, so I asked him to hand carry my application to Little Rock. He took it to the director at that time, Ralph Scott. I initially applied in September 1968, and it was a three- or four-month process, which was a relatively short period of time for that process to work.

ML: It helps when you know a commissioner.

BC: Yes. I like to kid J. E. about it. I am sure he was instrumental in me being placed on the eligibility list. The commissioners approve the applicants for hire, and the director is the one that actually hires them.

ML: What was your motivation to join the State Police?

BC: Number one was more salary. They also had more equipment, better equipment and more prestige. At that time, I felt the State Police was the number one elite agency in the state.

ML: Did you remember seeing any State Police officers in Harrison when you were growing up?

BC: I knew a couple of them. Hansel Bradford was one. Kenneth McFerran was one. Bodenhammer was another, but I can't recall his first name right now. Even when I was with the City of Harrison, I worked with them closely and got to know them. I knew that they were going to be hiring some troopers, and I was encouraged by them to go ahead and apply.

ML: When they hired you, did they send you to a training school immediately?

BC: Not immediately. I was already a police officer, and I had already been through a

basic police school. I worked five months and then went to a troop school.

ML: Where was your basic school?

BC: I attended training at Camp Robinson in Little Rock.

ML: Was that for any law enforcement officers in the state?

BC: It was for any municipal officers or county deputies in the state.

ML: What was your first posting?

BC: I was assigned to Marion County. Initially, for the first couple of weeks, I rode into Harrison with a couple of different troopers. Jacky Gaston was one. Joe Brewer was a sergeant, and Hansel Bradford was there. I think Ken McFerran was still there as well. Then I went to Marion County and rode with a trooper named John Kidwell.

ML: I have heard people talk about Marion and Searcy County and some of those counties over there and the issues raised by the competing political factions. They were some of the few counties in the state that were split between Republican and Democrat, and if a Republican was elected sheriff, then the Democrats would cause problems or at least create tension. Did you see any instances of that happening?

BC: I saw some of that. I generally tried to stay away from it. You always felt that one faction or the other was trying to put you in their particular corner. One thing I felt that the State Police was really strict about was getting involved in local politics. They didn't want you to go out and support or even voice your opinion on local political matters. That could lead to some people on the local level getting upset, who would then communicate that to their local representative and on to

the governor. I did see some of that and tried to stay away from it.

ML: How long were you in Marion County?

BC: Sixteen years and eight months.

ML: Wow. That is amazing—you stayed in your first posting for over sixteen years.

BC: My leaving was on my own accord. They didn't ask me to leave. I saw myself getting into a rut, if you will. I was married and had two children. I wasn't making a lot of money then. My wife was working, and I was working the night shift most of the time. I thought that if I didn't change something, ten years from then I would wake up and feel I had missed something. I started taking the competitive test for sergeant. I was fortunate enough to be selected and promoted to sergeant. I left Marion County in August 1985 and went to DeQueen in southwest Arkansas. I was assigned out of the troop headquarters at Hope, which was Troop G.

ML: As a post sergeant, what did you feel were your duties?

BC: I supervised the troopers and corporals in a three- or four-county area. At one time I had sixteen troopers. I created work schedules and [scheduled] days off. I worked highway patrol. I checked their reports for completeness and handled complaints.

ML: What percentage of your time would you spend working highway patrol and working personnel issues?

BC: I would say about fifty-fifty. Sometimes it would be sixty or seventy percent personnel. I had to travel a pretty significant distance to see all of my people. I would drive around and see them, if they had any problems, and deliver supplies.

ML: If you had to pick one personnel issue that was the most difficult to deal with, what would it be?

BC: I think it was their personal issues like family disagreements and divorces. Recommending severe disciplinary action could be tough, but the more you did it, the easier it got. You had to realize that as a supervisor that is part of your job. You want to maintain a personal and friendly relationship with your subordinates, but at times you have to take that out of the issue.

ML: How long were you in DeQueen?

BC: I was there for almost three years. I took the promotion test for lieutenant and was promoted to lieutenant in March 1988. I left DeQueen and went to Dumas, which is Troop E. I was the assistant troop commander.

ML: How did your job change?

BC: All of your time was devoted to managerial and office issues. I was in the office all of the time. I was looking at reports. The sergeants would submit them to me for final approval. I worked more closely with communications and driver's license personnel. I did enjoy being off on Saturdays and Sundays. That was a real treat.

ML: I guess you also got to work daytimes.

BC: Yes. I worked 8:00 [a.m.] to 5:00 [p.m.]. I was off on weekends and holidays. That was a definite change for me. I don't think I had been off on a Saturday in about twenty years.

ML: How long did you stay in Dumas?

BC: I stayed there nine months, which was ten months too long [laughs]. I left Dumas

in January of 1989 and made a lateral transfer to Springdale. I became an assistant commander at Springdale. I made up my mind and went to Little Rock and told Tommy that I wanted the vacancy in Springdale. He let me wonder about it for a month before I got my letter. By that time, I had worked over twenty years, and I had a lot of friends in the State Police. I had a good friend in personnel, and I knew that the procedure whenever someone was transferred was that the personnel director would be the first to know. I asked him to call me if my transfer papers were approved. One day out of the blue he called me and said, "Bill, I am writing you a letter." At the time, I wasn't sure if I was being transferred to Fort Smith or Springdale, but I would have driven to Little Rock to get that letter. That was one of the happiest days of my life.

ML: That is a familiar sentiment [moving out of southeast Arkansas].

BC: The people that grew up there and lived there just loved it. I got to be friends with the warden and would go up and have lunch with him numerous times. The trustees work in the kitchen, and everyone eats the same food as the prisoners. I noticed a trustee kept looking at me, and I thought he looked familiar, but I couldn't place him. After a little while, this trustee came up and asked the warden's permission to speak to me. The warden asked me if that was okay, and I said, "Sure." I forget his name, but he said he used to be a lab tech at Mountain Home. I said that the last thing I remember of him he had hit his wife in the head with a hammer. He didn't kill her, but he beat the heck out of her. I had worked a little bit on that case before I left Marion County. After that time, he wrote me a letter asking me to write a letter saying he deserved parole, but I told him I

wouldn't do that. We had a trustee I would pick up and take to our headquarters facility where he would work.

ML: When you transferred to Springdale you were assistant commander to Captain Phillips. When did he retire?

BC: He retired in June 2002. I was promoted to Captain in September of 2002. I retired the following June 30.

ML: Stepping back to when you worked in Marion County, what would be a typical day?

BC: A typical day would begin anywhere between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. When I first started, we were working ten-hour shifts. Of course, they would give us an hour for a meal break. I would get in the car and call Harrison on the radio and tell them I was "10-8," which meant that I was in my car working. I would go out and begin my patrol activities. I had the leeway to go anywhere I wanted to go. If I had worked an accident the night before, I would go and do that [work on the accident report] first.

ML: Where would you type your reports?

BC: Most of the time, I would go to the sheriff's office in Marion County. There was a period of time where I had an office at my house. I had a scanner so I could monitor the radio, and if I needed to call headquarters, I could go out to my car. I did my accident reports there, but most of the time I went to the sheriff's office. They gave us an area we could use. A normal day would be just enforcing traffic laws and serving warrants. In a rural county, you worked closely with the county deputies and city marshals. When I first went to Marion County, the sheriff had

two deputies. At the time, the sheriff was also the collector. At 5:00 [p.m.] everyone would go home. I had a key to the south side of the courthouse and a key to the jail. There was nobody there. Once in a while, you might hear a deputy out until 8:00 or 10:00 at night. Of course, back then there wasn't a lot of traffic, either.

ML: Baxter County was a wet county back then, right?

BC: No. Baxter County wasn't wet until 1980 or so. Most of the people over there drove up through Baxter County to go to the state line. In Marion County you could ride the ferry across to Peel and go to the liquor store. Back then you dealt with more issues of bootlegging than you do now.

ML: Was that something you tried to look for when you stopped a car?

BC: We basically knew who the bootleggers were, and I have caught those carrying significant loads.

ML: One of the big events in State Police history [that] occurred just a little while before you left Marion County was the CSA siege. [Editor's note: Covenant, The Sword, and the Arm of the Lord was a radical organization located in Elijah in northern Arkansas.] I am curious if you had any run-ins with these guys before the siege. [Editors' note: The siege began April 20, 1985, when the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] surrounded the compound. The siege ended peacefully on its fourth day when members including founder James Ellison surrendered to authorities.]

BC: Not any particular run-ins. I knew who they were. Jim Ellison was represented by an attorney in Yellville. His name was Kenneth Smith. Ellison had come to



turn himself in. He went to his [Smith's] office but changed his mind and ran off down the bank to Crooked Creek. We had a little manhunt for him there. Best I can remember he was apprehended then or maybe a little later. But I knew who they were and, as a matter of fact, I had stopped one of them before. You were really skeptical being around people like that. I think his right hand man was named [Kerry] Noble. I knew some of them by sight and knew what they would be driving. Same with the sheriff's office in Marion and Baxter Counties. Their compound in Oakland was in Marion County, but you had to drive through Baxter County to get to it because it was right on the lake. I was up at the "siege"—if you want to call it that—for two or three days. I slept on a picnic table at the grounds.

ML: Can you talk about the lead-up to it? How did you get the word about the operation?

BC: The federal authorities were working on it as well. I had some contacts with the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], and they kept me informed as well. I didn't know the exact time frame. I might know if it was going to happen this week or next week. What moved it up was when David Tate, traveling from Idaho to the CSA compound, was stopped by a trooper in Missouri, and he shot and killed the trooper [Jimmie Linegar]. I went on that manhunt. When Tate was captured, they immediately sent a bunch of us over to the CSA compound, and they moved that timetable up. It is strange and sad that I can remember David Tate's name and not the trooper's. I was sent up on the manhunt for two or three days. Back then, when there was a manhunt along the state line, all of the agen-

cies worked as one. I remember I even patrolled all the way up to Forsythe, Missouri. Not that the camaraderie isn't there now, but it was really strong then, especially between the state agencies. Even on the CSA siege, the Missouri Highway Patrol came down. Oakland is so close to Missouri, anyway.

ML: The FBI moved up the time schedule. Can you talk about getting sent over there?

BC: I was sent over there the next day. Once Tate was captured in Missouri, I think I got the information on my radio, and they had me stop and call in since the CSA had scanners. I got the information [that they were moving up the time schedule], and I went home and got cleaned up, ate and took a quick rest break. Then I changed uniforms and started out. Some of the troops sent SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics], teams in and they might have been there before me.

ML: What was your assignment?

BC: I was assigned to the middle perimeter, and we would check anybody coming in or out. Actually, we weren't letting anybody come in. We felt we had a tight perimeter around their place. Sometimes I would be at a roadblock, and other times I would be a rover and drive around.

ML: Would you stop anybody you saw?

BC: Yes.

ML: You mentioned that you slept on a picnic table. Can you explain why you did that?

BC: The reason we did that was because you didn't get a full shift off. You might be relieved for four or five hours. When I got a break, I would take my blanket to a picnic table. Three or four of us did that. It wasn't hot then, but it was warm. I

remember that because there were snakes out. You kind of learn once you have been out on a manhunt for three or four days what equipment you need for next time. We had MREs [meals ready to eat] and coolers, and we would run into town to pick up ice and stuff. We knew we were going to be there for a while. It wasn't a real long time, though.

ML: When it was over, did they let you go through the compound and look around?

BC: After it was all over and everything was secured, I did go in the compound.

ML: I have heard people talk about all of the weapons these guys had.

BC: I saw some weapons, but I never saw anything that was confiscated. I know they had a significant amount of weaponry.

ML: Are there any other memories that come to mind when you think about that incident?

BC: When the siege ended, I took one of the suspects in the CSA hierarchy to Fort Smith. That was where the federal courthouse was. We put them in the Fort Smith jail, and they were going to have hearings the next day. Some judge let some of them [out on] bond. My son told me that the guy I took down jumped bond, and they didn't catch him for several days after that. An FBI agent rode with me when we took him down there. It was a long trip after a long day.

ML: Before this—in the early 1970s there were a lot of radical problems in east Arkansas. Did they send you over to any of that?

BC: Yes. I was assigned to Forrest City. There was a person over there, Sweet Willie Wine, and he was going to march from [West Memphis] to Little Rock. There was some racial unrest on this. I reported to Forrest City at the National Guard

Armory. There were about fifty marked trooper cars there, and we each had a couple of guardsmen assigned to us.

ML: Do you remember any problems during the march?

BC: There was some rock throwing and scuffles and some arrests made, but nothing really organized or severe, at least not where I was. I think they had more serious problems somewhere else. I stayed in the Forrest City area.

ML: Was that your only assignment to a racial situation?

BC: I can't think of any other.

ML: Did they send you over to the Cuban refugee crisis [at Fort Chaffee]?

BC: Yes.

ML: You are hitting all of the hot spots [laughs].

BC: As a matter of fact, I was there at the big riot at the front gate.

ML: The one where they crossed the gate?

BC: They never crossed the gate on us. We weren't going to let them get past the gate. We had orders from the captain at Fort Smith, Deloin Causey. He stood there with a shotgun in his hand and said, "Don't shoot until I do," and jacked a round in his shotgun. I have a picture from the newspaper [where] you can see them rushing the gate. You can see some State Policemen there, and they had a close-up of the people, and you could see the wild look in their eyes. They had rocks and sticks and anything else they could get their hands on. The National Guard was behind us, but they weren't armed. They only had some nightsticks. I thought, "Boy, those aren't going to be doing us any good." I forget how long I stayed there, maybe five—that was June 1, 1980 when that happened. I remem-

ber they [Fort Chaffee officials?] called us and told us they were having a riot and to get down to the main gate as soon as we could. At the sector [where] I was, there was some shooting but not specifically among the troopers. There may have been [shooting] before I got there, because I know of some troopers who had to fire their weapons. I think that happened before we got there.

ML: Is there anything that sticks out as particularly memorable about that event?

BC: I remember driving around after everything was under control and seeing residents on their roofs with high-powered rifles. One said, "These people aren't going to be coming on my property." It was a volatile situation, and it led to a lot of resentment toward [Governor Bill] Clinton.

ML: How did the community respond when you got down there? How did they treat you?

BC: They treated us well. They were angry about the Cubans being there. [Cuban President Fidel] Castro had turned out his prisons, basically, and we got the worst of the lot. We should have shipped them all back. I will tell you this story. I was on the back gate with two or three other troopers and six or eight National Guard officers. It was kind of slow that day, and there was a turtle crossing the road. I picked up the turtle and with my knife carved the date and my initials in its shell and let it go. I had forgotten about it until Deloin Causey called it to my attention fifteen years later. Little things like that you forget until someone brings it up and stirs your memory.

ML: A lot of the time in a rural community, the State Police takes on a different relationship with the community than it does in Little Rock. You served in a lot of

rural areas. What was the role of the State Police in these communities?

BC: I think you said it. It is different working in a rural area. I think you take on a responsibility—that people looked upon you as *the* law enforcement. I am not saying the ultimate or best, but you had a lot of respect. I didn't look at my job as just writing people tickets and putting people in jail. I looked at my job as helping folks and working with them and trying to make situations better. I remember going to schools and talking to students about driving habits and drinking and driving. You see the people more often in rural areas. You develop a rapport. Sometimes the rapport is good, and sometimes it is bad. I had been in Marion County so long I was writing tickets to the kids of people I had written tickets to years before. I really struggled with my decision to leave Marion County, but I knew the time was coming when I needed to improve my position within the State Police because, obviously, I was going to make a career out of it. I was really worried, since we had been there so long, about how my kids would react. What they will tell you today is that was the best move I ever made. Probably, looking back, the only one worried about it was me. My son will tell you that it was a great move. There just were not a lot of activities for youngsters to do. We lived in Flippin and Yellville, and there you grow up, graduate, drink beer, fish a lot and work for Ranger Boat. That is about your life. As it turned out, it was I who had a hard time adjusting.

ML: Did you see the relationship between the community and the State Police change over the years?

BC: I think it is different. Some of my friends and I have talked about it. I don't

know if I could ever put my finger on it. To give you an analogy, I saw a young officer do something that just made me furious. Instead of getting out of his car and directing traffic at a congested intersection, he sat in his car and ran them down when they cut the corner and wrote them tickets. That is not his job. His job is to get out there and help the people and solve the situation. That just went all over me because that goes against my upbringing and idea of police work. I do think, and I am not picking on the younger generation, that they have a different set of values. Kids now view things differently than how you do, Mike. I probably view them differently than you do. Policing has changed a lot. The mannerisms that people use to police have changed. Equipment has changed a lot. I don't know if I could go back and do a highway patrol job again or not.

ML: You spent quite a bit of time as a post sergeant, lieutenant and a captain. How would you gauge if your troopers were doing the job they needed to be doing?

BC: You can look at the data that is collected from their activity. I gauged some of it on the number of complaints. You can look at the miles on their car and see how far they are driving. I also tried to compare me with them. I was a trooper in highway patrol, and I know how to do the job. I can still relate to that. Even though I was a lieutenant or a captain, I had been there and done that. I always strived to have a good relationship with my subordinates. One thing I tried to never lose as I went up the promotional system was the aspect of being a trooper. I just refused to lose that. I was there for the troopers. They gave me respect, and I certainly gave them respect.

ML: You talked about how policing has changed. When you started, you worked ten

hours a day, six days a week. Now they work eight hours a day, five days a week, and they get overtime. Is the trooper working today different than the one that would have signed up in 1969?

BC: I think he or she is different. Sometimes it is, “What can the State Police do for me?” Rather than, “What can I do for the State Police?” I saw [some of that] before I left. I never worried if I had to work an extra forty minutes or an hour or two hours. There are some people that tell their sergeant they want off early if they worked fifteen minutes over yesterday. I think their generation or culture or upbringing encourages that. So I think they are different. I think they look at it as more of a job than a professional career.

ML: Another activity during the 1980s and 1990s was the marijuana eradication program. Did you participate in any of those?

BC: I did on just one or two. When that really got into high gear it was probably in the mid- to late-1970s. I did go out on some of the ground details. What they eventually did was train spotters to go around in the aircraft and then use ground teams.

ML: Do you remember, either as a trooper or as a commanding officer, using any sort of special enforcement tactics?

BC: Yes. We used some non-typical vehicles. People can generally see an unmarked police car, so we would use some different kinds of vehicles. We have used pickups, odd-colored cars like brown or green, aircraft, helicopters, Mustangs and Camaros. We would warn people in the papers that we were going to be using these things. I have had people pass me while I was driving a Camaro and not



even realize who it was.

ML: Did you sense that when a director would change, the emphasis would change? [For example], if a director came in and his background was in criminal investigation, [would] he encourage more criminal arrests rather than traffic arrests?

BC: I saw some of that. When I went to work, Ralph Scott was the director, and he was a retired FBI man, so he really liked the criminal aspect of it. I didn't see a lot of significant changes early. Tommy Goodwin was, in my opinion, the best State Police director we ever had. He was reserved, intelligent, trusting—he would just give you a job and tell you to go do it. Later in his tenure, I heard some troopers say we were stagnant and that he wouldn't ask for a raise or get us new equipment. Many times people didn't know his hands were tied as well. I really enjoyed working with Tommy Goodwin. We had John Bailey come on board after that. John was a former trooper who went over to the highway police and then came back as director. His emphasis was on traffic enforcement. John is a good person, although I didn't agree with all of his programs or the way he did everything. I think he wanted to do what was right, and he was a good guy.

ML: I have talked with all of the living directors except Ralph Scott, and one of the things they all mention is how intimidating it can be facing all of these captains with twenty-plus years [of experience]. They have to try to win them over to what they want the State Police to become. They have talked about the resistance they have received from some of them. As a captain, what was your experience with these situations? Did you see that happen?

BC: I did see that happen, but not [during] my tenure. As a lieutenant, I could see that.

At one time, the captain in the State Police was God. We had some intimidating captains. I am sure you have come across the names “Slick” Wilson, Boone Bartlett [and] Gene Donham. They are good people, raw-boned and mean as hell. You were just scared of them. I don’t know if scared is the right word, but you were intimidated and very respectful of these people. They [came] up in a time [when] it was really tough to be a policeman and a trooper. One trooper might have four or five counties. They developed their reputations and statures, and nobody was going to mess with them. I never worked directly for “Slick,” but I have heard stories of him picking up the phone to the director and telling him that he was going to do it his way, and if the director didn’t like it, then tough. As a director coming into that, it was tough to win them over. They have to have the support of the troop commanders because they are the backbone. We know that a political appointee will most likely get the director’s job, but it needs to be someone with State Police experience. They know the inside of the State Police and how the system operates. What you have is that when the governors change, the directors change—with the exception of Tommy Goodwin. He was appointed by Frank White, and he served under Clinton and [Jim Guy] Tucker. Did he lose a bit of emphasis later in his tenure? He may have lost some of that, but he was a really good director.

ML: Are there any changes in technology or equipment that stand out as being particularly important?

BC: When I went to work, we didn’t have radar. It was still on the horizon. We had a two-channel radio. It was on a low band, and there were some times when I

would be sitting around Cotter or Flippin, and if the weather was poor, you couldn't talk to Harrison. The radio systems are much better [now]. Now you have LIDAR [light detection and ranging] with the laser light. Also, you can sit in your car and input all of your accident data onto a mobile terminal and print it out on the printer at headquarters. Now you don't even have to get out of your car to do your reports. When I was a trooper a lot of my time was spent with paperwork. When I was doing accident reports, I had to use carbon paper, and I had to use a typewriter without a spell checker. I am not a good speller anyway [laughs]. You had to make sure that when you turned your accident report over to the other side that you had the right side of the carbon paper up, or you would have a big mess. Computers, radio equipment, the mobile database—it has really changed. Radar is a good enforcement tool, but that is not the only job troopers have. Do people speed? Yes. And you need to slow them down, but there are other things out there, too. I never was a speed cop. I know the State Police has some. The State Police has gone through times when they really wanted us to write tickets. Did I ever have to work under an official quota? No. Did I ever have to work under an [un]official quota? Maybe. I never told my troopers that they had to write so many tickets a day. If they were just out in their car and enforcing the law, they would find plenty of violations.

ML: I interviewed Tom Mars. He gets a bad rap for a lot of reasons. One of the things that he instituted regarding DWI [driving when intoxicated] enforcement was sending the bottom-ranking troopers to be retrained in Little Rock, which was [an] unpopular [policy].

BC: I think that there is a certain amount of police officers that are lazy. To give you an example, say you are working late on night and are on your way home. You get behind a person, and he or she kind of runs over the yellow line. Then you get to thinking, "Boy, I hope he doesn't cross that yellow line again. I don't want to mess with him and haul him to jail and have two hours of paperwork to do." You hurry up and hope your driveway gets there before he runs over that yellow line again. I think there are some people like that. Tom Mars's program helped some of them, but it was very unpopular. They didn't like going down there to be re-trained, even though they needed it.

ML: What did you think about Tom Mars? He was the first non-police guy to come in there [during your time of service].

BC: He got a lot of resentment on the retraining program, and he got a lot more on other things, too. I have heard troopers say that it [the Arkansas State Police] was a toy for him. He took a pretty good pay cut just to come down. I think it was a fun time in his life. I think he made some promotions he shouldn't have, and I attribute a lot of money woes that the State Police are still experiencing to him. He spent too much money and bought too many toys. He put too much emphasis on things he shouldn't have. As far as the retraining program goes, I don't think we ever sent anyone down for that. We threatened one or two. I think basically that was what it was. I heard some stories about people in Little Rock that hadn't made a DWI arrest in two or three years, so maybe they needed some retraining.

ML: You talked about Tommy Goodwin. Are there any other officers or commanders that you highly respected?

BC: Tommy stands out in my mind because he was the type of guy you could go down the hall and talk to. Bill Miller was a good director. Ralph Scott was controversial. The State Police went through a reorganization period where we were part of the Department of Public Safety. I can't remember all of their [Public Safety directors'] names. Doug Harp was promoted because of his position with [Governor] David Pryor. That was the only reason. It was bang—one minute he was a lieutenant and then bang, he was the director. I think that the governor did that just because Doug Harp was there. Not that Doug Harp was a bad director; he was a mediocre director. Doug Harp was probably pro-criminal [arrests] more than other directors because that was his background. They have all made promotions I didn't particularly like. It is hard to get away from friendship.

ML: One of the things that tripped up Don Melton was the problem with the commissioners and promotions. The commissioners have de facto control over who gets promoted. What was your relationship with the commissioners?

BC: I had a good relationship with most of the commissioners. I do think that some directors went through a period of time [where relationships weren't very good]. Commissioners have to approve the promotions. I think what you get is a push back from the commissioners when the people they wanted weren't getting promoted. It might be a political issue or a "good old boy" type of deal. They could refuse to approve a promotion, but they can't promote themselves. Then the director wouldn't submit anyone for promotion, and there would be a stalemate. That situation went on with me. Winford Phillips left on June 30, 2002. I should have been promoted the following commission meeting, but Melton wouldn't put

my name before the commissioners. There came to be a rift between him and the commissioners, not just because of me. The story I heard was that he was going to promote somebody, but the commissioners said they weren't going to approve any other promotion until Bill Carver's name was put on the table. One of the commissioners told me that if they hadn't done this, I never would have been promoted. It is kind of an uncomfortable situation, but I felt I had earned the job. I had served in that capacity for a while, anyway, since Winford was winding down. I think Don Melton is a good man, but I don't think he was a very good director. I was disappointed that he had an opportunity to promote me at the next commission meeting but did not. My son was an Arkansas State Police Trooper. He has since left and gone to work for the federal government. He was upset with him. Actually, my son is a third generation police officer. My father was a city deputy sheriff in Asheville, North Carolina, during the whiskey running days. My son was a city policeman at Fayetteville for three years and then he went to work for us for six years. He resigned and is now a criminal investigator for U.S. Customs out of Kansas City. He cried like a baby when he left the State Police because it had always been his goal to be a trooper. The State Police doesn't pay our troopers enough. His retirement system was different than mine, and not as good. At one time, that was what drew quality people to the State Police: equipment, salary and benefits. The State Police is suffering now because of the money woes. You can go to work at Springdale or Rogers and make more money. The governor needs to put a little more emphasis on the State Police.

ML: Are there any other State Police officers that stick out over your career?

BC: I have a lot of good friends like G.B. Harp, Les Braunnns and Ed Wolf. I have friends all over the state. I talked with John Chappelle the other day, and he had been fishing over in Cotter. He reminded me of [something] that happened years ago. We were over at White Sands drinking coffee. We had been out on a small manhunt, and it was in the summertime. This other trooper and I were the only ones in this café, and the waitress was always pulling jokes on us. She walked by, and I didn't know it, but she slipped a firecracker under my seat. That thing went off, and we jumped up and grabbed our pistols. It scared her, and she fell down thinking she was going to be shot. John ran into that waitress, and she asked about me.

ML: Are there any other memorable events that stick out when you look back over your career?

BC: I worked some pretty severe accidents that involved multiple fatalities. It is a hard thing to talk to the families and go to the morgue and identify the bodies. You never get used to that. I never got hardened to the fact of telling someone their loved ones had been killed. Bill Clinton was governor, and the State Police association was having a fish fry at Lake Norfolk. The troopers were just mad as hell at Bill Clinton because the first thing he did when [state] revenues fell was freeze state salaries. We had worked three or four years without a raise, and people were grumbling. The association invited him to speak. We had an old converted ferry with fish cookers on it, and we went out on the lake with the troopers and their wives. It seems that wherever I went in the state I always drew the assignment of driving the governors. So he knew me. When he got on the ferry,

a lot of the troopers were not openly friendly to him. He saw my wife and me sitting at a picnic table, and we were eating. He plopped down between us and said, "Not everybody is happy." I told him they weren't. He asked me why, and I told him he knew why—the salaries were not very good. I said, "Governor, we have worked for quite a time without a raise, and when we do get a raise, it isn't much of one. The first thing you do is freeze salaries." I told him he needed to give us a raise. He asked me what he should say, and I told him to tell the troopers—and to be honest—that he was going to try to find the money to give us a raise. He was sincere, and he asked me if that would help. I told him it would if he followed through. Well, he got up and made a speech telling them all of this. When he [finished] he came back over and sat down and asked my wife how he did, and she said, "You did good, but now you have to follow through on your promise." He did finally, but the troopers were really upset with him. When he was president, on his first trip back here I was on detail at the Tyson Lake House. Here came the limo, and all of a sudden it stopped and a Secret Service agent got out and looked around and then Clinton got out and came and gave us all a big hug. It came out in the papers, and my sister-in-law was reading the *Dallas Morning News* and saw it and called to ask if I was trying to get a promotion [laughs]. I had a good career. I had an exciting career. I never had to shoot anyone—intentionally, at least. Getting back to the CSA deal—I would call my wife, and to this day she will tell you that she thought our telephone was tapped. The CSA had the technology to do that. They were really into it with a trooper in Gainesville. They would listen in on phone conversations. Back then you didn't know



what a cell phone was, and you had to go to a pay phone. I think it cost a nickel or a dime to call home. Nothing else stands in my mind, other than the famous tackle I made [of the stalker at the University of Arkansas versus Ole Miss football game in Fayetteville on October 26, 2002] [laughs]. I guess the picture is still on the Internet. I tell people that after thirty-four-and-a-half years of service in the Arkansas State Police, I will only be remembered for that. One accident that I remember was when George Mann, who was the city marshal in Marion County, was killed on a one-lane bridge. G. B. Harp worked that accident. George was killed on his seventieth birthday. I had been telling him to retire. He had pulled up next to a one-lane bridge when he saw a kid he knew had an arrest warrant for sitting on the banister. He was talking to this kid when a sixteen-year-old kid that had been drinking came along and hit the patrol car and pinned George between the car and the banister. When they moved the car, he died just like that. He was a good guy.

[End of Interview]

[Edited by Rebecca Willhite]

[JD]