HISTORICAL MEMORIAL CENTER

Pennsylvania State Police

Oral History Interview of:

Corporal Richard J. Kara

Diaz Data Services ~ 331 Schuylkill Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17110 ~ 717-233-6664

INTERVIEWER:

This is a Pennsylvania State Police oral history project. The date is January 23, 2007. My name's Corporal Bob Mertz [ph], PSP, retired. I'm interviewing Corporal Richard J. Kara. The interview is being conducted at Corporal Kara's home in Brownsville, Hiller, to be exact. Corporal Kara, do I have your permission to videotape this interview?

MR. KARA:

Yes, you do.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. On behalf of the Pennsylvania State Police Historical Educational Memorial Center, Corporal Kara, we welcome you. This is tape one. Okay. Corporal Kara, give us a little bit of information about your background, your biographical data, your place of birth, family structure, what you did prior to leading up to your joining the State Police.

MR. KARA:

I was the youngest of nine children, born to -- the parents were John and Rose Kara. I was born here in Brownsville, November the 16th, 1940, to be exact. And I grew up in this area. During

my time in the area, of course, I went to the local system, graduating from Brownsville High School. After I graduated from high school -- during that period of time, as I was in high school, I, of course, worked in a grocery store, serving as a clerk and as an apprentice, a jack-of-all-trades. After I graduated from high school, I went on to school. I studied basic engineering and drafting in at a vocational technical school, and then, at that time, still maintaining my employment, working my way, actually, through school. After I had graduated from that school, I had the opportunity to stay on where I was working, because in the back of my mind, I was always going to go and join the Pennsylvania State Police. It was something that I had always wanted to do, probably from the time that you first form those thoughts and all through high school. That was my ultimate goal. During my time that I worked in a grocery store as a salesman, I got to know quite well a Jewish fellow, and he owned his own merchandise, a wholesale company. And he had told me back then. He said, "Son, I'm going to give you a piece of advice." He says, "Whatever you put in your head, remember, and nobody will ever take it away from you." He says, "You learn as much as you can learn, and then you continue on." So, I -- when I graduated from

high school, I -- as I said, I went into the -- further my education with -- into the drafting and mechanical engineering fields, all the while, still working in a grocery store, working my way through it. After I graduated, I still had the thoughts that I was going to join the State Police, so rather than go out and seek employment in the drafting field with some corporation, the boss where I worked, the guy that owned the store, asked me if I was willing to stay for a while, and if I was, I would -- he would teach me how to cut meat. So, I stayed there, and I did learn the meat-cutting profession. And I kept that profession right up to the time that I went into the State Police. I turned 21 in November. At that time, there was -- they were adding on to the State Police. They were adding another complement. There was a 2,000-man complement, and they were adding 400 men for the turnpike complement. And I wanted to be -- obviously, I was going to join, and I had the opportunity, and I was -- you were able to, at that time, put your application in just prior to turning age 21. And I was fortunate enough. I did it. And then the -- when I was 21, of course, they had the investigation. I took all the testing prior to that, and three months after I turned 21, I was in the academy in Hershey.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. Now, your family, your father, John, what did he do for you?

MR. KARA:

My parents actually emigrated here from Hungary. They met here. They were married here, but they, both my parents, emigrated from Hungary, and I'm of the first generation in the United States, because I was born here. He was a coal miner by profession, working here locally for the H.C. Frick Coal Company in the -- in this area. He retired from the coal-mining industry.

INTERVIEWER:

And your mother?

MR. KARA:

Mother was a housewife, all -- spending all her time, of course, raising children, and tending to the home, as most women did in those days.

INTERVIEWER:

In the pre-interview, I found it interesting that -- do you want to tell us about your learning and your father's native language and how you spoke it and...

MR. KARA:

As a young individual, when I was -- of course, when I was born, my parents, being the first generation in this country, immigrating to this country, spoke Hungarian, and quite a few of the neighbors in the area always -- also were native immigrants, and they spoke Hungarian, as well. When I was born, it was always my father's idea, especially since I was the youngest, that I was going to be able to understand, read, write, and speak the Hungarian language. So, from the time that I was born, he spoke to me from the time that I could first remember of speech in Hungarian. And he never spoke to me in English until the day he died. And during that period, of course, his ideal was that I was going to learn the language and be fluent in the Hungarian language. And when -- and during -- all during my childhood and in -- even in my later years, I was never able to speak to him in English, although he could speak to everyone else in the neighborhood. He could talk to them. And he could talk to them well in English. He would never speak to me in English, and I could never speak to him in English. I had to always speak to him in Hungarian, because if I spoke to him in English, he would just tell me he didn't understand what I was saying. And so I learned the language as a result of it, and of course growing up

and around the household, that was always the language that I spoke. So really, I guess, when I started school and we -- being with my friends, I really did learn how to speak English.

INTERVIEWER:

That's interesting. Another interesting thing and -- that I -- something I thought was interesting, you had several brothers, all who served in the armed services, and I believe you told me that one or two of them actually died in the war.

MR. KARA:

Yes, I -- all of my brothers were in. They were in the Second World War, and I had one brother that was in just at the end of the Second World War in Germany. One -- my oldest brother, John, was killed on the invasion of Germany when they launched from England into Normandy and then on across Belgium into Germany. He was fatally wounded there. And I had another brother, Alex, that was with General MacArthur when they took the Philippines. As a matter of fact, he was with MacArthur on the first wave when they not only took the Philippines but when they were beaten off and then they had -- on the return trip. He was also wounded in the war. Another brother was in China, Albert, and as a result of working in the Southeast Asian corridor, contracted a severe, I guess along with many other ones, form of

diabetes. And he was a diabetic all his life, and of course, he eventually succumb to that, as well. And I had a brother that was in the Air Force. He was the only one that made it through without any problems. It was Joe. And another brother, Julius, who was in Germany just after the war suffered inner ear problems and various infections as a result of whatever contamination that they were involved in there.

INTERVIEWER:

That's interesting. Interesting background. And your wife, Marlene [ph], she retired, is that correct?

MR. KARA:

Yes, she's from this area, originally from the Brownsville -- Allison area, actually, towards Republic. Went to the local high school here as well and graduated from the Brownsville Area School District and worked after school in various jobs here and then as a sales representative of Home Interiors out in Dallas, Texas.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Did you know Marlene before you joined the State Police?

MR. KARA:

No, actually, I met her as a result of my sister-in-law who had worked -- was in working with her in a factory, Republic

Sportswear, where they made MacGregor suit coats and MacGregor clothing for the MacGregor -- the clothing line. And my sister-in-law is the one that introduced me. At that time, I was stationed up in Indiana when I first met her.

INTERVIEWER:

And as a result of that marriage, you had two children, is that correct?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I have two daughters: Holly, my oldest daughter, and my youngest daughter, Heather.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have any grandchildren?

MR. KARA:

I have three grandchildren: Jordan, who is 16 years of age now, and -- to my daughter, Heather, and I also have two grandchildren, Miranda and Samuel, through my daughter, Holly. Miranda's 11 and Samuel's 9.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. You stated you went to college after high school. Where did you go to college?

MR. KARA:

Yes, when -- I went to a vocational technical school in Uniontown. That was a trade school where I was part of the commercial institute of technology program at that time -- those years, and I studied mechanical drafting and basic mechanical engineering. In those days, of course, everything was done with a slide-rule and a T-square. It was no longer -- there was no computers, no math. All the math that we used, I performed on the slide rule. And when we -- in the course of study, you had to learn all phases of drafting. And in that studying, that course design, I had to not only know the mechanical drafting, which I specialized in later, but I also had to start out with architectural drafting, structural drafting, as well as electrical drafting. And then I finished it in -- being -- the major thrust of my education was in mechanical drafting, and I pretty much specialized in technical illustrations, basically making designs and drawing various mechanical parts, as you would see in a catalog.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes. So, between high school and 1962, when you joined the State Police, you were -- kept yourself pretty busy.

MR. KARA:

Yes, I worked and I continued my education. It was something that I -- as I said, when I met that one salesman who owned his

own company and gave me that advice, it was something that stuck with me all my life. Always put it in your head, because whatever you put in your head, nobody will ever take it away from you again. And that was something that I always remembered. And then, of course, later on, I went -- after I joined the State Police, I started my college education, and I -- of course, I started at Penn State and ended up finishing in California University.

INTERVIEWER:

And that was done at -- in the evening?

MR. KARA:

Yes, that was all done in the evenings. When I was finally -- I started, I believe, up in the Greensburg area with Penn State. They were offering some night classes, and I took several classes up there. And of course, in those early days, we were transferred quite a bit, and I ended up being transferred, not only within the Troop A area, I was transferred down into Troop B. And of course, I couldn't continue the education up there. The program was too far away, distance-wise, so I -- Indiana University then started a program in criminology, so I then enrolled in that program, and it was done in consortium with California University of Pennsylvania. And I took the courses

there at California with Indiana and all the Indiana instructors. And then I completed all of the criminology and all the requirements for Indiana, however, Indiana University required that the last 30 credit hours had to be completed on campus site, in Indiana. And of course, we're talking about a distance of about 100 miles, plus me working, and it just wasn't feasible. So I took a lot of -- most of the courses being in the English and the varied other sciences, the required courses, I took at California University, and then I had to take some additional courses. I graduated with a degree in urban government, urban affairs. And as luck would have it, I could no longer get those courses in at the university campus, which is only seven miles away. They were being offered in Pittsburgh. So, I had to travel two nights a week from Uniontown to Pittsburgh. I took classes starting at 6:00 in the evening, and I would get home usually around midnight on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and I took two classes every night so that I could get the required courses for my background, my education, and then I finally did, and I graduated from -- which is now California University of Pennsylvania.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. You said that you always wanted to become a trooper. What do you think was the -- who might've come along your way that started you thinking about being a trooper?

MR. KARA:

I don't really -- I can't recall exactly what the beginning -- were the beginnings of the idea was for me to want -- always wanting to join the State Police, but there was -- from the town here, Roy Tittler [ph], who retired from the job as a major, was on the job at the time, and he was a -- his family lived here, and occasionally, he would come home. I know when I was in high school, I was able to go down and talk -- or since I graduated from high school, I had met him down at his sister's house and talked to him about the job. And he -- as a matter of fact, then, he was stationed in the Butler area. And then, his brother, Ray, who I never had much contact with after he came on the job, but I knew him, and then he was stationed up in the Punxsutawney area up into Ridgway. So, I guess I sort of got the ideas in my final years from them, but where I got it originally, I could never place it in my mind. I know when I left the area to join the State Police and I was going into the academy, the minister's wife from the church that I was going to here had told me that when she -- when they first came here, and I was just a young toddler, probably in the

preschool and -- at the preschool age, that she was asking me then and -- what I wanted to be when I grow up, and I always told her that I was going to be a State Policeman when I grew up. And I don't ever recall it, but she mentioned it to me when I went to the -- actually went to the academy.

INTERVIEWER:

That's unusual, because most times, it's a youngster runs into a State Policeman in uniform and decides that's what they want to be, but in your case, it was you.

MR. KARA:

Yeah, I don't really recall how I -- my -- in my younger days, it was unusual, because there just wasn't that many men stationed even in the Fayette County area. There was -- probably lucky if there was 30 men stationed here or 20 at -- as a matter of fact, it couldn't have been no more than 20. And seeing a State Police Officer was very unusual. The only time we would ever -- I ever even saw anything that resembled a State Policeman was when we drove to Uniontown and you went past the old barracks and you saw the cars and you knew that's where the barracks was on Route 40. And maybe, occasionally, you'd see a guy on the road. But other than that, I had actually, other than Major Tittler,

no one on the job that I ever actually spoke to prior to me coming to the job.

INTERVIEWER:

When you applied, you stated you were 21, just prior to being 21. Do you recall who initially interviewed you?

MR. KARA:

Yes, it was Detective Sergeant Jasper Augustine [ph]. Jack did my background investigation. I remember not only the interview a the old barracks in Uniontown but when he came out and did the background investigation in the neighborhood. He had stopped by and I had talked to him. He interviewed me on various occasions, and I had the pleasure of working with Jack after I came on the job, before his retirement.

INTERVIEWER:

That's also interesting just to note, for the interview, you did the background on my son, isn't that correct?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I remember that now.

INTERVIEWER:

What did the process consist of back then? Height and weight requirements?

MR. KARA:

Back in those days, it was quite a bit different than it is now. You couldn't be no shorter than 5'8" nor taller than, I believe it was, 6'1" or 6'2". And of course, the height and weight requirements, you -- being proportionate. They wanted men a lot thinner. They weren't looking for huge men. They would make their own, I guess. And of course, besides being in excellent physical condition, I'll never forget, of course, you had to have 20/20 vision without corrective lenses, but you had to also have 20 of your own teeth. I remember that as a -- talking to a member of the department that you knew well, Corporal Gorman [ph]. When they said that, it was like buying a horse. You know. You had to make sure everybody had 20 of their own teeth.

INTERVIEWER:

That's funny. What kind of tests or interviews did you have to take to get on the job?

MR. KARA:

When I first -- when we first made the application, I -- they -- I remember I came into Uniontown to the barracks, and then, of course, seeking the application. I think, at that time, we had to do everything from Harrisburg, if I'm not mistaken. And then sent it in to them. They sent an application form out, which was filled out and returned to them. And then, later on, you were -- when

the testing procedure was done, it was done in Pittsburgh for this area, Shanley [ph] High School, you had to go take the civil service test, which would've been the next step after the initial application. And once you passed the civil service test, then you were called in for the interview process to begin the actual investigation portion with the -- when I met with Sergeant Augustine. And then they did the background investigation. And once that was completed and it was successfully -- you successfully passed that stage of it, as well as the civil service test, then you went to Hershey. You were called down there for another interview and the final physical by the physician, the state physician in at the academy in Hershey. And then, as a result of that interview and then again the passing of that physical, it was then we were invited to come on the job.

INTERVIEWER:

The interview at Hershey, was it by an individual, or was it a board type interview?

MR. KARA:

It was a board type. I -- if I remember right, I believe it was three officers that interviewed you briefly, concerning your background and your desire to join the State Police. And then, after that is

when you went and took the physical, once you -- once the interview process was done with you.

INTERVIEWER:

How much of a time period after that board interview by the three officers before you were notified that you were going to be going into the academy?

MR. KARA:

I would imagine it was probably, oh, I would say, at least a month or six weeks, something like that. I was informed by a letter from Harrisburg that I was accepted, and then I would be eligible for the next class that would be going into the academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Back in those days, did you need any letters of recommendation or anyone to speak on your behalf before you gained the appointment or...

MR. KARA:

No, I just walked into the barracks and started the process, just like anybody looking for a job, I guess. Of course, for me, it wasn't a job. It was something that I was determined I was going to do. And I went into the barracks, and I just asked for the application and the process that I was going to be required to go

through to join the State Police. And they put me -- pointed me in the direction, and I just followed through with it.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So, politics played no role in the hiring process?

MR. KARA:

None whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Back in 1916, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, “No political influence or other influence avails to get a single, undesirable man on the force or to keep a man on the force if he proved himself unfit.” Do you feel that this statement held true while you were at the PSP?

MR. KARA:

I was never exposed to any sort of political influence during my entire career on the job. I was never asked for -- to do anything, except what I was required to do as far as my employment was concerned.

INTERVIEWER:

When you were notified that you were hired, how did you feel?

MR. KARA:

Oh, that was great. It was almost like a dream coming true, that I was finally going to be able to go down to the academy and start the process and basically fulfill a lifelong dream.

INTERVIEWER:

You weren't married at the time. What did your family -- how did your family feel about that?

MR. KARA:

Well, my father had passed away just as I graduated from high school. My mother -- of course, I lived at home with my mother. Having gone through what she has gone through in the Second World War and with her other sons, she wasn't too happy on the fact that I was going to enter into something on the same plane. But nonetheless, the fact that I was determined that I wanted to do it, she accepted it, the fact that, okay, that I was going to go into the State Police, and that was going to be my lifelong career. She accepted that fact.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. The cadet training experience, tell us a little bit about that. What was a normal day like?

MR. KARA:

Well, in those days, of course, my days at the academy as well as the -- my early days on the job, I believe I -- when I went to

Hershey, we were -- I believe it was the second or the third class at what was then the brand-new State Police Academy located on the hill opposite the Hotel Hershey. So, everything at that academy was, basically, brand new. Those days, of course, there was no such thing as a 40-hour workweek and -- or contracts or anything like that, so when we went into the academy, you were going to be there for six months, and your day began probably 6:00 in the morning, and it was lights out at 10:30 at night, basically five days a week and a half a day on Saturday. We -- our days consisted -- I'll never forget my first day at the academy after we were indoctrinated and when they took us down to the stables, and there, of course, I believe they had about 60 horses who had spent the winter pretty much in the barn, in the stable area, and didn't get to get out very much. And we were, of course, sitting, lined up down there for roll call, and the First Sergeant introduced himself and all the manpower to us. And then, the next thing you know, that -- it was time for the horses to be taken out onto the picket line to be groomed by the numbers. Of course, they did explain how this -- how the grooming process of a horse was to be done, and we all were each given a rag, a currycomb, a hoof pick, and a brush. And we

went into the -- we were called out by numbers, because there was a man for each horse, and then the rest of the men, the cadets who were there, then would clean the stables after we took the horses out. and the reason I remember it so well is because that was the first time those horses had been out for a while, and especially them knowing that there were some green hands holding onto them, taking them out to the picket line. That was quite a day. I mean, there was some rearing and kicking and bucking and snorting that went on that was unbelievable. I managed that -- I was pretty lucky. I -- out of the 60 horses I believe we had at that time, or at that -- a number close to that, unfortunately, there was one mare. The rest were geldings. And she was a beautiful horse, American Standard bred. I'll never forget it. I walked into that barn, and it just so happened, that was the horse that was in front of me. So, I took her out of the stable, and I took her out to the picket line to tie her up. And I managed with no problem. Of course, I tied her to the picket line where we was going to clean them. And of course, we cleaned them by the numbers. And there was the academy staff there, and of course, the first sergeant was calling out as we were cleaning them. And she just didn't want to be touched on the

croup area, you know, on the hindquarters. I knew I had to go in there to clean the feet by the numbers, and boy, reaching down for those hind legs, she did not want to be touched, and she was kicking. And I think that first day, if I didn't duck 15 or 20 times and her hooves went over top of my head, I didn't duck once. And I'll never forget it when I finished grooming her, I said, "Oh, boy. There's only five months and 30 more days to go and I can get away from this."

INTERVIEWER:

Did that discourage you in any way, or did you just...

MR. KARA:

No, it didn't. I was just determined that I was going to do it. As a matter of fact, after I graduated from the academy, I ended up being selected to ride in the rodeo, to be a part of the rodeo team. My equestrian abilities -- of course, they taught us to ride. We had to ride all through the time I spent in the academy, and I was one of the ones, there was probably about ten of us, selected out of a class of 100, and we stayed on, and then I -- of course, I stayed with the rodeo for almost five years after that, performing as an equestrian.

INTERVIEWER:

Let's talk about the rodeo. Just what was the rodeo?

MR. KARA:

The rodeo, at that time, we used to -- it -- was using the horses. We have horses, motorcycles, and dogs, and we would go out after training at the academy at the -- down in the -- of course, the stable area, and then we had a drill field area where we practiced. We would travel to different parts of the state, and each year was at a different part of the state. I believe it was divided into three different areas. And we would put on shows. So, we'd -- we did it in the month of August. It was done in a stadium arena area, anywhere there was a football stadium. Of course, they made arrangements ahead of time that we would be there. And we would come into town, set up the tents. We had the horses. We transported everything. It was almost like a traveling circus. And we'd come into town and set it up, and then we'd practice on the field so -- to get the feel of the area, and then, the next day, we would put a show on in the afternoon. Two shows, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, and then that night, we would tear down and move onto the next town. It was almost -- just like a traveling circus. But we did riding in formations on the horses, like four abreast and the different maneuvers of showing the actual horsemanship. And then there was stunt riding on the horses. We had horses that

we used to -- you'd do vaults over top of the horses while they were galloping across the fields. Then, the fancy dressage where the horses were actually almost like dancing to music and jumping through fire, going over hoops. And then we had a -- quite a few of the -- most of the dogs were German Shepherds. We'd -- and we had handlers there to put on the shows for them, different things with the dogs. And also drills with the men riding motorcycles. So, if you weren't performing, you were the -- basically the stagehand for the next act that was coming on. You were out. You'd perform, and you'd come off the field, and then you were -- you would be the prop man or whatever that was needed for the next act until you went out and performed again.

INTERVIEWER:

Were all the men detached from troops to perform?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, all the -- everybody that performed were actually Troopers on the job and the permanent personnel from down at the academy that were stationed there. That was probably one of the things that really made it so interesting to the people that these were actual Troopers that you saw on the road. When we -- when it came time to perform in the rodeo, back then, I was at

-- in Greensburg, and then when I would leave right after Memorial Day, we worked then. Of course, there was no such thing as a contractor or a 40-hour workweek, so you could do it. Then, we went to Hershey, and we were actually detached to the academy in Hershey where we stayed, and we would practice and train the horses and get them ready in June and July. And then, in August, we would go on the road. It would already be set up where we would go and which towns we were going to visit and where we would perform at the various stadiums. And then, at the end of August, we would make the circuit of that area of the state, return back to Hershey. And we would be dismissed in time to be back in your troop for Labor Day. And then, of course, you worked there. And while we were down at Hershey in those days, we were also -- there were patrols out of the academy that patrolled the Hershey area as well as Palmyra and down through parts of Lebanon County. And those days, we were the patrols as well. The permanent personnel in Hershey would work the daylight shift, and then the afternoon and the midnight shifts we would take. And so we would also pull patrol duties, and we would also pull the dusk duty, of course, to dispatch, because the dispatch center was right out of the

academy. And the only break we would get is you worked midnights, you were allowed to sleep until noon the next day. And from the midnight to 8:00 shift, and then you got up at noon and then you went and reported back and then started. You got the afternoon portion of the work where you cleaned up and -- the road and so forth.

INTERVIEWER:

How big of a -- how many men were on the rodeo, roughly?

MR. KARA:

There was probably -- I would imagine, all total -- everybody that was on the -- in the -- on the detail, not only did you perform your -- you know, you were a performer. You were also, as I said, the crew, so it was probably about 40 of us, I believe, all told, because the one segment we performed on horseback, there was probably 30 -- I think four sets. We rode in -- we started at four abreast, and I think there was eight, so we started with, like, 32 or 36 horses. So, we would have 36 horsemen plus others, so it was probably around 45, I would say, men that were involved in it.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So, you had to be pretty much dedicated to the State Police to put in all those hours for no compensation. I -- is that not right?

MR. KARA:

Well, it was -- yes, that was your life. That's what you were going to do. We weren't permitted to be married anyway when I joined the State Police. You had to be single. And the only way you could get married was with the Troop Commander's permission after submitting a letter to him and then after at least five years on the job. So you weren't going to be married right off the bat or you weren't going to get married without them knowing it and them okaying it as well. So, your job -- and back then, the men were really close together. I mean, it was a family. I mean, you depended on each other. You lived with each other. And that was just your way of life. You were dedicated to the job, and so was everybody else around you.

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned getting permission from the Troop Commander to get married. Did that require an investigation of the lady that you were going to marry?

MR. KARA:

Yes, it did. I -- when I was -- when we were married, I submitted a letter. I was stationed in Greensburg at the time. I had to submit a letter to the Captain with my intent that I was requesting permission to be married, giving -- supplying them, in the letter, with her name, address and so forth, where she was from, her age, and of course her family. And then, they did a background investigation to see if she was worthy of becoming a member of the Pennsylvania State Police's family.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you know whether or not that's done today?

MR. KARA:

No, now they do accept married personnel on the job, so it's done, you know, ahead of time, but back then -- and if the Troop Commander said no, I mean, that was it. You couldn't get married. It was no questions asked.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you recall anyone who may have wanted to get married and was, after the background investigation of the woman, that they would not permit him to marry that woman? Do you recall any instances?

MR. KARA:

I don't recall. I heard of them, but I personally didn't recall of any incidents where that occurred. I did have some of the men -- other men say that that had occurred. The only instance I can recall is when I was stationed up in Somerset, there was a guy out on the -- one of the Troopers out on the turnpike, and I believe he was from up in the Erie area, I'm not sure. He didn't ask permission to get married, and he went home on a weekend, and he did get married, figuring -- I guess he thought that they'd never find out. But it wasn't too long after he came back that they found out that he got married without permission, and they fired him.

INTERVIEWER:

So, they meant business.

MR. KARA:

They meant what they said.

INTERVIEWER:

Before we get back to your training, while we're on the rodeo, do you recall any instances or any incidents that stick out in your mind of a comical nature?

MR. KARA:

Oh, on the rodeo?

INTERVIEWER:

I'm sure there are many, but...

MR. KARA:

I recall the things that occurred at a rodeo, of course, there was always somebody going to be banged up. There was -- almost every town we went in, as a result of stunt riding, there -- and they even stunt-rode motorcycles, some of the other guys. I only -- I did nothing but with horses. But other than guys being banged up, I can recall -- well, one I do. When I was -- we were performing somewhere down east, and I can't remember where. When we entered onto the field, usually there -- under each goal post, there was a -- the -- there was four horsemen, usually the Captain and then carrying the colors of the United States and the state flags and two men on each side of them on horseback, and they would be the post force when we performed a show. And we came out in columns of four horses abreast, and so there was eight columns of four. And coming out, if you were in the middle of that pack, things were really close, because we were tight. You were nose to rump on your way coming out, and the -- you were -- actually, your legs were hitting the guy beside you. And occasionally, the horses would get excited in there, and I had one where -- and they would start biting or kicking as you're coming out. And then, when we came out on to the field, we

would break into a single column. It was just single file, and we would gallop all -- completely around the field, and we just kept feeding off from the four-horse column into the single units and just following one another around the field. And it just so happened that just as we were breaking, the horse that I was riding, the one in front kicked, and the one in back bit him, and he just went nuts. And he just started rearing and bucking. And I -- so nobody would get hit or kicked by him, I pulled him off to the side. I still went. I made the gallop across the field, or with the rest of the men through -- on the field, but I kept him to the side so he wouldn't kick anybody, because he was just leaping through the air on his hind legs and kicking and bucking. And I -- of course, I had a good seat, so I rode well. And I kept him, and he finally quieted down. I pulled him right back into the line, and we finished and went on and did the show that -- it was, you know, without incident. And when I finished, coming off the field, the First Sergeant was there. Of course, he was one of the ones that was under the other goal post and saw everything that was going on. He said -- he congratulated everybody. "You did a fine job. You put on a good show." And he says, "By the way," he says, "that was quite an act you performed on the opening as

well going out across the field." So -- but it was a wild ride, but again, we were well trained to what we did.

INTERVIEWER:

The rodeo, is it still in existence?

MR. KARA:

Not to my knowledge, not to the -- especially to the extent that it was in those days. As I said, those days, there was no -- you were dedicated to the State Police. There was no such thing as a contract. There was no such thing as a 40-hour workweek. You just were there. We worked six days a week, and hours meant nothing. So -- and then when we went on the road that month of August, we worked the whole month. There was just -- wasn't any days off, because you were just gone from the time we left Hershey until the time we return. So, that was just part of your life, and that just so happened that was the way you lived that month. That's all.

INTERVIEWER:

But the comradery on that rodeo amongst the men probably was one of the reasons that you volunteered for that duty.

MR. KARA:

Yeah, the closeness was there. I mean, it was just like, I mean, you were all brothers. I mean, you were there for the same

cause and for the same purposes, and it was just a united effort by everybody involved that this is what we were going to do. And when they went out on the field to put on a show, they were going to put a show on that those people in the audience -- and we filled the arenas, the stadiums that we were in. that -- they were going to be impressed by Troopers that they see every day out on the road, and this is what they could do as well.

INTERVIEWER:

From a public relations standpoint, how would you rate that rodeo on a scale of one to ten?

MR. KARA:

Probably a 12, well above the 10, because I know that I was fortunate enough in my years of riding with the rodeo, I rode in this area where I was from. And of course, everywhere we went, the local officers from that particular area, when they were on the field, their names were mentioned, and they were introduced as well. So the people just -- you know, they couldn't get enough of it. I mean, it was probably a public relations bonanza, if you could call it that.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you say that it -- that rodeo would have an affect on a young person in the audience who may have thought of joining the State Police?

MR. KARA:

Oh, there's no question. The -- whenever -- wherever we went, whether we were in Philadelphia or Erie or -- it didn't matter. The people, the just came out. and they would come out, even afterwards, before we would leave the area, they would come into the back, into the tent area, where we were as -- you know, taking care of the horses, just to be around you and ask you questions and see what's -- see what was going on. And a lot of young kids were, I mean, extremely impressed as a result of it.

INTERVIEWER:

And so it would be a great recruiting tool?

MR. KARA:

Oh, it was fantastic.

INTERVIEWER:

That's interesting. Okay. Getting back to your training, what do you find -- what did you find was the toughest part of your training, if anything?

MR. KARA:

I don't think -- I didn't have any -- really, I didn't have a difficulty in any portion of the training. Again, I don't know whether it was because I was just so set that that's what I was going to do and nothing was going to stop me. I -- when -- as far as the actual book, learning the law and everything, I had no problems with it whatsoever. As a matter of fact, I finished one-tenth of a point, grade point, of being the highest in my class when I graduated. As far as -- in the gymnastics part in the gym, the boxing, the judo, the wrestling, and all those things, I -- and the actual physical training, the running and everything else, I didn't have any difficulty with any of it. I -- the most difficulty I had was that first day, me ducking the hooves of the horses.

INTERVIEWER:

They now have a training -- what they call a training tank at Hershey, which is a swimming...

MR. KARA:

Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

In those days, did they have that training tank?

MR. KARA:

No, they didn't. The only thing we had, they would take us down to the community center in Hershey. They had the, of course,

basic buses, which sort of looked like a school bus. They would pick us up on -- it was on a Friday evening. Well, of course, we had to have the -- be trained and certified in life saving. And the community center in Hershey, which was on -- right on Chocolate Avenue, there was an indoor swimming pool, because we were there, of course, in the wintertime, and they would take us down there every Friday, and we had to perform in that small pool. It was nothing the size of the pool that they have at Hershey now, the training tank they have now, but it was the best they had in those days. It was -- of course, I'm talking in the early '60s, 1962, so we actually went down there and used their facilities.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. Do you remember who your roommate was in Hershey?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, it was John Juran [ph]. He was from -- I believe it was called Grantsville, out off of Route 21 -- or Route -- I think it was, no, Route 22, just outside of Hershey. And his dad was a former Justice of the Peace.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember what become of him? Did you follow any...

MR. KARA:

John was -- well, he was with me. As a matter of fact, he had rode. He had his own horse. He ended up in the rodeo with me, as well. He was one of the members chosen to stay back and perform. And he was in the Harrisburg area, and I know he was on the job, and he probably retired. I don't -- but I don't -- I lost contact with him after that.

INTERVIEWER:

So, when you graduated from Hershey, you stayed right at Hershey for the rodeo the first...

MR. KARA:

Yes. Well, it wasn't the first -- when we graduated, everybody else went to the troop areas, whatever troop they were assigned to. I was assigned to Troop A in Greensburg at the time, but when it came time, they notified the Troop Commander in Greensburg that I wasn't going to be released from the academy until September, so I was, of course, promoted to Trooper from the cadet status, and I just stayed on at Hershey. And then in September, as a matter of fact, September -- well, around September 1 or Labor Day, and then we left. When we were finished there, we went to the troop. And I did that every year for about five years. And we also left -- in December, we went down and we performed for the Farm Show. So I would leave. Again,

I would be detached in -- the first of December to Hershey. We would go down perform -- and prepare for the Farm Show, in the Farm Show Arena, and then we would move all the horses and everything down to the Farm Show Arena, and we would actually stay there with them. They were under guard. Somebody was there with them 24 hours a day. We practiced in the Farm Show Arena, put the show on the first night of the Farm Show, and then we worked the Farm Show detail the rest of the week. And then, once the Farm Show was over, then we were detached back to the troop.

INTERVIEWER:

The uniforms you wore as a cadet, describe that.

MR. KARA:

They was -- well, basically, it was tan, fatigue pants, what we would know today as just plain khaki pants, blue shirts, and ties, a military field jacket, and of course, the cover, or the hat, was the fatigue hat, military fatigue hat.

INTERVIEWER:

Was there any particular instructor or -- that impressed you at the time you went in the academy? Any one instructor?

MR. KARA:

Well, we had quite a few of them. Of course, they were all old-timers there. We had Corporal Broadwater [ph]. Sergeant Hemmings [ph] taught criminal law. Corporal Broadwater taught motor law. Corporal McMullen [ph] was the PT/judo/boxing instructor. And several others there, Corporal Guessford [ph] at the range, as well as some other personnel were there. I guess Sergeant

Rona [ph], who later was promoted and was part of the permanent personnel detail at the academy, I think he was probably the closest. I can remember he taught -- not only taught the physical education and all those various disciplines, he was quite a stunt rider in the rodeo, as well. And he was in his 40s. And he was probably the closest thing to a superman that you ever met. I mean, there wasn't a thing that he couldn't do, anywhere from taking you for a run in the morning to climbing that rope and actually sit down on the gym floor and climb that rope hand over hand and let you stand up and beat you to the top and back to the floor. Him -- he was almost like a -- like he was just a superman. Very well conditioned. Of course, in those days, as I said before, they didn't -- weren't particularly interested in massive manpower. They wanted you more like a gymnast, to

have the strength and the agility. And they worked you to it. And he was one of the instructors. I -- and I -- as I said, he was probably the closest thing to superman. The only thing that he couldn't do very well was drive the bus, and when he drove us down to the training tank at the community center. He always had trouble with the ten-speed, shifting to second -- the second speed with the axel.

INTERVIEWER:

There was talk around when I went to the academy that Captain Rona, at the time, could actually go up that rope upside down.

MR. KARA:

He could actually do that. As I said, he was the closest thing to superman I ever saw. When I was at the academy, I think he was in his early 40s. and I had seen him sit down on the floor with his legs straight out in front of him, just like you see the gymnasts on -- performing in the Olympics, and just start from a dead stop, seated on that floor, hand over hand, and go all the way to the top of that gym floor -- ceiling on that rope and back down. And also, I -- one time, I did see him do it with his hands behind him in back, going up that rope. It was just amazing what he could do. Or -- and put his feet upside down, as you say, just using nothing but arm strength.

INTERVIEWER:

Amazing. Did you have a graduation ceremony? What was it like?

MR. KARA:

Yes, we did. Well, the governor back then was Governor Lawrence [ph], who was the former Mayor of Pittsburgh. When we had -- the graduation ceremony was held in the gymnasium back then, and it -- we were actually individually, then, of course, brought up as -- to receive our official promotion from the rank of cadet to trooper, and Governor Lawrence was there and spoke and the various members of the academy staff spoke. And one cadet also delivered an address there, and the families were invited down for that -- for those ceremonies.

INTERVIEWER:

And then upon graduation, you were promoted to the rank of trooper, is that correct?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I was, along with the other ones in that class. We graduated in the morning, and I had to report to the stables that afternoon at 1:00, because we had to prepare for the rodeo. So, the family got to -- saw me ride the horses at Hershey for the first time.

INTERVIEWER:

All right. I don't want to put you on the spot here, but it's been quite a while since you've been retired. But in 1929, they issued a mandate for each cadet to memorize and recite the Call of Honor. Do you remember it?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I do.

INTERVIEWER:

The Call of Honor? Would you care to...

MR. KARA:

I'm a Pennsylvania State Policeman, a soldier of law. To me is entrusted the honor of the force. I will serve it honestly, faithfully, and the duty, keep up -- I don't remember all of it, but that's -- from that point on. I will serve without any consideration to class, color, creed, or religion. And as a matter of fact, I have a copy of it with a hat, campaign hat and the gloves and a flag.

INTERVIEWER:

I know it's a long time since retirement. And...

MR. KARA:

Well, about -- well...

INTERVIEWER:

But...

MR. KARA:

...11 years, 12 years since I retired.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Okay. Now, we're going to talk a little bit about what life was like for you as a member of the State Police. Give a brief overview of your career and its major highlights, promotions...

MR. KARA:

Well, my -- I began my career in the Troop A, Greensburg area. In Greensburg, I was, of course, a patrol coming out of the academy, and my first years on the job was, basically, patrol. I was stationed in Greensburg. At that time, we also patrolled the parkway out of Pittsburgh, so that we -- there was no -- there was a Pittsburgh station, but they only handled administrative duties, the garage inspector duties to driver's license duties in the City of Pittsburgh. And the State Police were responsible for the Penn-Lincoln Parkway east going from the Fort Pitt tunnels out at that time to Churchill Borough. And the patrols that were provided down there were provided out of the Greensburg station. So, if you happened to pull the patrol duty for the parkway, you had the pleasure of working an extra -- starting an hour earlier than everybody else, going down there, and you stayed on the parkway until your relief came. So, you stayed

there until your relief man got to the parkway, and he would call you on the radio. Of course, the radios in them days were nothing like the communications we have now. You would see him coming up. I could see him on Route 22 coming up that end of the parkway. He'd say, "Okay. I'm here. You can go ahead and leave." And so you were going to -- started an hour earlier, and you probably finished an hour late. But -- and then in -- after I left Greensburg, I was transferred to Somerset, the county detail. From Somerset, I was transferred up to Erie -- or to Indiana. I went up -- while working in Indiana, I also worked over in Evansburg in Cambria County, because we had the radar in Indiana back in those days, and we would run it for the details over in Evansburg, so we would go over there. And I worked both counties and both stations. I left Indiana. I was transferred to Pittsburgh. Back then, they sent a detail. As a matter of fact, then it was Corporal Red [ph] who retired as Major Red, was taken -- had a detail of troopers that went down and worked in -- worked out of the Pittsburgh station and did nothing but patrolled the Penn-Lincoln Parkway. And so I was then sent down to Pittsburgh as part of that detail to work the -- exclusively the parkway out of the Pittsburgh station. I think I was there for

about nine months, and I was sent back to Somerset. And then, from Somerset, after a period -- another period of time there, I was transferred into Greensburg. And that's ultimately when I was married, and then I was transferred from that troop just by accident down to Troop B in Washington. It was right around Christmastime. I happened to come walking, finished working a day of patrol. I come -- I happened to walk by the First Sergeant's office and then down the hallway, and unbeknownst to me, there was another trooper in there with the First Sergeant. And he hollered at me. The First Sergeant, he yelled out to me. He says, "Kara, come here a minute. I've got to see you." And so I walked back and went to see the First Sergeant, and he says, "You're living down -- you're from down around Troop B area, aren't you?" I says, "Yeah." He said, "Well, how'd you like to get -- be transferred down there?" I said, "Well, whatever." I said, "It doesn't matter to me where I'm transferred to." And he says, "Well," he said, "we have a transfer list that's made out, and somebody -- there's a mutual between Troop B and Troop A in Greensburg, and the man coming from Washington was coming to Greensburg, and the individual in Greensburg that was to go to Washington didn't want to go, and they needed to

have another replacement." He said, "Would you replace him?" I said, "Sure." So, I was transferred between Christmas and New Year's to Troop B in Washington, and I spent about an hour in Washington. I walked in, and then it was -- Captain James was in charge. I walked in, and -- for my orientation. And after about an hour of orientation, he says, "By the way," he says, "aren't you from this area?" I says, "Yeah." He says, "Uniontown area, Fayette County, right?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, then, go to Uniontown." He said, "They could use you over there." So I was -- I spent an hour in Washington and was transferred to Uniontown.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that a good thing or a bad thing?

MR. KARA:

I don't know, back then, because Uniontown had the reputation, and I imagine it still does, as probably the busiest station in the state. And I think when I got there then, there was probably only about 20 of us on the job that was working out of the station then.

INTERVIEWER:

So, you didn't have much ahead notification that you were going to be transferred, did you?

MR. KARA:

No, I -- as a matter of fact, it was probably only a day or two if it was that far, that transfer. But prior to that, of course, I -- we were used to it. I remember I worked for Captain Shrin [ph] who was a captain in Greensburg then, and it was his philosophy that every trooper would know every county that -- in the troop area and know all the back roads as well, so he made sure within about probably six month's time you were constantly transferred around the troop and -- to make sure that you knew the counties all around you.

INTERVIEWER:

So that's why you went from Greensburg to Evansburg to Somerset to...

MR. KARA:

You were at every -- the only station that I never made up in that area was -- well, then it was the New Kensington station. Now it's Kiskey Valley [ph]. That was the only one that I missed, but I guess he figured I covered everything from Indiana to Pittsburgh, so the -- that station happened to be in the -- in between the two, but they covered the two same -- the corner of the two counties, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have a preference which station you liked the best?

MR. KARA:

No, I enjoyed them all. I -- every one you -- when you got to another station, you sort of -- well, of course, the -- again, we had to live there. It was no such thing as, you know, you weren't married. You couldn't be married anyhow, so you lived at the station. You slept right at the barracks. And you -- it was right in with the manpower, and you developed, and you learned the area you were at, and you adapted to it and became a part of it. Unfortunately, when you were really into it, you were transferred again to the next station. Yeah.

[Tape 2]

INTERVIEWER:

This is Corporal Kara, tape two. Okay, Corporal. So, when you were transferred from Greensburg to Troop B and you ended up in Uniontown.

MR. KARA:

Yes, as I said, I -- when I first was transferred down, I think my first day in Troop B was -- consisted of one hour at Troop B headquarters in Washington, and I was immediately transferred over to the Uniontown station. And I -- of course, I ended my

career at the Uniontown station, but I was transferred a few times in between there.

INTERVIEWER:

At Uniontown, what were your duties?

MR. KARA:

All through Troop A, my duties, primarily, of course, as a young trooper, was the same as everyone, was a patrol officer. And when I was transferred to Uniontown, my duties at the -- my initial duties were, again, as a patrol officer. After serving -- after several years as a patrol officer, I did -- I was asked to -- I was able to do a little bit of public speaking, I guess, and that was in, probably, the initial phase of starting to be in the early stages of the drug activity in the area. And I had taken some courses and classes with the DEA, the New Jersey State Police, the Department of Health, and various other ones to actually speak and educate the public about now the drug abuse problems we had. And of course, then, it was in the infancy stages of the various types of drugs. I did that, and then, as part of my patrol duties then, I also spoke at various public functions for the department.

INTERVIEWER:

When you were talking about drugs, where would you give your speeches?

MR. KARA:

Mostly to civic organizations. I was -- I know I spoke at several churches for their various organizations, but more on the civic function of the community. I wasn't -- it wasn't in the schools, at that time. Of course, drugs, at that time, was -- probably consisted of -- it was just the start of marijuana and then various pharmaceutical drugs, barbiturates amphetamines in those days. After doing that for, well, probably a considerable period of time, I don't remember exactly how long it was, they decided, in the Uniontown station, that they was going to have somebody, because of -- they considered a problem of drugs coming into the area that someone should start and do some drug-only investigations. I remember it was -- Lieutenant Wright [ph] was the officer in charge then. He called me into the office and said since I had a background and I understood part of the drug culture, that he felt that it would be a -- I could probably do that, those type of investigations. And he asked me if I, indeed, would do it. And I -- back then, it would've been in the late '60s. I told him that yeah, I would, and -- I'd venture into, because no one has ever done it before. I think, at that time, it

was -- as a matter of fact, it was Trooper Ross [ph], at that time, was in the Troop B headquarters in Washington, and he was starting. That -- it was only the -- what then turned out to be only the two of us. So, he asked me if I would do it in the Fayette County area, and of course, I could work with Trooper Ross as well. That would be only our -- you know, a partner, if, indeed, we could come together on various investigations. So, I told him I would do it. The only stipulation that I had, in those days, everything we did was suit and tie and hat. And I said, “Well, a suit and a tie just isn’t going to cut it in that type of trafficking, that type of investigation.” I said, “I’ll do it, provided I can go out in just street clothes and forget the formal suit-and-tie business.” And he said, “I don’t care how you do it, just go do it.” So, I was the -- I guess the initial “hippie nark” for Fayette County back in the late ‘60s. as a matter of fact, it was at the time of Woodstock we began the -- actually under -- what was -- now we call it undercover investigation, but back then, unfortunately, we didn’t have the type of vehicles you have now. I had an old, unmarked patrol car that we had portawalls in those days, whitewalls, that you put on the tire to change it a little bit from being the police car with the black tires out there. Change things around. But I

would use them basically to get me from town to town and then get out of the car and get on foot. But the investigations, as we did them then -- of course, I was the only one in Fayette County, and that was it. If I was going to do something that I felt was a little bit dangerous, I'd get a hold of Trooper Ross, and he would come over and serve as my backup to keep an eye on me. And likewise, I would do it for him. And that's how the -- we started the drug investigations in the area.

INTERVIEWER:

You and Trooper Ross, from back in the late '60s up until just recently kind of formed a team over all these years.

MR. KARA:

Yes, after -- well, we were together in the '60s. Like I said, it was just he and I. There was no one else. If you were in trouble, you depended on him, and if I was in trouble, I'd -- or he was in trouble, he depended on me. And then, we separated. He pretty much stayed in the drug business with the various task forces and so forth, and -- but I ventured out into other areas of criminal investigation. But after he retired, he started for the District Attorney over in Washington, a drug task force for Washington County, and it was in operation, I guess, about three years or four years, something like that. and then, when I retired, I was

called by the District Attorney and asked to come over and be part of that task force, and he and I were together again for another 10 years.

INTERVIEWER:

Were you -- what was your -- do you remember what your starting salary was?

MR. KARA:

Yes, when I first went to the academy, it was $75 a week, and my first year on the job, actually as a trooper out on the job, we made $3,500 a year I believe it was, or $3,200 a year was our salary, so you weren't on the job for the pay, obviously. You were there because it was something that you wanted to do.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you get any automatic pay raises or...

MR. KARA:

No, it was just -- it was nothing automatic. As I said, there was no such thing as a contract. You -- there was no 40-hour workweek. The only thing you did say was -- of course, it was common in those days that -- "Look at that arm patch on your shoulder, kid. What's it say?" "It says Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." "Well, that's where you work. And you're going to work in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and we work six

days a week. We don't work by hours." So, I guess the only guarantee was you would never work more than 24 hours in a given day. So -- and many were the days that we did work 24 hours, straight through from one day into the other.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there any perks that came with the job back then?

MR. KARA:

Well, you got a half a day off holidays a year. We -- there was no such thing, back in those days, when they told you that you -- there was going to be extra manpower and everybody -- available man was going to work the holidays. They weren't kidding, because everybody did, because there was no compensation and no days off for it anyway. So the only time off we had is if you worked over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. And you -- the troop was basically divided -- or the stations were divided in half, and half the manpower would work Christmas and the other half of the manpower that were off for Christmas would return and work New Year's so the guys that worked Christmas would be off for New Year's. And the advantage of that was that on Christmas Eve day, December the 24th, if you were going to be off for Christmas, you only worked four hours. You worked from 8:00 in the morning until noon, and

you were able to quit at noon and have those four hours off. Christmas day was your day off, and then you were right back to work on the 26th. And likewise, the guys for New Year's, they were -- they would do the same thing on New Year's Eve Day.

INTERVIEWER:

Were you provided sleeping accommodations for...

MR. KARA:

Yes, we -- well, it was mandatory. If you were single, you slept at the barracks. You had a -- we had a bedroom there and a closet, and that was your home away from home at all the barracks. As a matter of fact, every station that I was at, it was -- of course, it was in the days that we had to live at the barracks, and I had lived at all those stations that I named. I actually had a bedroom there. In Greensburg, I was in the small cottage, because there wasn't any room in the barracks when I got there, being as I was with the rodeo detail and coming in late, so I stayed in the small cottage that was just off to the side of the barracks there. That eventually became the crime lab. I moved out when they decided they were going to make the crime lab there.

INTERVIEWER:

How about sick and annual leave? Did you -- was anything like that available at the time?

MR. KARA:

Well, you did get sick leave and annual leave. You had 15 days a year. Of course, in those days, if you didn't use the 15 days you -- of sick leave, you were required to be sick. I mean, there was no such thing as just taking the day off because you didn't feel like going to work. And if you didn't use them that year, I mean, it was just something that was granted for you in case you did get sick. You lost them. And then, eventually, we were allowed to build up to 30 days and 60 days and eventually on up to where we could build up some sick leave. The annual leave was 15 days a year. We had three weeks. However, you got to celebrate, because you were the low man on the totem pole, most of your days -- your vacation time would be in the months when there was -- snow was flying in January, February, and March. It would be nothing for the First Sergeant to let you know that you have a vacation coming up here and the summer months are going to be on us, and you're not going to be able to take any vacation. And of course, I couldn't, because I was part of the rodeo detail, and I had to be in Hershey. So, you would take your vacations in February, March, or April. And then,

maybe, if you didn't take it all, then you'd get another one some time in October or November.

INTERVIEWER:

With the working conditions and the pay and the limited time off, was there any time that you got discouraged and maybe asked yourself why you became a State Policeman?

MR. KARA:

Never. I don't think I ever did and nor have any of the men that I worked with. It was just something that you were dedicated to do. This was your life, and this -- that's -- was just how you accepted that as part of your life.

INTERVIEWER:

Corporal Kara, do you have any idea what a young man coming on this job today what his salary would be?

MR. KARA:

I would think it would probably be well in the mid 40s, 40,000. Back in the -- of course, when I came on the job, that was just unheard of. And...

INTERVIEWER:

Have you heard anything about benefits for the people on the job today?

MR. KARA:

No, I'm aware of some of them, but I'm not sure -- I'm sure that they're -- of course, they're a lot better than we had when I left the job. And the benefits that they in -- they have now, including the time and a half, the overtime, and everything else, that was just, "Hey, kid, that's part of your job. That's what you signed up to be." And it was no question on where you were stationed. I went to work in Somerset. I worked at -- on the shift up there, and I was going to have the day off the next day, so I came home, back into this area. I just got home. I had supper, and I received a phone call from the Captain that said I was needed to be in -- back in Greensburg as fast -- as soon as possible, go to Somerset, get my uniforms. I got to Greensburg at, like, 8:00 that night and was told that I was going to Erie. And we left for Erie, and they were bringing horses for me, because there was a major strike and a problem with American Rubber or something like that in Erie, and we had to get up there. And I went to Erie, and I think it was the next day we finally got a break and got the chance to lay down, you know, so it was no such thing as -- and nothing to worry about. You know.

INTERVIEWER:

In the ‘70s, well, maybe after 1971 or ’72, things kind of got better in the State Police. Do you want to elaborate on that and why it got better?

MR. KARA:

Well, we got -- of course, in those days, I can remember -- well, I do remember, especially, when we had hospitalization. It was the first time that we had hospitalization. My neighbor next door, who has since passed away, had worked for U.S. Steel, and I happened to have been talking to him one day, and he said, “Whoa, that was -- we just got a new agreement coming up, and we’re going to finally have hospitalization.” He says, “You mean you don’t have hospitalization?” I said, “No, there’s no such thing as hospitalization.” You know, if anything happened to us, we had to take care of it. We were allowed to be a part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield as a group, and the group being the Pennsylvania State Police, but we paid our own hospitalization. And I said, “Yeah, we just got an agreement and a new contract come up that the state’s going to pay $2 of our hospitalization every month, so things are really looking up.” So that was our first benefit besides the -- of course part of the state pension back then.

INTERVIEWER:

And what occurred in the early ‘70s, legally, that made things better, life better, for people on the job as far as benefits?

MR. KARA:

Oh, when we had the binding arbitration. There was no question that the -- I mean, it -- then we really became modern as far as the labor laws and things of that nature were concerned. As a matter of fact, I remember I was in Uniontown when we heard the first arbitration award. I just couldn’t believe something like that could happen and would ever -- I would ever be on the job and see such a thing. Initially, when we -- when I came on the job, we had belonged to what was known as a civic association in those days, and if anybody died on the job or was hurt on the job where -- as a result of -- death on the job itself or off the job, if they were still a member, the -- all the members on the job would chip in $3. It was part of the association. We would chip in $3 to pay a death benefit to the widow, and they would guarantee that. It was set up for all of us that the widow would get a check with -- for $10,000 within 24 hours of the notification of the member’s death so that she would have money to continue on. But the arbitration, when that came into effect, that was probably -- really a Godsend to the department, as far as the manpower was concerned.

INTERVIEWER:

Did that come easy or was that something that had to be fought over?

MR. KARA:

That was a while. That took some fighting with the -- through the FOP and to be able to get on arbitration and contract agreements as far as working conditions and the benefits. I can remember. I think I was stationed in Greensburg yet when the first time that we ever had -- was going to -- as a matter of fact, Commissioner

Purdy [ph] was the commissioner, and we were going to work five days a week instead of six, and the resistance from the older men in rank at that time, the First Sergeant and so forth up, "That's just impossible. It's not going to work. We can't do it." You know. "These men have to work six days a week, because we don't have the manpower." And I'll never forget that he came around each troop and talked to all the men. And he says, "Well, it's going to happen, and you're going to make it happen. So, they'll work five days a week now and now six days a week." And it was through things like that that brought the -- started bringing the job forward.

INTERVIEWER:

Commissioner Purdy, again, not to put you on the spot, but did any one commissioner stand out in your mind that did more for the organization than any other?

MR. KARA:

I think of all of them, I -- of course, I was under probably a good half a dozen or so commissioners as well as governors. I think Commissioner Purdy was probably the one that started the job to really move forward. He came in on the job. He was an ex-FBI agent. And he came -- when he came on the job, his ideas were a little more progressive, and he wasn't stuck by the military procedure that we had and that was there before. And when he came on the job -- or when he came -- took over as the commissioner, he brought new ideas with him, and he was -- he had the administrative ability to make it happen. I know he's changed the colors and the schemes of the patrol cars from the old gray ghost that we had initially with the one bubble gum machine on the top and the different -- not only the cars, the different ideology as far as the movement of the department and the investigative process was concerned. I think he was probably the one who really got it started, and he -- like now, the accreditation for the department and things of that nature.

INTERVIEWER:

There's talk that he modernized the reporting system.

MR. KARA:

Oh, he did. I'll never forget the old accident report that we had. Of course, you know, not only did you put your time on the road, when you came off the road, everything had to be typed. You wrote nothing up except to make yourself notes, so you would then spend the rest of your time, outside of your actual patrol duties, inside the station, typing reports on a typewriting, four copies, using carbon paper. There was no such thing as a minor accident report. I think it was on the average of about four or five pages long and in narrative form. Only the front first two pages were in -- of a printed nature that you could fill in various information, operator, vehicle information, and things of that nature. And then after that, it was narrative form, along with a -- drawing a diagram of how the accident occurred. So, if somebody just scratched a car, you were stuck with a four-page report. And Commissioner Purdy, when he came on the job, really changed the system and modernized it to where -- the fact that a lot of them could be done by the officer with a pen out on the scene and not have to come back and type it all over again, because everything was typewritten back in those days.

INTERVIEWER:

From your observation point at the time, was -- did you note or did you feel a lot of resistance from the so-called “old timers”, resistant to change the way Commissioner Purdy wanted to modernize the job?

MR. KARA:

Oh, there was no question it was there. I -- the example I gave you of -- when he said that we were going to work five days a week, I can remember when he -- you know, that it came out that that’s what his directive was going to be, and he made it a point, when he came -- became the commissioner, that he went to every troop headquarters, and he met and spoke with every man on the job. You actually took time and you went to the troop headquarters. And he was there until everybody in that whole troop was there -- he was able to speak to them. And the resistance was there, but he was just as determined that he was going to, you know, move forward and change the job, and he did.

INTERVIEWER:

Who followed Commissioner Purdy, do you recall?

MR. KARA:

McKenna [ph], I believe. McKenna and then Urella [ph]. Urella, I think, was the initial -- the commissioner right after Purdy and then McKenna or McKenna and then Urella.

INTERVIEWER:

When we talk about the rodeo, and not to put down any one commissioner, that's not the purpose of the question, the rodeo ended under Commissioner

Barger [ph], I believe. Do you have any input there? Do you know why that may have happened?

MR. KARA:

I don't know what actually caused it to cease to be in existence at that time, whether it was any personal animosities on the part of the commissioner or the simple fact that this day and age, it would never be able to function because of the fact if you have contract and time negotiations -- limitations put upon you, manpower working only eight hours a day and things of that nature and then actually transferring men, as I was transferred for the better part of five years, just on temporary duty in another station, I don't think you could do it in the contract language that we have, you know, currently. In my day, it was just -- it was a military organization. This was part of your job, and that's just the way it was. And there was no questions asked and no time

and nobody gave it any consideration. It was -- that's what we do, and we did it.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think maybe it had anything to do with -- I know during the rodeo, there were solicitations by -- if the rodeo came to the western part of the state, certain members would go out and solicit various businesses that sort of fund the rodeo expenses and perhaps Colonel Barger wanted to put an end to that, the solicitations?

MR. KARA:

Well, the solicitation was part of the rodeo scheme, not only funding of the rodeo to offset the costs of the actual movement of the manpower and bring it to the various areas of the state, but it also went into what was only part of the pension that we had at those times to help to support the members in a pension -- as a pension benefit. The remainder of what that generated was used for -- as part of the retiring members' pensions. Of course, it has since all changed because of the state pension system, but initially, that was part of it.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Okay. We know, for a fact, it ended, and probably different people may have different opinions, but -- and I would

imagine it was because of it was a monetary problem in this day and age.

MR. KARA:

Yes, this day and age, it would just be too cost-prohibitive to do it, not only taking, you know, the wages of the men and the manpower and the time -- the dedication of time away from the troop areas and then having -- of course, back in those days, we just worked in another area. As I said, I just patrolled in Hershey in my off time as opposed to patrolling in Greensburg. It didn't matter.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. When you weren't on patrol as a patrol officer in Uniontown, was it two-man patrols generally or one man?

MR. KARA:

No, everything was one man. The only time that we ever had a two-man patrol -- well, Uniontown was -- being a busy station, had one midnight patrol, and that patrol was a two-man patrol. Other than that, everything was a one-man patrol, and the reason for that was because there was no communications with your station after midnight, because the man on phone, it was one -- another trooper, we didn't have civilian personnel, the man on the -- that was on the phone would take the phone, basically,

to bed with him. He would hook it up beside his bed, and he would sleep that -- with the phone beside the bed, and he would answer the calls during the night and then, of course, come to the radio to dispatch you for any of those calls, because he was going to be patrolling the next morning at 8:00. He was going on the road. So, it -- your only communication was with troop headquarters. And as good as the radios were at that time, you were -- you could call from the Uniontown area, perhaps call Washington and they -- if the radio was good enough and you were getting enough signal that they could get you any assistance you may need or call the Uniontown station and wake him up and get him to the radio to get you any assistance.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. So that's what they mean by "sleeping with the phone"?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, when you slept with the phone, that's literally what you did. If you were the -- then it was in the afternoon, the 4:00 to 12:00 desk officer, your duty was to take care of the communications and the station itself from 4:00 to midnight, and then at midnight, you closed the station down, locked it up, and then you took the phone basically to bed with you, and everything you did after that was -- you would respond to those

phone calls. Some nights, you didn't get any sleep, but that was just the way it was. But that was done that way throughout the area, not only here. But even when I was in Greensburg, it was normal. Some of the smaller stations didn't have midnight patrols, so there was times where you'd -- not only he would sleep with the phone, and if you was the 4:00 to 12:00 patrol, you were the midnight patrol as well, but you slept. You went to bed, and then if anything occurred, he woke you up and dispatched you out. You went and took care of it and come back, and you'd go to sleep, because you were going to be patrol the next morning.

INTERVIEWER:

So, conceivably, a man could work, on a busy night, 24 hours straight?

MR. KARA:

Oh, yeah. It was not -- it wasn't unusual that that would occur. Yeah. And if you had a good -- sometimes, if it was really nice and you had a good CO, he'd come in there and he saw that you were up all night and nobody got any sleep, he'd say, "Go ahead and, you know -- I've got another guy here. He'll take care of the road. You get a couple hours of sleep, and then you can go out

at noon." And you know, he'd shorten your day up for you a little bit, but it was not unusual to work 24 hours.

INTERVIEWER:

Was there any compensation for that?

MR. KARA:

No, it was just what you were supposed to do. That was your job. That was your tour of duty, and that -- you completed it the best you could.

INTERVIEWER:

The communication system back then, was it anything to speak of or was it...

MR. KARA:

Well, it looked terrific. You -- when anybody would look in the patrol car and they'd see that, the radio there, and actually it was a telephone receiver that I -- or telephone handset with a button in the middle, and then when you'd take that off, and of course they would -- everybody would just, I guess, I imagine that you were talking on a telephone, you know, and you just pressed a button and you talked. It looked great, however, the communications sometimes -- it wasn't unusual that we would get Spanish stations from somewhere that would cut you out here in Uniontown -- or in this area. The stations of other police

departments in the Carolinas and down south, due to weather conditions, that would just completely override you, and you couldn't even hardly talk two miles away. Like I said, when I worked at Greensburg and we were on the parkway, we weren't allowed to leave until the car got actually on the -- your relief was on the parkway. And of course, we had a radio -- each had a radio in the car, but you would see him coming to you. And when he's talking on -- he's on the radio to you to tell you, "Okay. You can leave and go ahead back to the station."

INTERVIEWER:

What about radar? Was there -- did every station have a radar set?

MR. KARA:

No, initially, when the radar came out, I was in Greensburg when it was -- the law was passed that we were able to use radar. Initially -- it was a different type of radar than we have now. It was a fixed system that you had it -- that hung on a window of the car. The car had to be stopped along the side of the road. And initially, it took -- a non-commissioned officer had to actually run the -- operate the radar set itself, and we had teams involving chase cars, usually two or maybe three men who would be the chase cars for the non-com. And he would set up alongside of

the road, and he would call the car off and the speed, and one of the cars would then stop the car and then issue the citations.

INTERVIEWER:

By “non-com”, you...

MR. KARA:

A non-commissioned officer had to actually operate the radar set itself.

INTERVIEWER:

So, the non-com would be a corporal?

MR. KARA:

It was a corporal or above. A corporal or a sergeant, but usually it was a corporal. And then, eventually, they relaxed it to where a trooper could run the radar set itself. And then, of course, he still had two chase cars, other officers, who actually -- would actually physically pursue the vehicles.

INTERVIEWER:

And over time, and before you retired, that eventually got much better, also?

MR. KARA:

Oh, yes. It went from that unit where there was only one in the troop, and then there’d be -- I remember when the -- each troop had two radar units, and that’s when I was up in -- stationed in

Indiana, and I would run the radar unit for Indiana and Evansburg, and we would travel back and forth. And then, it eventually evolved to the handheld radar and the radar you have now and the various types.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Were there any formals inspections routinely conducted?

MR. KARA:

Oh, the inspections were almost daily and weekly. You stood roll call, and then the early years on the job, before you went out on the road, there would be roll call. The first sergeant would be there, and he would check the roll call and an inspection, but there would be -- initially, there was weekly inspections. It wasn't unusual for -- even for daily inspections by the non-commissioned officer who would be in charge of the shift prior to going on the road. And then we would have them, weekly inspections. Of course, inspections then because we had to live at the barracks as well as the barracks itself. And then, later on, several years later, they began what was known as the troop drill for the entire troop where they would form platoons in case there would be any civil disobedience and riots where we'd have to have our groups together. And they would have monthly drills of the various formations, and when you reported to that -- usually a

troop headquarters, then you also had inspections of -- by the commanding officer.

INTERVIEWER:

You talk about troop drill and platoons. Were you ever activated as a member of a platoon for any particular incident?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I was in the -- Pittsburgh, in the riots. In that time, I guess it was back in the -- I think it was in the ‘60s. I think we were down in Pittsburgh when they had the riots there. But that was the only one that I can recall other than, again, me, being a horseman, I was sent to Erie on a civil disobedience up there. It was a huge strike of some sort. I don’t know what caused -- some big labor dispute.

INTERVIEWER:

So, if they had disobedience somewhere and they needed the horses, they would truck them to the area that they needed them and then pick me out of the troops who were qualified to ride?

MR. KARA:

Right. They had to -- the manpower would be from -- if it was brought -- they would bring them from -- the horses out to the western part of the state, and then they would get manpower here that were good equestrians, could ride, and they would use

them and team them up with the horses and of course ride it in whatever the occasion would be.

INTERVIEWER:

How effective were those horses in a riot situation?

MR. KARA:

They were terrific. I know that I -- the horse that I always rode in the rodeo that -- never came my direction, because he was a little nasty, and I figured, well, this would be the time to have a little nasty horse, but he never came out. I always...

INTERVIEWER:

You...

MR. KARA:

...had -- that was Sticks. He would pick up his back leg. He like to sit on you. He'd just pull you -- when you'd pick up his leg to clean it, he'd like to just sit down on your back and let you know that he knew you were there. Or if you got a little too close and -- he didn't do it to me as often, because I rode him a lot and we understood each other, but I'd let somebody else get near him, it wasn't nothing unusual for him to go ahead and bite you or if you'd come by to kick at you. But when the horses come out, and we took them into the area, the -- our horses were never afraid because of the fact we had them in arenas in the stadiums

areas around people and noise and gunshots being next to the range down at the academy. These things didn't bother them. So, when we took them out and had to take them in the crowd, they were right at home. It didn't matter how much noise or what kind of a disturbance was going around them, they responded to the rider. But I -- of the times that I've had to do it, we never did actually ever have to take them into any crowds. The fact that we were there and it was publicized that we were there, that was about all it took. They saw us riding, and it was pretty well understood that these guys could get the horses wherever they wanted to go. These -- they were all well trained, and there wasn't going to be no problems with them.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. What kind of a -- what type of annual update training was required, if any?

MR. KARA:

Well, we always -- you had, you know, update the civil -- the special orders and the memorandums that came up. You would get that, basically, probably on a weekly basis as they came out. The first sergeant would make sure that you received the notification of all special orders and all memorandums. He would read them to you. And then they would, of course, put a tag on

them and you had to initial them that you did -- you also read them and you understood what the -- what they were. Then, it started -- again, I guess it was back around Commissioner Purdy's time when they started to -- various training and updated materials, and basically, what we know as in-service training was started. And then, of course, it continues. I'm sure it continues to this day.

INTERVIEWER:

Would they call every man back to Hershey, or would they have one or two men trained in a certain...

MR. KARA:

Well, you had troop-training officers. For the various troops, you had, usually, probably two or three men that would be called back to Hershey, and then they would get -- they were instructors. They were taught down in Hershey of all the changes and all the various materials. And then they would bring it out, and they would see -- they were responsible for training all the men in that -- in their troop area.

INTERVIEWER:

As I recall, you were a troop-training officer.

MR. KARA:

Yes, I was a training officer going back -- I guess I saw the vehicle codes change and the criminal code change from the beginning when it was written from the time when I was on the job.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. What other types of training opportunities were available to you?

MR. KARA:

Well, on the job, as far as my training, I had a lot of training with the various departments. I -- as I said, the New Jersey State Police Academy. I was there. I went with the -- what is now the DEA, Drug Enforcement Administration. I went back with -- at the earlier dates as well as when it became the Drug Enforcement Administration. The Department of Health and those dealing with drug identification and drug investigations. I was involved in a lot of the update trainings of the new law at Hershey. And I was also part of the original group that was -- what was known as the CIA program, Criminal Investigative Analysis program, with the FBI Behavioral Science Unit out of Quantico. And that one required, probably, well over 500 or 600 classroom hours of training. And then, we were dealing with

serial killers, violent sexual assault, serial rapists, murder, and behavioral patterns of people involved in those kind of things.

INTERVIEWER:

So, you had a lot of specialized training in numerous subjects?

MR. KARA:

Yes, a lot of -- most of the training that I had was all involved in various aspects of criminal investigation. The last, probably, 10 or 12 years of the -- on my time on the department was with the infancy of -- the beginning of the -- what is known as the CIA program, the Criminal Investigative Analysis program. And then I stayed with that right through to the end. Because of my background, I was chosen to go down to be a part of it. My background formal education in criminology and psychology and the behavioral sciences.

INTERVIEWER:

You were promoted from corporal -- or from trooper to corporal. Do you recall what year that was?

MR. KARA:

I believe it was about 1969. It was right after I had been working in the vice unit. I can remember when I received a telephone call. I was out -- I had been working in the Dunbar area, and they got a hold of me to call back to Uniontown station, that the

captain wanted to talk to me. He was there. And that's -- so I had to get to a telephone, because we didn't have the communications we have today of cell phones. So, I had to get to a telephone, and I went to one of the trooper's homes down there that was home, and I used his phone to call back to the station, and the captain informed me then that I was -- asked me if I wanted to take the promotion of corporal, and which I, of course, accepted. I had been high on the list prior to that several times. As a matter of fact, I died first on the list. I was -- several times, I was number one on the list to be promoted after we took the test. It just so happens that they just didn't make any more non-coms, so I just never got promoted.

INTERVIEWER:

That's what you mean by "dying on the list"?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, you're dying on the list. I mean, I -- when the list came out after you took the test, I was -- when I came out, I was lucky. I was number one on the list. So, well, you know, it's yours, you know, until the next test the next year. You've got to make it. Well, they just -- there wasn't any promotions to be made, so that was it. You died on the list, and you went and took it and started all over again.

INTERVIEWER:

When you were promoted, were you transferred?

MR. KARA:

Yes, I was transferred from Uniontown. I was working. As I said, I was the narcotics officer here then, and I was transferred, initially, to Washington. I spent a good bit of time, quite a few months, in Washington as a patrol corporal. And then I was sent to Belle Vernon for a short period of time and then again back to Washington and then back to Uniontown.

INTERVIEWER:

At Belle Vernon, were you on a criminal unit there or...

MR. KARA:

The first time, I was on a patrol unit.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. KARA:

Yeah. I -- eventually, later on, I was transferred to Belle Vernon as the crime unit supervisor.

INTERVIEWER:

The promotional tests, how often were they given?

MR. KARA:

Well, some of them were annually. Some were like every couple of years initially, in my early years on the job. They didn't come

up -- weren't necessarily an annual thing the first few years. later on, it became an annual where they would keep a list -- sometimes they would keep a list for a year or two years and promote off the same list, but other times, you know, they would do it on an annual basis.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you recall how that list was established?

MR. KARA:

There was so much of a score for your -- the actual test that you had taken, and then you had a rating. There was a rating system that rated you and your performance. And then you got so much for your -- another factor was your time on the job, the years you had on the job. So that was all factored in to give you a total, overall score to establish your promotion -- or your place on the list of promotion.

INTERVIEWER:

Who would do the rating in the rating system?

MR. KARA:

Well, it was usually, if you were on the patrol section, it would be the patrol section supervisor, commander, whichever it would be wherever you were, whether it was troop headquarters or station

or the crime section. The -- usually the sergeant in charge of whichever one.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. You talk about the rating. Would -- that section commander, would he look at your file and determine his rating by your conduct over the past whatever time?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, it would be of your work, your job performance, and your overall demeanor on the job that they would -- it would be taken into effect. Some of them, they came out with several different systems that were used eventually over the course of my career, and some of them, I just -- I -- there just was no rhyme or reason to how they would come up with a figure. I can remember one instance that I was rated by this -- my immediate supervisor, and I got one rating, and there was a man -- an individual that was transferred from another area of the state into our station. And the same supervisor had to rate him and never saw him before in his life and had had no idea what it was. And he rated the both of us. I had the worst rating in the state, and he -- and the guy that he never saw, never knew, he rated, and he had the best rating in the state. He said, “This isn’t right.” I -- as a matter of fact, he even complained about it. “Look, I know how this guy

works. I've seen him work every day. That's not where he belongs, and you give me -- and I rate this other guy, and he gets this great rating. I don't even know who he is." But that happens. You know.

INTERVIEWER:

It could be a personality thing. If you had a...

MR. KARA:

Oh, it could happen. Sure, it could happen. In the case that I just told you about, the one instance that it happened, it wasn't a personality problem. It was just this -- the system, and nobody understood it. It eventually fell by the wayside, but there's an inequity, you know, that was there, and so that's the way it was, kid. You just had to live with it.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, thank goodness, it was -- it went by the wayside and...

MR. KARA:

Thank goodness.

INTERVIEWER:

The discipline system, what was that like?

MR. KARA:

Well, the discipline system was basically -- of course, I guess, I'm sure as it is now, prior to the Bureau of Professional

Responsibility, back to that time, it was the -- usually a commissioned officer that would do any investigation of any complaints on anybody. And of course, it was the court martial board system that was used if, indeed, the offense was that grave. And then, of course, the commanding officer and the -- would have, basically, his sole control in the early days, to discipline however he thought fit.

INTERVIEWER:

So, if two men were disciplined for the same thing, conceivably, one man may get a more severe punishment than the other man, depending on what mood the troop commander was in?

MR. KARA:

That could well be possible, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

That -- has that since changed? Is it now uniform?

MR. KARA:

Yes, now it's more uniform throughout the Commonwealth. You have the Bureau of Professional Responsibility personnel who will do the investigation, and the -- I would assume it's done by the upper echelon brass in Harrisburg who then metes out the necessary discipline for whatever the offense may be.

INTERVIEWER:

I see.

MR. KARA:

Until you reach the -- of course, the portion of being a court martial, which they would be a court martial board.

INTERVIEWER:

How did -- we talked about special assignment duty. How is one selected for any given special assignment? Is there a bidding process?

MR. KARA:

No, basically, it was done by the supervisory personnel of the station where you worked. They saw your work performance, how you -- what you were doing and what they felt that you were capable of doing, the type of investigations. If indeed, that would've became into the criminal investigation part of it, and then they were -- you were selected by what the station commander or section commander, if you happened to be in a headquarters, saw in your ability of the various investigations that you did as a result of being a patrol officer. I know I was -- happened to be in Uniontown at the time, and then I was selected from the patrol to what they called back in those days, you got to go into the back room. You worked in plain clothes and did criminal investigations. And it was based by the criminal

section commander or the -- in that case, the station commander and the criminal unit supervisor who felt that, okay, this individual is suited for this type of investigation or this type of work, and he would probably adapt well to it. And then they would give you the opportunity to go ahead into that type of investigation, if, indeed, you wanted to do it. I know individuals that just didn't -- they were quite capable, but they were -- they wanted to stay on the road and wanted to be a patrol officer, and they -- that was their choice. They could do it.

INTERVIEWER:

Talk about stations that we used to call the barracks. I know in your day-to-day travels, you see stations or barracks now. What -- how could you compare the stations of yesteryear back in your day with the ones that are in existence now?

MR. KARA:

Well, the -- basically, the -- what you see today is the luxury Taj Mahal compared to what we had. Our -- the -- most of the barracks, with the exception of a few, maybe basically the headquarters, were a house in some particular county and whichever particular county you happened to be in that was transformed into a police station. The bottom floor would be for the public to come where your operations were, and the top

floors were the sleeping accommodations for the personnel. That's where you lived, and if you had a -- hopefully, you had a few garages and a parking area in the back.

INTERVIEWER:

I heard rumor that the Uniontown station, years ago, men lived there and they had one bathtub and a pan and -- for 20 or 30 men. Was that true?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, it was. It was one bathroom, one sink, one bathtub, and a shower. And what -- and it was well water at those times, and sometimes, it wasn't quite spring water to come out of the shower. You know. It was -- it wasn't the best of accommodations, but you made do and you lived with it. And of course, the old building, itself, was something to be reckoned with. It really was an old house that you lived in. I know a couple of times we had investigations where I was going to Pittsburgh at -- as a result of working undercover, and we was going to leave Uniontown at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, because we had to go down to the city, and rather than come home, we just slept -- figured, okay, I'll sleep for an hour or two at the barracks, and then we'll go -- leave from there and go into the city. And I know there was times that I probably had the

clothes that I wore on the street and was covered up and trying to sleep in the bed with the snow coming in on you that -- it was actually warmer outside, because the wind didn't -- it wasn't increasing so severely through the sides of the windowpane coming in on you.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you recall any amusing incidents that occurred in Uniontown when you were there that happened in the barracks?

MR. KARA:

I can remember the -- well, the one that really -- there were several of them, but one that really sticks out in my mind is an individual back then, when the first sergeants were promoted, actually we call the -- give them the field promotion. The first sergeants were made lieutenant. And the first sergeant in the troop area was promoted to lieutenant and had gone over to the quarter master and got his uniforms and, of course, brought them over to Uniontown and he put them in his locker. And of course, it was an old house. It wasn't nothing spectacular about the barracks area, so in those days, an old house meant that there was two-by-four walls with the plasterboard on each side, and that was the extent of it. And one incident, a young trooper who had -- who was there practicing his dry-firing in his room,

accidentally fired off a round, that it wasn't actually dry. He didn't check his revolver completely, and he fired a round, and it went through the wall. Of course, nobody was hurt, but it went through the locker, and it was on the other side, and it was the newly-commissioned lieutenant's locker, and it put a hole through all of his pants.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you recall who that lieutenant was?

MR. KARA:

Yeah, it was -- then it was First Sergeant Lieutenant Timmy Poiser [ph] from up in Connellsville. As a matter of fact, to this day, he's still alive, and I've seen him probably two or three years ago and doing quite well. Very, very alert, and...

INTERVIEWER:

What were some of the job duties or working conditions that elicited the most complaints from out of the troopers, that you recall?

MR. KARA:

Most of the men that were working that I could think of, the jobs that we'd -- that would -- we did was just probably the time factors of being out on the job so long and trying to get the job done, just being so busy that if you were fortunate, if you could

take the cream off the top, because you would be going to one assignment and trying to follow-up on something, and it wasn't the question of, "Hey, are you done yet?" I mean, it was just time to move on, because another one is in the background and just being pushed so much, because back then, due to the lack of manpower, I know -- I'm surprised to know now that where I started with 20 men, there's over 100 working there now. You know. But...

INTERVIEWER:

In Uniontown?

MR. KARA:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

In your mind, what are some of the most noteworthy changes that occurred on the State Police, during your career?

MR. KARA:

I think seeing a lot of specialization, realizing -- initially, when you came on the job, it was one trooper for whatever happened to occur wherever he was working. I mean, he did it all. And no matter what it was, he was responsible, and he was going to take care of it. And seeing the job actually where it started to specialize and have manpower personnel that would be able to

respond for certain situations, such as the forensic type of work that's being done now, the -- to specializing various aspects of criminal investigation, and to develop an expertise in it. I think it's -- the job has come a long way and has done very well.

INTERVIEWER:

Of course, the radios and the cars...

MR. KARA:

Oh, there's no question the communications. Of course, that's improved not only on the job, but throughout society. The communications that we have today were -- was just strictly unheard of when I came on the job. I mean, it was -- the telephone was the greatest invention there was, and that was strictly a landline from -- between one phone and the other. Some of them were dials, and then it came to the push-button touchtone phones after that, but that was the -- as best as you could get. The communications we now have today, and especially with the computer system, that's just remarkable. And I know it frees the men up to do a lot more and gives them a greater ability to go ahead and do the job and -- that's before them. Just in the computerization of the department, I can remember the registration forms when we had the book if someone who would call in a registration, and you went out, and

we had 20 or 30 books with them -- all the numbers listed in them. They were like encyclopedias, and you would just go around and start searching through the books to find out a registration information, and if it wasn't there, you had to call Harrisburg, and they were actually going out and looking by hand on three-by-five cards and -- to do the thousands and millions of trays to find the registration information you have. Now, it's just the touch of a button.

INTERVIEWER:

So, computerization has made the trooper's job...

MR. KARA:

Oh.

INTERVIEWER:

...much safer and...

MR. KARA:

Oh, without a doubt. And much more -- giving him more time to investigate as well, because he can do probably -- he can do more out on the street and in his vehicle than we could sitting at a typewriter when we -- after we spent all the time out on an investigation.

INTERVIEWER:

I understand now that they can actually access the FBI computers right from the car.

MR. KARA:

Yes, they have the -- you know, the information that's at their fingertips available to them was just strictly unheard of, you know, when I was on the job. You know. We called back. At best, you could contact your station and then have them start the process for you, but it was -- that's nothing compared to -- one trooper, right now, on the road, probably, can do more than the whole station could have done at that point in time.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Was there anything you would've done differently in your career with the State Police?

MR. KARA:

I don't think so. I had a good, varied career. I enjoyed it all. I spent probably the greatest amount of time on the job, probably in excess of 25 years, in the criminal investigative side of it. I've spent, probably, seven or eight years on vice and narcotics. Three years, I -- four years, I believe, I was in the -- three years in the street as an investigating officer, and then I spent another three or four years as the non-com, the corporal in charge of the vice unit for the troop area, itself, dealing with not only narcotics,

gambling, position, and organized crime investigations. And then the remaining part of that career after that was all in the field of criminal investigation, both as an investigator and as a supervisor. And then, of course, my -- probably my greatest experience and -- was an experience that I wasn't eager to begin that change in my career was when I was part of the criminal investigative analysis unit when I was sent to Quantico and Hershey where we learned to do the behavioral analysis on criminal investigations. And that was probably the -- one of the greatest advantages of my whole career.

INTERVIEWER:

I think I know the answer to this, but if you had it to do all over again, would you join the State Police?

MR. KARA:

Probably, I would do it, although, looking at it from today's perspective and what a new officer is -- being required of them and the attitude of society, I would probably hesitate and have my doubts, but other than have the doubts and the hesitation, I would probably still go back and do it all over again. I -- it was a career that I really enjoyed. I'm sure when I joined the State Police, the officers then who were the senior ranking officers were saying, "Well, the job has changed so much that I don't

think I'd ever do this again." And I was thinking this was the beginning of a fantastic career. So I would think that I would probably still do the same thing all over again.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. When did you retire?

MR. KARA:

I retired in May of 1995.

INTERVIEWER:

What kind of benefits did you take with you when you retired that were available?

MR. KARA:

Well, then, I was able -- we were able to take the retirement benefit, which was 75 percent of your salary, and the hospitalization, which has been great. And as I said, the -- I've put some hard years on the job, but they were well worth it, and I'm reaping the benefits of it now, and I'm enjoying it now.

INTERVIEWER:

What are you doing in retirement? Anything?

MR. KARA:

Well, my first ten years that I -- when I retired, I -- my intention was to do nothing and just retire and take it easy, but I got a call from the District Attorney in Washington to come over. He

wanted to -- he was interested -- he became the District Attorney when I was in charge of the vice unit in Washington troop headquarters at the time, and he -- we got to know one another. And he found out that I was retiring, so he invited me over, that I should have a -- sit down one day at lunch and have a talk with him. And he wanted me to join the task force with -- then with Trooper Ross, and I decided no, that -- I didn't really want to do that just then. I wanted to take some time off, because that was just before I retired when he called me over. And I decided that I would like to take -- at least take the summer off and have time to -- he goes, "Oh, that's no problem." He says, "Come see me in September." And so I did have the summer off, and in September, I did go over and see him, and he said, "Okay." He said, "You're done vacationing. Are you ready to get back to work?" I said, "Okay. I'll give you five years." And it so happens that I went back to work for him, and I gave him ten years, working at an undercover unit for him over there.

INTERVIEWER:

And that was with Trooper Ross again?

MR. KARA:

And that was again teaming up with my old partner, Trooper Ross, and we were -- we worked together as the two initial

hippies in 1960, back in the days of Woodstock. As a matter of fact, interesting to note is the -- when the -- it -- we were working in that undercover capacity when Woodstock was going on. And when the people broke up at Woodstock, nobody would ever have believed it, and I would've never believed it when he told me that they were going to now all leave Woodstock, New York, and they were coming to Fayette County out off of Route 201 just outside of Connellsville on a farm out there that they were going to have another Woodstock-type festival in Fayette County. I said, "You -- this can't be. Now, who is going to come from New York all the way down here?" So, I was -- being that I was working undercover, I said, "Well, you go out, and they're supposed to be sending an advanced detail to put up a stage out there." There was a small lake, and they're going to be setting up and preparing to have another concert like they had at Woodstock. So, lo and behold, I went out, and sure enough, there they were, starting the constructive stage out on this guy's farm property and near a little small lake. And lo and behold, about a week later, the influx of the, back then, Volkswagen minivans and the people started coming for -- into the area.

[Tape 3]

INTERVIEWER:

This is Corporal Kara, tape three. Okay. Corporal, the Woodstock incident was down on 201. Do you recall what year that was?

MR. KARA:

No, it was, I believe, probably about 1967 or ’68, somewhere in there, I think.

INTERVIEWER:

How long did that incident go on?

MR. KARA:

The Fayette County portion of it didn’t last too long, thank goodness. They were building the stage when I went out there and preparing for it, as I said. They sent me out, because I was the neighborhood hippie and -- with the long hair and the beard and all that stuff, and nobody would pay any attention to me, so I’m -- I was out. And indeed, I went back to Sergeant Sichter [ph], who was in charge of the criminal unit at that time, and I says, “Boys,” I says, “this isn’t no rumor. Those guys were actually out there. They’re serious. They’re getting ready to -- they’re building a stage.” And it wasn’t too long after that when they started arriving, and then of course, being the fact that they were -- our department knew about it ahead of time and was able

to expect the influx of people that started to come in there, I remember Major Red now, Corporal Red and the actual uniformed officers were able to head it off and stop the incident from happening, and it was through the Department of Health and Sanitation and things of that nature that they were able to stop and get an injunction for -- to avoid them having that out on 201 on that farm.

INTERVIEWER:

How much of a crowd was there?

MR. KARA:

I wasn't there when the actual -- well, they called it a seize that had taken place on one of the hills at that time, but I guess -- I know there was several hundred, at least, that had already arrived into the area that our officers had to disperse and get them on their way to keep them from congregating and then stop the other ones from coming to stop the incident from occurring.

INTERVIEWER:

And did you have the opportunity to infiltrate the group?

MR. KARA:

Well, no, the only part that I was able to get into was the initial group that was there building the stage and getting ready for the influx of people. I was not around them, because they were

getting ready for the music festival, and they were going to set everything up there. But the actual group that -- when they came in, you know, our officers were already waiting to disperse them to keep it from happening.

INTERVIEWER:

So the people, the initial people, had no idea who you were?

MR. KARA:

Oh, no. No. I was just a local, longhaired individual that happened to be down there wondering what was going on. I was asking questions, you know, "What are you guys doing down here? What's -- you know, what are you building? You know. What's going on?" "This is going to be the stage. This is going to be this." And I thought, "Oh, boy." And that's when I went back to the sergeant. I said, "Well, this is no longer a rumor. Those guys are serious."

INTERVIEWER:

Are there any other incidents of major proportion that you'd like to talk about?

MR. KARA:

Probably the two most major investigations that I was involved in, the first one, I was a rather younger officer on the job, in my early years in the criminal investigation unit, was the Yablonski murder

investigation involving United Mine Workers officials that occurred over in Washington County. That investigation I remember. I was stationed in Uniontown when it occurred, and of course, the area of investigation was the Waynesburg station, the Clarksville area. They sent the officers from there, Troop Shifgo [ph] and some of the other men that were stationed in Waynesburg down to begin the investigation, and when we found out what was going on, then the troop commander assembled a detail of criminal investigators to go over and work that case specifically, and I was one of the ones that was sent from Uniontown over. And we arrived, I think, just several days after the initial -- they initially found the bodies. It occurred over the New Year's holiday weekend, and it had taken a little bit of time factor because of the fact, if I remember correctly, that the two sons, each thought that the family had gone to the other son's residence for the holiday week, New Year's holiday, and no one realized it. And then they finally realized, each to the other, that neither one -- that they didn't show up, and that's when they discovered the crime had been committed. And then we were sent over. I -- well, the initial -- of course, they responded initially, to the initial call, and then the next -- I believe

it was a day or so that the captain had assembled a unit to -- specifically of criminal investigators from throughout the troop to go and specifically work that case. It was us and the FBI, and Lieutenant Wright was in charge of the investigation at that time. And we worked it completely through.

INTERVIEWER:

Describe that crime. Just what was it?

MR. KARA:

What had occurred was as a result of a power struggle within the United Mine Workers. "Jock", Joseph Yablonski was known as "Jock", ran against Tony Boyle, who was the president of the United Mine Workers. And during that election, Yablonski did lose, but there was quite a bit of animosities through it. Yablonski won the election -- or no. Excuse me. Boyle won the election, and then, of course, Yablonski lost, and it was -- I guess allegations and bad blood, obviously, must have occurred between them, and then, ultimately, what had transpired, which the investigation revealed, it took several months, but that Boyle had hired some hit men through funneling channels -- money through the channels of the union, down all the way through Kentucky up through -- into Ohio, and that's where the hit men were from to actually put a hit out on Yablonski. And they had

tried several times unsuccessfully to assassinate him at various locations where he had been alone, and which they were unsuccessful to do it. They just couldn't. The opportunity, apparently, wasn't right. And what had happened is they then staked out the residence over in Clarksville and then found the opportunity, which happened to have been New Year's Eve that they went and decided -- one of the individuals involved, decided that, "Well, we'll just go and we'll just kill everybody in the house. We know he's in the house." They had been watching him for several days. And so they went down and broke into the house and murdered him, his wife, and his daughter as they slept in bed.

INTERVIEWER:

And what was -- where were these -- let me structure this. Over a period of months, how was this crime eventually solved?

MR. KARA:

Well, eventually, what we did is when we worked the investigation, here again, it was prior to contract times. We didn't have any contracts, no overtime, or anything. We just worked. And from the time that I arrived there, which was probably -- I think I -- shortly after the crime was discovered, I think, like, January the 5th or something like that. That was our investigation

from that point until it ultimately ended. And I can remember when it ended was in March. It was in -- during a spring thaw, because we were -- we had a command post set up at the -- what was known as the Ten-Mile Boat Club. They had a home over there or a building over there that we used as our command post that entire time. But we worked it continually, I mean, from morning until night, usually on an average of, probably, 15 or 16 hours a day. I could specifically remember leaving -- being there at 7:00 in the morning to get started the investigation and -- every morning, and then quitting usually around 11:00, 12:00 at night, just enough time to come home, freshen up, sleep for an hour or a couple hours, and then go back and do it all over again. And we did it for almost -- the better part of almost three months. And it was just a hard legwork. And it was just one of those ones. We started the investigation along with the FBI. We had FBI agents working with us. We started at that house, and we started the interview process and making, basically, a wheel coming out from around that house, assuming a circle, that we talked to every person in the whole area probably for a two-mile area around that house, what they saw, what would be unusual. And it wasn't the question of going to a house and we talked to --

maybe the -- only the wife was home. Well, who lives here and who all resides in this house? And if we only spoke to the wife, we'd go back to that house until we spoke to every member of that family and got an interview to find out exactly what they may have seen. And ultimately, through other investigative leads as well, but one of the things that stands out in my mind that I can recall, that it was over the Christmas holiday break, and it was near there, probably a -- I guess several blocks away from where the house was situated, there was a young -- two young girls. One young girl lived there, and her cousin had come in from Ohio or other -- one of the outlying states and was staying with her during the Christmas holiday. And of course, not much going on in that little town, they decided to -- what they would do is sit in their bedroom window looking out, and they would record the license numbers of all the cars that went by that went up and down that street that day. And lo and behold that after we -- well into the investigation, we found out. we did know that the girls did this, but we had no idea that later on, a month or weeks later, when we found out that -- started focusing in on suspects, we went back, and here those two girls did write down the license number of the car that was used in the killing that transported the

-- those three individuals that was involved in it, that actually did the killing. And they had the license number to it. They wrote it down. And -- but the investigation itself, we spent -- as I said, we made sure we talked to every person around, and of course, the forensic leads. I mean, we followed up on everything. I can remember one of them was a belt that was left there, and here it was one of the ones left by the mortician when he removed the bodies. But then nobody could identify it. We didn't know what it was and knew it was out of place. And we found out who manufactured this belt. And the one FBI agent that happened to work with me was -- and said, "Well, we've got to go to the manufacturer and find out and give him the belt and put him on an airplane." I think it was somewhere out in the Midwest to the manufacturer. And he identified it and said what it was, and we come back, and of course, we had found out that's what it was. But every -- the least little lead, the -- whatever there was, I mean, it was followed up to the -- in detail. And every night after we conducted the interviews and the investigations that we did during that -- the day, each night, we would sit down, and everybody, the -- all agents, we all worked together, would report on what we did that day and what we found out that day. And

then, we would plan the next days out and -- to further along. Some just continuing the interview process. Some to follow up on whatever lead may have come up. And we were able to find -- to come up -- I know I was able to come up with an area probably a mile or so away from the house where they were watching. They were able to see the house, and they were able to watch the house. And they, indeed, did. They had a -- it was a maroon or a red Chevy that they were using, the car. And where they were sitting alongside of the country road, on a hillside there, they had scraped the guard post with the side of the -- it was the door is what actually scraped it, and I found -- I -- of course I knew it was a maroon paint, because we even found out that they bought beer at a local beer tavern and what type of beer they were drinking. And I cut the front of that post off and sent it off -- sent it to the FBI, along with the door when we later had the car to match -- and we matched the two back up. And one of the other things I know in the -- that -- it was in part of the book that was ultimately written for it, because I testified in the numerous trials, they knew they were drinking beer as they were stalking them and watching the house. And it happened to be at this particular location where they were drinking beer. And the

time -- when we were there, the snow must have been two feet deep, and it was down over a hillside. It was a wooded area. And the guy said they were drinking beer. I said, “Well, what did they do with the cans?” Well, I happened to get one of them to talk and said they just threw the cans out the window. So we were there. I was there with this FBI agent, and we were looking there. And I said, “Now, what are we going to do with this? The snow is about two feet deep.” He said, “How are you going to find anything in here?” And I happened to have a can of pop I was drinking. I said, “Well, I don’t know.” I just threw it out the window. And it went out and plopped down there. I said, “Well, we’ll go down and find -- start with that can there and see what’s underneath all that snow,” and then dug down through the snow and found their beer cans that they had been drinking with their fingerprints on it and was able to use that, amongst other evidence that come in there.

INTERVIEWER:

What was the final -- what was the disposition on that case?

MR. KARA:

The disposition on that case, we were -- we convicted all three shooters of homicide, well, every -- all of them. Then there was one of the individual’s wife, her father, who was from, I think,

Middleboro, Kentucky. He actually hired these three individuals who were burglars and whatnot from Ohio, because -- knowing his wife was -- she was -- one of them was her husband, but he was at a -- belonged to the retired worker -- Mine Workers Union in Middleboro, Kentucky, I believe it was, or Tennessee, I'm not sure. And then it went to that president of that local, who ultimately went up -- further up into Washington, DC to -- I think it was -- the guy's name was William Prader [ph] who was a -- was the -- one of the attorneys for the Mine Workers and then ultimately to Tony Boyle. And we were able to trace the money going into the union through pension checks down through -- ultimately to -- the man's name was Silos Huttleston [ph] through the lodge presidents and so forth. What they did was funneled fake pension checks down to a group in -- I think it was either in Kentucky or Tennessee to the members of a retired local. And they were go to out and cash all of these checks and return the money back to the president of the local. And that's where the money came from to pay for the hit, who -- which then went onto Huttleston and then, of course, Annette Gilley [ph] and then to her husband and the ones that actually carried it out. And they

were all convicted all the way up to Tony Boyle, the president of the United Mine Workers.

INTERVIEWER:

Just curiosity, when the money started funneling, how much was it, and -- now that the case has been completely disposed of, when it ended up to the people that actually committed the crime, what was the variation there?

MR. KARA:

I don't recall, initially, how much money that it started. I -- the number escapes me, but I think when it came down, ultimately, to the people that carried the crime out, I think it came down to about $20,000.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So, that was in, what, 1969?

MR. KARA:

'69. '69 and '70.

INTERVIEWER:

So...

MR. KARA:

That was probably the -- one of the largest cases that -- you know, notoriety in -- as a matter of fact, there was a movie made

right up to that time that the crime was -- been committed on the election and so forth.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have any knowledge as to what happened to these actors in this crime or...

MR. KARA:

Well, they were all sentenced. Tony Boyle died in prison, and I believe a couple of the other ones did, and the rest are still serving life-in-prison sentences. I -- down to the ones that carried it out, because they were younger.

INTERVIEWER:

There was another case you talked about that was local, around the Fayette County area. Do you want to elaborate on that?

MR. KARA:

That's probably one of the cases that -- again, one of the most bizarre cases that occurred that I got involved in that I was just -- wasn't going to let up. What had happened, I was part of the CIA unit, the Criminal Investigative Unit, and of course, I was the Criminal Investigative Unit supervisor here in Uniontown, and I had spent, already, some, probably, I don't know, eight or nine years with the FBI in the profiling business with -- dealing with serial killers and violent sexual assaults, something that I wasn't

that interested in getting in initially, but I was told by the captain because of my background that I was going to get interested in and I was going. So, I submitted a letter, and I went. And I really am glad that the captain was so persistent, because it was something that I learned and I learned well, and I really got interested in it. And they used to say, well, you know, you get pretty good now. It's surprising how good you can get. The crime that occurred here that I was involved in was a young girl that was waiting -- it was at -- occurred on a Friday, again. It happened to have been over a Labor Day weekend. She had left home, walked out, probably, I don't know, maybe 200 feet or so, from her home, out to an area on the road to wait for a school bus to go to school. And it so happens that an individual was out along the roadway there, sitting in a car, seen her, and abducted the young girl. She was 11 years old. She was there by herself. There was nobody else there with her. And of course, she was abducted and obviously didn't go to school, but the people at the school thought the girl was home sick. The people -- the family at home thought the girl was at school, and no one actually realized what had happened until about 5:00 that evening when she didn't return home on the school bus. And of course, then,

we were involved in it. They called in as a missing person, and they started the investigation to -- checking into what happened to this girl. Of course, at this time, nobody knew what happened to her. The investigation went the whole weekend with no one being able to turn up any trace to this girl. And then later in the afternoon of Labor Day, which is about four -- three or four days later, she ends up being able to call home, and then we find out what had happened. And what had occurred, as she was picked up, before the bus got there, this individual kidnapped her and took her out and into a wooded area, several -- probably, I don't know, seven or eight miles away from where she lived, strictly a wooded area, and unfortunately, the individual did rape her several times. And then -- but what he did was he tied her to a tree. He had her hands tied behind her back and her feet, and she was tied, basically, against a tree. And the tree was in an area that was completely overgrown overtop of a -- had a big green canopy overtop that you couldn't see. And he had kept her there for those three days that she was gone, coming back on different occasions and, of course, assaulting the young lady. And the girl, of course, being tied to that tree, and then this being a hot time of the year, summer, she was just eaten up by

mosquitoes and insects and there was nothing she could do about it. I mean, they were crawling all over her body, eating at her. But that -- the last time that he would untie her and then assault her, and he tied her again to the tree, and she told me that she finally, after -- well, this happened to have been on a Sunday. She said that she was just there and she just picked at the knots behind her back. She could feel a knot in the ropes, and she just picked at them for almost a 24-hour period, constantly. And she was able to finally pick that knot free and untie herself, and then she got herself loosened away from there, and she escaped from the area. She escaped from the area, because she didn't know where she was at, and she was -- she did see -- when she got away from the wooded area she was in, there was a road and houses. She was afraid that this individual lives here somewhere. And she was afraid to be seen or go to one of those houses, because it might be him again. So, she just ran and kept on the roadway, and she went probably, oh, a good three or four miles. And she told me she did walk through an area where there was houses on both sides of the road, a small community, but she felt like she was in a tunnel. And everything was just hazy all around her. And she was afraid.

And she just ran through there, and then of course nightfall was coming on her, so she went off to the road and went down into the wooded area, and she just slept there all overnight, and then the -- which would've been on Labor Day morning, the morning she woke up. And she -- and then when it was daylight, she walked out a little ways, and she saw a trailer up on top of a hill, so she then walked up to that trailer, knocked on the door and then asked the guy. She said, "Would you mind," she said, "if I use your telephone that I can call my mother." And she said it that nonchalantly, I mean that politely. And then of course she did, and she called her mother, and then we were involved again back in the investigation, and we found out what had happened. And during that investigation, I know in the initial phases of it, everybody was just -- they couldn't get over and -- the girl being so calm of the fact that, you know, she wasn't screaming and hollering. And she was -- she would relate instances to you and the information rather matter-of-factly. But one of the things in -- during that investigation that she did is when they -- we sat down and talked to her and to describe the individual, and she gave us detail, including the car and details about the car and details about the individual. But the only thing that occurred this all --

during -- through all of this is when she described the individual. And I said, “Okay. Now, what race is this individual?” She would say he was black. But ultimately, I found out, she was describing this individual. And I felt that that’s what was happening, but for some reason of the fear factor and what had occurred to her, she was using it as a defense mechanism. He, in some way, instilled that in her that she was to tell whoever would come upon her that the individual that abducted her was black. And then she was using a defense mechanism the fact that “I’m alive. Everything is okay now. I went through all of this, and I survived it, so I’m okay.” And so she was really pretty calm about it. She wasn’t hysterical. And as a result of that, I know most -- a lot of the guys that were around me said, “Look. I don’t think this happened.” You know, and there was a lot of skepticism. But I was convinced that it occurred. And so I went out, and we did find the scene. I was able to find -- go back and find it, along with Trooper Anthony [ph], one of the other officers that was working it. It was actually his case, and he was transferred, and I -- being the supervisor, I inherited the case, the remainder of it. And so we went out and was able to find the area. And I did find where she was tied to the tree and so forth. And even though

we was using a helicopter to look for her, and it did fly overhead, because she told me she heard it, but the area was just so covered over -- covered with brush that you just couldn't find it. And as a matter of fact, Trooper Anthony had been out in that area, and he had walked probably within 20 or 30 feet of that area. And she had heard him, but she's tied to a tree, and she -- there's nothing she could do about it anyway. She knew somebody was out there. And again, thinking it was the suspect, she didn't want to say anything. And but it was so overgrown that he couldn't see anything, either. I know he felt bad. He was telling me that, you know, he was that close. Why couldn't he find it? You know, but there's just nothing he could do about it. He couldn't see it. So, ultimately, we did the investigation. I had the R&I out there to do the investigation of the scene, which wasn't much of a scene. But one of the things that we did through there, because they always ask me in investigations, now that we did what we had to do, knowing that I worked with the CIA -- or with the FBI in the psychological profiling unit there that -- what -- now what do you want in this scene? You know. What do you think -- anything you want me to do in addition to what I did? And examining from the behavioral analysis side of

it, I just went into the fact that for him to tie her to the tree, this is what he would have to do. And I looked down, and I could see just a very tiny, slight imprint of a shoe where, obviously, he stepped and that he actually tied the girl to the tree. So, I took the dirt right out of the center of that imprint. You couldn't photograph. You looked at it through the camera; it was just nothing that would photograph. And it was nothing deep enough that you could do a plaster cast or anything. There was nothing you could do with it. So knowing that there was nothing I could do with it, I just saw that slight impression. I just took some dirt right out of the center of the sole of that impression, just to have it. I -- there was no reason I could -- nothing I could do with it. So I had to make sure that was taken, and I had that at my disposal and a few other things that we did around there. But ultimately, what had happened is her description of the vehicle and the insides of the vehicle and everything was to a T, and we was able to find an individual -- find out the individual, who, ultimately we arrested -- I arrested, who did it, who committed the crime. And we arrested him as a result of another incident and found out that everything that she was telling us actually matched him. But when -- she'll say, "Is that him?" "No, it's --

the individual was black." And I felt that he -- what he did in the -- during the time that he had abducted this girl, that's was it -- what he instilled in her, and she was going to respond to that. And so we did find his car and the things that she -- he had repainted the car. He bought cans of paint, spray paint and repainted his car. I found his car. He repainted it. And I was able to put it back to him. And all of the circumstantial evidence, I could put back to him. And of course, the attorneys and everyone says, "There's no way, because this girl's going to say, 'Is that him?' 'No, he's white. The guy that took me was black.'" So, I had a -- we had a young prosecutor, who I was able to convince, that through all this circumstantial evidence, and I must have gave him a dissertation for a half hour or so, he said, "Well, you ought to present this to the jury when it comes to the time." I said, "No." I said, "That's your job." But I convinced him that through all this circumstantial evidence, all of it, each individual piece of this, and I'm talking probably 30 or 40 pieces, all of that, who does it point to? It all points to the same individual. I said, "We're going to do it circumstantially, even though I know that when she sits -- gets on the witness stand she's going to describe him and everything there and eventually say, 'No, he's

black.'" So, we -- he decided, "Okay. We can do it. We're going to prosecute him." And what had happened, in the interim, because of the publicity involved in all of this, somehow, when we had him in jail, he ended up on the news in an interview that he was being accused of this crime, and he's -- so he didn't do it. And here, this young girl saw him on television. And I guess part of what her thinking was that, "How could he be in jail and be on television at the same time?" He's not in jail, and whatever he did to her, he's going to come back and do it, probably threatening her and her family. So, nonetheless, we -- I decided we're going to go through with it, and we're going to prosecute him, and I arrested him and charged him with the crime. And it even got down to just before we got into the actual trial of it and interviewing with this girl, and all the time, she's telling -- when we get down to the bottom line, "No, the guy was black." And indeed, it was as white -- the individual was white. And then it was just probably in preparing for the trial and talking to her, I said, well, there -- you know, if there was anything, because of the fact that she was sexually assaulted and so forth. I said, "Anything you can recall about this individual? Any tattoos or anything?" "Oh," she says, "you know, there was some kind of a

tattoo right on the inside of his thigh." She said, "It was a -- just a real scary face with a -- carrying a sickle," which was the Grim Reaper. She said, "He had" -- it was on -- and I think she said it was the upper right thigh. She said, "Yeah, I remember that now." And -- but all the other details she was very good on. And it so happened, we had him in jail. He happened to have been in the Western Penn, I think it was, at the time. So I just got on the telephone real quick and called Western Penn. I know they -- you know, the individuals, they mark down all the tattoos. I wanted to know if he's got one there. And sure -- and everything else. Yeah, he has that tattoo there, as well. So, we prepare for the trial, and it just so happens, just as we were going into the trial, the girl finally relented that no, he wasn't black. He was white. It just happened at the start of the trial, because everything that I presented up to that point was this guy was black. And so we was able -- I was able to convict him. He -- as a result of that, he ended up with 55 to 114 years -- 110 years in jail. So at -- the minimum was he had to serve the 155 years, which would put him out of commission forever, thank goodness. But during the course of it, though, that -- it was -- the -- investigation-wise, I spent probably days on the telephone, some

things that I wanted in addition to -- well, that dirt that I had there. I wanted to prove that I was right in her mental capacity that what had happened to her caused such a trauma in the child that would cause her to do these things, which she would be so normal and giving you all these descriptions. Nobody would believe that it occurred, because she happened to even -- she appeared on television on these, like, Good Morning shows. And "That can't be. That kid is too normal. You know. Look. She's not excited at all. She's not even upset." I said, "This is what happens." So, I, through the program, the CIA program that I was involved in, I knew -- happened to know a psychologist in Pittsburgh. And so I figured, well, I'll find out from him if my theory is correct that she was put under such trauma that she responded the way he told her to respond. So, I called and I got a hold of him, and I said, "Well, you know, this is what I need, and this is what I have." And he said, "You know," he said, "I can't help you there." He says, "What you're going to have to do," he says, "I know a guy down in John Hopkins in Baltimore." He says -- and he gave me his name and phone number. He says, "You call him." He says, "Maybe he can help you." So, I get on the phone and I work my way through John Hopkins, and

I finally find this individual. I talked to him. I said, “Well, this is what I need. This is what I” -- “Oh,” he says. “That’s out of my field.” He said, “I can’t do anything there.” He said, “But I know the guy you need to get a hold of.” He said, “Dr. Stinston [ph] in UCLA out in California.” He said, “He’s the noted authority on this.” He said, “You get a hold of him.” So, I -- of course, I -- being from Uniontown, it’s kind of tough, you know, to picture, “Okay. I’ll just call UCLA and he’s probably in the other building.” Well, I started in UCLA, and I eventually call all through UCLA, and I did find his -- I did get a hold of his office. It took a while, but I got him. And I talked to the secretary. Oh, no. He was out somewhere on a speaking engagement somewhere. He won’t be back for several days. So I leave my name and phone number, and, “I’d really like to talk to him. This is what I’d like to talk to him about. Will you ask him to please give me a call?” And sure enough, he did come back several days later, and I received a phone call home -- one evening at home. And he called me back. And I -- so I proceed to tell him what I need, what I think happened. I need somebody with his credentials to examine this young lady. And he says, “Well,” he says, “you know, I could do it,” he says, “but, you know, we’re 3,000 miles

apart. It's awful costly." He says, "Let me give you the name of my counterpart on the East Coast at the University of North Carolina, Dr. Mark Everson [ph]." He says, "Get a hold of him, and I think he can help you." So, in the meantime -- and of course, I find out in -- through all of this about the -- I knew about the Chowchilla kidnapping of the school kids out in California, and Dr. Lenor Terr [ph] who wrote a book on the results of the trauma done to those kids. And he said, "Well, she can't -- she's more of a research psychologist. She could probably help you, but she's not what you need." So, he gave me the name of Dr. Everson in North Carolina, Chapel Hill. So, I started at the University of North Carolina, and I finally get through to Dr. Everson and tell him, "This is what I need." He says, "Yeah, I think I can help you." And then I set it up with him and his associate to come up. I conducted the -- Trooper Anthony and I, we conducted interviews with her, had her examine her up at the Holiday Inn in Uniontown so we'd have a completely neutral setting that he could work with her. So, I had him flown up here. And of course, we did it. And at the conclusion of it, he says, "You're right. This is what's happened to her." And he could -- had his clinical analyses and so forth with it. So, I had my expert

now to go in to testify why this girl's going to be so calm and say why she's going to tell me that this is not the individual. He's black. Everything else is right, but he's black. So, that was good. And I figured, "Well, I need -- I've got -- I have this dirt." And when we caught the individual and I found him, it just so happens, we found him in a house out -- not too far from the scene, probably within a mile away, half a mile away from the scene where this crime occurred. There was a group of homes out there. And it was a relative of his house. And just in the interview process, it happened to be Trooper Roundfeld [ph] that was interviewing the girl, talking to him, said something about, "Oh, yeah. He was here over that weekend. He had been in here a couple times." And he says, "As a matter of fact," you know, "he took off his shoes in the back of the old car there and changed his shoes and left them over there." And he left a pair of tennis shoes in the back of this -- sitting in the back of this car. I said, "Well, where are those tennis shoes?" And so, "They're over in the back of the car." "Can we have them?" "Yeah, go ahead and take them. I don't care." So, I got the tennis shoes, and I -- of course, I did this back during the course of the investigation, and I could see the little bit of a tread. And I --

there was a little wavy tread on the bottom of the ball of the foot. I said, “That’s what I saw very faintly in there. I swear that’s the tennis shoe.” And the -- but there was dirt in them little ridges. So, I went and I scraped the dirt out of the ridges inside that shoe and caught that dirt and kept that dirt, and then I got a hold of the -- our lab and said, you know, “What can you tell me about dirt?” And of course, he said, “I can’t tell you anything except yes, it’s a dirt.” So, I happened to have been teaching for Indiana University down at Carnegie-Mellon, and it just so happens while I was down there that they had just brought back rocks from the moon and they were examining them in another building down there. So, I had -- the director of security down there owed me a favor. So I says, “Hey, you find out. If those guys can examine moon rocks, how about if you can get them to examine this soil for me. I want to match the soil that I took out of that shoe to that soil I took out of that footprint.” He says, “Well, I don’t know, but I’ll get a hold of them.” So, he went and talked to them for me, and they come back and said, “No.” He says, “They can’t do anything like that. What you need is to talk to so and so at the University of Pittsburgh, and they could probably help you.” So, I called this individual. I finally go

through and I find them. He said, “Oh, no.” He says, “I can’t do anything there.” He says, “What you need to do is talk to this female doctor so and so at the Department of Agriculture at Penn State. They deal with soil. They could probably help you.” So, “Okay. Thanks a lot.” I get a phone number, and I start through Penn State, and I find this individual. And I -- all of these take, of course, a period of time that I could find them and talk to them. I talked to her. She says, “No, I’m sorry. I can’t help you. We can’t do anything like that.” She said, “But what you should do,” she says, “you ought to contact Dr.

Tedrowe [ph] at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He’s a soil morphologist. He could probably help you.” Okay. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. So, I get on the telephone, and I start through Rutgers University, and here I find out that he’s now a professor emeritus and -- but he still was associated with the University. And they gave me his phone number at home. And I called him at home in Edison, New Jersey, told him who I was and what I want. He said, “Oh, sure, I can help you.” So, I said, “Trooper Anthony,” I said, “you ever been in Edison, New Jersey?” He says, “No.” I said, “Well, you’ll be there tomorrow.” I says, “Here you are. This is what you’re

taking down to Dr. Tedrowe." I told him who's coming down, going to see him down there and what I wanted, an analysis. And here, I didn't know it, but Dr. Tedrowe is the supreme authority of soil morphology. He is the guy that wrote all the textbooks that everybody learned about how to do this examination. And so he examines this soil and comes back -- I got a telephone call from him. He says, "Trooper." I says, "Yes." "It's Dr. Tedrowe." He says, "I want to tell you," he says, "that soil came from" -- of course, before this happened, he wanted me to go three feet on each side of that tree, three -- all three different directions and get him a soil sample, including the -- plus the one that I already had. And he says, "Trooper," he says, "without a doubt, the soil out of that shoe and the soil that you took out of that impression is the exact same soil." And he goes into the dissertation of what it was. And of course, I had no idea what he spoke of. So that was some of the other evidence that we were going to use, circumstantially, against him, and which we did, and ultimately, I convicted him.

INTERVIEWER:

Did he have to come in and testify or...

MR. KARA:

Yeah, Dr. Tedrowe came in to testify, and I'll never forget. They had an individual who they had was a soil expert. And he's testifying. And of course, Dr. Tedrowe is sitting beside me and he's sitting there. And he's, "Oh, yes. He does this from this textbook, and he learned this from this textbook. And no, you should be able to do this, and you have to do this thing." This is the guy that wrote the textbook. He's sitting right here. You know. So Dr. Tedrowe testifies, and of course, they tried to discredit his testimony, which was just out of reach, because he was just talking -- they found out that this is the buy that actually wrote the textbook that everybody learned about. All they know about soil morphology is because of him. And so that sort of shot their experts down. They couldn't bring another expert in, because he taught them. It was through his knowledge that they learned anything about soil morphology.

INTERVIEWER:

Who prosecuted that case, do you remember?

MR. KARA:

Richard Bauer [ph]. He was a young Assistant District Attorney there. We prosecuted -- actually, he prosecuted, probably, a good half a dozen, maybe even a dozen, murder cases and

violent sexual assault cases that I presented with him. And we had a good conviction rate. We...

INTERVIEWER:

Was the jury out long on that case?

MR. KARA:

No. No, time to go through the evidence, but not an exceptionally long period of time. They were -- yeah, they were convinced. There was no ands, ifs, or buts. And then she finally broke at the last minute and said that that was him. And she no longer -- and then of course they used -- the defense used the tactic of you were saying it was -- he was a -- it was a black individual. It wasn't him. And she says, "Yes, but the -- that wasn't true. This is what actually occurred. It was him." But she never did tell me what occurred to her to cause her to hold that line, which I know he fed it to her and then reinforced it as a form of brainwashing with her.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, those are two great cases, and obviously, commendable on your part. You put a lot of time and work in both of them, which leads me to my next question. Were you commended for all your time and work in these cases by anybody from the department?

MR. KARA:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Is that unusual?

MR. KARA:

Well, I don't know. Just -- that's what you were supposed to do. I've had -- now I had my station commander and guys around me say, "Hey, good job." You know. Most of them said, "You'll never" -- especially the last case, "You'll never convict him." I said, "Well, I am." I said, "I won't retire until I do. I've got to put this guy away because of the fact he is going to -- from this point on, he'll start murdering his victims." Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, without any certificates or trophies, it's self-gratification of...

MR. KARA:

It is. That's exactly what it is. I know the attorney has -- he's been after me. He said, "You should sit down and write a book." He says, "You -- this is beyond belief, you know, all that you have gone through and how you did that." He said, "You should write. You put it in the form of a book. Sit down and write a book." I said, "Well, I don't want to do it, because of the fact I don't want to put that girl in -- bring her back through that trauma

that she went through." And -- but he has been after me several times to sit down and write a book. But I...

INTERVIEWER:

Well...

MR. KARA:

Maybe someday I will. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

Throughout the state, this goes on, and there's been investigators, and you obviously did a good job on both of these cases. But I guess if everybody got a certificate or a trophy or whatever across the state, that's all they'd get done doing, but, as I said, it's self-gratification, and it sure looks good on a resume.

MR. KARA:

Well, it, indeed, is total self-gratification.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

MR. KARA:

I know that that's not going to happen by this individual to another young girl.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. KARA:

And they're not going to have to go through what she went through. And it was just -- I was just -- well, maybe she was just fortunate that I -- and I had the background and training that I believed what she said. And I was convinced that I could do it. And I would just push it to that point, because everybody told me, "That's impossible. How are you going to do it? She's going to say, 'No, that's not him.'" You know.

INTERVIEWER:

Without your hard work, there would've been a case that went by the wayside. Nobody would've ever have been prosecuted or charged with...

MR. KARA:

Oh, yeah. And I feel that there would have been other cases that would've occurred after that. And some young girls would've lost their lives. There's no question in my mind that the training that I received through the FBI with the behavioral science unit, I stopped a serial rapist and a serial killer before -- in his infancy. I put a halt to it.

INTERVIEWER:

I agree.

MR. KARA:

And...

INTERVIEWER:

I'm sure anyone that watches this interview will think along the same line. Well, Corporal Kara, we're near the end of the interview. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Anything that comes to mind? Anything you'd like to say?

MR. KARA:

No, there's no more than I can think of. I think I've probably said more than enough. I just could say that it was a career that I'm glad I will -- had the opportunity to -- I was able to carry it out and the opportunity came for me to go, even though I was trained in another area. And I have to admit, today, that the advice that I received from that old salesman that "Kid, put it in your head, because nobody will take it away from you," really paid off. All that -- my study of the engineering, architecture, and all that stuff, all played the -- when I came to a crime scene and things of that nature, I was all able -- always able to fall back. I could always relate to it. I knew how to -- where a door should be. I knew the dimensions what they normally should be. I knew the mechanics. If there would happen to be a machine involved in there, I could understand how it would work. So the information that -- the advice that he gave me as a young kid, and I -- even

though I knew that I wasn't going to go into that field, that I was going to join the State Police if the opportunity came and when it presented itself that I continued that education, and I completed it. And I -- not to blow my own horn, I was good at it. I made drawings that were what you would see in catalogs that -- this was a -- say a lawnmower, that you blew it apart and showed all the parts interrelated and how they would all go back together, on that one picture, that you could put each piece back together. And those are what I did. I did it all by hand. Technical illustrations is what they called them. And it paid off.

INTERVIEWER:

It's amazing and it's remarkable how one statement can make such a difference in a person's life. One statement.

MR. KARA:

You know, and when he made that statement, I was cutting meat in that store. It was a local grocery store, and he was leaning on the end of the meat counter, and he -- knowing he was talking to an individual. I was just out of high school. Just a young boy. And he gave me that bit of advice. He says, "Remember to always -- no matter what you put in your head, nobody will ever take away from you. You can always use it. It's good. You just continue on to it, even though." And I think we probably

discussed the fact what I was doing, what I was learning in school, and the -- what I planned on doing. I probably told him, "No, I'm going to join the State Police as soon as the opportunity comes. As soon as I reach the age, that's where I'm going." And of course, he gave me that advice.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you had any involvement with the State Police since your retirement, any associations or...

MR. KARA:

Other than meeting the guys, and you know, running into guys, but not formally, as far as the department is concerned, going to retirement dinners and things of that nature, meeting up with the guys and, on occasion, when I was working for the District Attorney's Office, I would have occasion to meet with some of the investigators over there and some of the younger guys. Of course, I was like a dinosaur, though, already.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Well, Corporal Kara, on behalf of the State Police Historical Educational Memorial Center, I want to thank you for this great interview. It's been a pleasure on my part. And once again, it's great to see you. I...

MR. KARA:

My pleasure.

INTERVIEWER:

...worked with you a long time. Okay**.**