

Track 1

Ronnie: let me give you this you know five, or ten minutes of my life.

Ken: Perfect

Ronnie: My granddad, Joe Roberts, had a ranch on Nutty Brown Road, which is, uh, right off of 290

Ken: Yep

Ronnie: in 1950. I was born in 1950, and, uh, my dad had started his cedar business as a like a wholesaler. And there's different things, you know, people call like this, to me like, the cedar business is like logging in the Northeast, Northwest. You know, like you have your loggers ...

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: It's really timber loggers, is what it is.

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: You know, people call 'em cedar choppers and this and that. It's kind of a little bit of a derogatory term but, anyways, uh, my granddad had been in the cedar business for quite a few years, and, uh, I think he probably helped my dad 'cause he was real close to my dad. He started in the cedar business up in Kerrville, and, uh, so my mother stayed in, uh, my granddad's ranch house over there on, uh, Nutty Brown Road. When I was born I was born in Seton Hospital. – the old Seton Hospital – it ain't there no more.

Ken: Me too

Ronnie: Yeah (laugh together) And, uh, anyway, uh, uh, so life was good, you know. He moved on up. He moved, uh, he bought a, he had a house on Bandera Road, which is between right out of Kerrville that goes to Bandera.

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: And, uh, he put in a cedar post yard there, so's he's getting' his business built up, 'cause it's like the wholesale business. That's what my granddaddy was in. He was in the wholesale

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Like when you have a cedar post yard you're a wholesaler. You know people come, lumber, you know back in the day, uh, these people from the lumber yards and stuff, or ranchers would come and buy

Ken: Right

Ronnie: OK, and, uh, the life was going good, and then he moved to Hunt, Texas, which is a little town at the headwaters of the North fork and South fork of the Guadalupe River.

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Yes, I know exactly where it is

Ronnie: Yeah. out of Kerrville. Back then, that was my heyday, I mean that's, yeah I was about five years old and, I used to run around, I looked like a little Mexican boy, no shirt, no shoes, you know and I'd go either way to the river, 'cause Hunt it was, you know it's like this and I could go the North fork or the South fork, I could go fishing and do all that stuff, but anyway it's like a Mayberry, you know, for me.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: That was my good -- that was my good period of life. Well I had an older brother that died when I was, uh, I was five years old and he was about six and a half. He died, he had a brain tumor and he died. And, um, somehow my dad just kind-of -- you know, he didn't deal with it too good, yeah, he, he, he started drinking a lot and, 'cause he was like a deacon of the church and he was a song master

Ken: Uh-hum

Ronnie: he helped build a little church there in Hunt. Yeah, he was a very upstanding citizen and, uh, he just, he just kind'a went off, yeah, by the wayside, and, uhm, uh, OK, and then that was like in, uh, in '58, my mother committed suicide.

Ken: Oh. I'm sorry.

Ronnie: You know, and, uh, so that was like another thing for him, you know

Unknown person: Yeah, you were just 8 years old

Ronnie: Yeah, and, uh,

Ken: Uhm

Ronnie: So he just kind of went to hell in a handbag

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: My grandparents took me and my three sisters in. My youngest sister was one year old, a little over a year old. And they lived in Oak Hill and he had a cedar post yard in the old frontage road was the, uh, there is a post office up there now, uh, where our property was, and, um, he, he had a cedar post yard, and, uh, he took us in. I was eight years old, and, uh, he raised us.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He was blind. He was a blind man.

Ken: Really?

Ronnie: My grandmother, uh, she

Ken: Did he still work in that yard blind like that?

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: Well my grandmother did most of the work

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: She was a, she was a Patterson, so, goes back to the Pattersons over there in Eanes. They had a big, pretty big ranch

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Probably had fifteen hundred acres right on Barton Creek

Ken: Uh-huh, right, I've heard of that name

Ronnie: there's actually a Patterson Lane that goes right down

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: There's still a couple Pattersons that live over there. But most of 'em sold their land, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie, And, uh, anyway, uh, so they raised me and my sisters and stuff and that's how I kind-of had my ties to the cedar business and stuff

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: you know, and, uh, I knew some of those people over there, and, that sold posts. There were all people from Eanes that sold posts to my grandparents

Ken: Uh-huh, right. So they were buying from the folks over in the Eanes School District.

Ronnie: Yeah, yeah,

Ken: 'cause that was before, that was after the Low Water bridge was built.

Ronnie: Yeah, this was in the '60's.

Ken: Yeah. They were still selling, you know, cutting and selling cedar

Ronnie: Oh, yeah. Yeah. The Browns, there was a family called the Browns, they was, uh, well I'm just telling 'ya what I remember, you know, there was a Charlie and Mike and Baldy, they called him Baldy. And, uh, their, I did,

Ronnie: Do you have this book here?

Ken: Yes, I talked to the lady who wrote that book.

Ronnie: Really?

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: OK

Ken: Yeah, it's a good book.

Ronnie: It talks about the Browns. There used to be a Brown Lane over there

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: OK. And, uh, there's a lot of stuff in here about the, uh, the Teagues, Homer Teagues and, uh,

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: The Browns and, there used to be a Brown Lane in what's, uh, I can't remember that road now that cuts through to, uh, 360. That used to be Brown Lane.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Um, gosh, I get a little deficient here with – it's, it's the one that, right past, right by Barton Creek Mall. But anyway

Ken: Yeah, I don't know that area real well

Ronnie: But see, yeah, but see those, those people, uh, they used to have a lot of land over at the end of the Browns and the Teagues. The Teagues actually donated the land for the first school

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: and, over there in, like, there's a lot of my relatives in here. The Oestricks

Ken: Were you related to the Teagues?

Ronnie: Yeah, yeah, some of my granddad's um, I don't really have a family tree as such, but, uh,

Ken: But your grandmother was a Patterson

Ronnie: Yes, she was a Patterson.

Ken: And what was her daddy's name, do you recall?

Ronnie: Uh, Robert Payton

Ken: Robert Payton

Ronnie: Yeah. Uh, his story goes back, huh, he has in, uh, he was born a month after his dad was shot and killed in that feud down in the Sutton-Patterson feud down in Gonzalez County.

Ken: Oh, I've heard of that feud

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
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Ronnie: Yeah, yeah, it's a big, I mean it's bigger than the Hatfields and McCoys

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: It's really bigger than that 'cause there was, it went on for so many years, so many people killed. John Wesley Hardin was involved in it.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Manning ... the Clements brothers and, anyway, uh, he was born and then, uh, he wound up up here somehow, and, uh, he, uh, he stayed there, and he lived a good life, you know. And he had a lot of land, but you know that land wasn't worth much

Ken: It wasn't worth anything

Ronnie: No, I mean you couldn't raise cattle on it.

Ken: No

Ronnie: It wasn't cattle country

Ken: No

Ronnie: It wasn't sheep and goat country and it was all cedar

Ken: Yeah (laugh together)

Ronnie: and, uh

Ken: Do you know the name – the Emmett Shelton?

Ronnie: Oh yeah, yeah

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Oh yeah

Ken: I've listened to his tapes. He made tapes

Ronnie: Tapes, oh yeah. He had a long knowledge

Ken: He did. They named the bridge after him. Did you know that? That low water bridge there, that's the Emmett Shelton Bridge.

Ronnie: But, you know, he was a lawyer, OK

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
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Ronnie: And a lot of them people lost their land. The poor people over there, the, all the Teagues and the, oh, you know a lot of them people, because their kids would get in trouble and they would trade land for legal service.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And that's how he really probably accumulated – I mean I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with that

Ken: Right. He says that he, you know, of course, he says he was their friend, and

Ronnie: Oh, yeah

Ken: you know, and

Ronnie: They would go to him

Ken: They would go to him

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: But he ended up with a lot of land

Ronnie: A lot of land

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, but, you know, even my great uncle which lived here in Dripping Springs – I call this the Golden R. That's why I like living here. And I'll tell you why – because it's like Eanes is over there and then, uh some of my family goes back to Bee Caves in the 1870's -- Bee Caves, then Dripping Springs and Oakhill, all that land right here and close to Barton Creek was the Pattersons and the Roberts and they all lived close to Barton Creek.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And I feel like Barton Creek is only – I could almost throw a rock to Barton Creek

Ken: Could you really. I had no idea

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: it came up this far.

Ronnie: Yeah, the headwater goes up even past Dripping Springs, you know, but

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Anyway, uh, that kind of gives you my little two minute spiel. What, uh, what

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Ken: What am I doin'. Well, apparently...I'll give you a card and I'm, uh, this is, I'm, I've been teaching at Southwestern for thirty one years

Ronnie: Where at?

Ken: Southwestern in Georgetown.

Ronnie: In Georgetown?

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: OK

Ken: For thirty-one years

Ronnie: I'll be darn. Congratulations

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: That's a very noble, uh, profession. What do you teach?

Ken: Economics

Ronnie: Really!

Ken: Economics

Ronnie: OK

Ken: And, uh,

Ronnie: OK

Ken: I've always, um, I've always, uh, sort-of studied, uh

Ronnie: You grew up in West Austin?

Ken: I grew up on Vista Lane

Ronnie: Uh ---a hummingbird – (laugh)

Ken: That's a nice feeder.

Ronnie: Is your wife – will she be looking for you?

Ken: She's from Houston. She went into town to get...maybe have her a little lunch

0:10:49.1, Ken continues with his bio...

Track 2

Ken: Where I grew up

Ronnie: That's a lot of good stuff in that

Ken: And so I started out on this thing, and I'm thinking, you know, 'cause I went to O'Henry and I met, I knew a Melba Teague and I knew Luther Pierce, and I knew some other guys, and we would

Ronnie: You knew some of the Pierces?

Ken: Pierces, uh-huh

Ronnie: Pierces, yes sir. My, uh, grandmother's, my grandmother Patterson, was, OK, my grandfather Roberts, my dad's father and mother

Ken: What were their names? What were their original-?

Ronnie: Joe Roberts and, uh, Mary Patterson

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Well, her sister was a, married a Pierce.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Litten Pierce

Ken: Litten Pierce?

Ronnie: Yes, and there is a lot of stuff

Ken: There's a lot of stuff about Litten Pierce

Ronnie: There is, yeah

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They had a rock quarry, uh-ha, a few years ago we lived in Oak Hill and, uh, uh, I had some rock work done there that I owned a little rock. The porch is done, you know, some flagstone, and this guy drove up with a load of rock, and, uh, I looked at him and I said "man, he looked, you look like a Patterson." Pattersons have a certain look. They kind of have these little beady eyes

Ken: (laughs)

Ronnie: I said "man," I said "man, you look like a damned Patterson," you know, and this guy got out of his truck

Ken: Uh-huh

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Ronnie: And it was a, it was uh, I can't remember his name right now, but he was a Pierce. He had a rock, they have a rock quarry out there in, uh, Liberty Hill, somewhere down in that area.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: and, uh, I couldn't believe it, man, it's like

Ken: You could see it

Ronnie: I could recognize it, yeah, see them eyes, you know

Ken: huh

Ronnie: But anyway, uh, yeah, yeah it's kind of a tough life over there but you know, uh, Ken, I think those, uh, you know from my, you know, having digested ...

Ken: (laugh)

Ronnie: They were like, they was stuck in little Appalachia over there.

Ken: Over at Eanes, or, uh

Ronnie: In Eanes

Ken: Ya-huh

Ronnie: In Eanes. And the the Bull Creek area

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: They liked livin' ... nobody bothered them

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: You know, they liked this livin' kind-of under the radar, you know, I mean that's just the Irish. See, I've got that same thing, that's why I live out here, I don't, I can't stand a house like next door to me

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I moved over to Mason for a year. I though "well, I'm gonna' get away from Austin

Ken: After you retired?

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And my wife and I moved to Mason

Ken: Back to the town?

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Ronnie: Yeah, inside the town

Ken: a beautiful little town

Ronnie: Oh, beautiful little town. It was great and I couldn't stomach it. It's like, it's like people next door to me, you know, I mean we had this old 1920 house, historical house

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And

Ken: Was it one of those old rock houses?

Ronnie: Uh, no, it was wood-framed it was, uh, bungalow house, you know

Ken: Uh-hum

Ronnie: and I couldn't stand it.

Ken: It happens

Ronnie: I mean I looked, I mean I was almost like ready to go to a mental institution

Ken: uh-huh

Ronnie: But I think it's just this Ir., you know, like there's a lot of Irish culture over there in Eanes, you know, those people in that day 'cause the land wasn't worth anything but they lived off the land, you know.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They lived off the land

Ken: You say "Irish culture," you, is that what you, is that

Ronnie: I grew up in Irish – you know, I feel like there's an Irish culture

Ken: An Irish culture

Ronnie: uh, what do they call it? You know, they've got a word for it, uh, self... you know, you raise your own garden

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: you, uh, they hunted deer

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: They lived, livin' off the land, well they called that, what is the word?

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Ken: Yeah, subsistence.

Ronnie: Subsistence.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Yeah, they were subsistence people

Ken: Yeah, fished

Ronnie: Fished, yeah, and, uh, hunted, and uh, lived off the land, I mean, yeah, and that's, that's kind of why they liked it out there because it was land nobody really wanted. People from Austin would buy that land, these little lots of land, but they wouldn't live out there, they'd just go out there and cut wood off of it

Ken: um-hum

Ronnie: you know. And, I mean even, you know – they talked about it here – that's a great book

Ken: It is a great book

Ronnie: It really gives you a lot of, uh, I think it was written in '86 for the, the Texas sesquicentennial

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And, uh, you know, it's just like those people, uh, they just, they just didn't want to be bothered

Ken: Where do you think they came from? Do you have any, any clue

Ronnie: Oh, uh, well most of them come like, my family, you know, from Tennessee. They were all from Appalachia.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: I mean that they just, they just kept wanting to get away, you know, they kept moving from Pennsylvania and they moved down to West Virginia, you know, and Tennessee, and

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, you know,

Ken: Right

Ronnie: where the Appalachian mountain range run and they migrated over here, you know, when Sam Houston called for help they all come from the Appalachians.

Ken: Yeah

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Ronnie: You know, that's where all them, I mean, they're the ones that, uh, I mean they put their, their ole' rifle over their shoulder and come marching, you know, we needed some help over here and man, they, they liked to fight

Ken: Yeah. A guy named Jim Webb, he's a Congressman?

Ronnie: Oh, yeah.

Ken: Have you read that book?

Ronnie: No, what's the name? I want to get it.

Ken: What is that book? Uh, *Born Fighting*

Ronnie: *Born Fighting*

Ken: It's a good book. You're gonna like it.

Ronnie: You've read it?

Ken: I have read it.

Ronnie: I definitely want to

Ken: I think you're absolutely on target on this thing about being from Appalachia, and, you know

Ronnie: Oh, yeah

Ken: and, um,

Ronnie: I mean they were a fighting, I mean they were, hell, they've been fighting over there in Ireland

Ken: Yeah, it's about the Scots-Irish, you know

Ronnie: Oh, yeah, Scots-Irish

Ken: I've got to tell you something that my sister said because it really, to me, when you said Irish – because my sister is, uh, you know, we, like I said, we're about as old hill country in a sense, I mean I just, I spent all of my time on motorcycles, fishin', huntin' in the hill country.

Ronnie: Yes

Ken: I was right on the edge (talking over each other)

Ronnie: I spent my whole life fishin' and huntin'

Ken: ...and, and, you know, I remember coming out here. We took the back way to Dripping Springs to see her about three years ago

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Ronnie: Your sister lives over in Bear Creek?

Ken: She lives over on Bear Creek

Ronnie: How far do you go down in there? You said...

Ken: About a mile or two

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: You cross the creek

Ronnie: You cross the creek, yeah. That little 'ole water low water

Ken: Yeah, OK

Ronnie: A few of my wife's brothers lived, lived over there.

Ken: My sister bought, I want to say that little place was the Settemier place. We, she had, if you remember If you remember Eanes there was a horse stable. She used to, she used to love horses

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: There was a horse stable on Bee Cave Road, way back -- the only place there. We would go over there and

Ronnie: Yeah, really

Ken: She would do that

Ronnie: She loved horses

Ken: She did. She grew, you know, then she bought a

Ronnie: Is she older than you?

Ken: She's five years older than me

Ronnie: Really

Ken: Yeah. I was talking to her yesterday, 'cause we had gone to a, I remember talking to my wife, and we were driving the back way about three years ago, we had these beautiful spring rains and it was just a carpet of green grass and I said, you know, this looks like Ireland to me. And, and I'm talking to my sister and then she said "looks like fockin' Ireland (with Irish accent).

Ronnie: (laugh together)

Ken: She said, and I said "you know, I just wonder if, if there's not something to that.

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Ronnie: Oh yeah, really

Ken: Is that some sort of, you know,

Ronnie: I think it is, it's like my family is, like my granddad, he's more like my father, actually, because my dad 'kind-a went, went south

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: you know, he just, you know, he was a, he, he turned totally away from God, and

Ken: Isn't that something

Ronnie: Then he lost his son

Ken: sure

Ronnie: and, uh, then, you know, you think things can't get worse, but they can, man. Then he lost his wife

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: My mother

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Yeah, I know, he just – but anyway, I thank God that my grandparents took care of him. He's blind and I was like his right hand man, and, man, he taught me a lot of ____, I mean, he taught me how to do a lot of things, you know, and, uh, uh, he'd work my ass to death, I mean, boys were like, uh, boys were like mules, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Uh

Ken: Did he, did he have his place in Hunt still, or did he move

Ronnie: No, that was my, uh, I'm talking about my granddad. My dad lost, lost all that

Ken: Oh, so that was your dad

Ronnie: My granddad, he had a cedar post yard there on the Hill. At that time, when things went to hell, you know, it was like in 1958, and, uh, he took me and my three sisters in.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And, uh, they raised us, you know, uh

Ken: Where did ya'll live? Where did you grow up?

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Ronnie: In Oak Hill

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: on the Old Fredericksburg Highway, you know, it's called the Old Fredericksburg Loop, Old Fredericksburg Highway, it's um, it's just, you know, it's one of them things where the old 290 when they re-straightened it out

Ken: um-hum

Ronnie: You know, there was some of these old Loops, yeah, there's still places up here where they have they have the Old 290 Loops

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Uh, but anyway, he, uh, you know, and that was the culture we grew up in, I mean he had his hounds, he loved his fox hounds

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He had fox hounds and, uh, you know, uh, he, he loved to hunt. You know, he'd tell me how many, back when he was young, uh, he, he did all kinds of things, I mean, he would farm over there, he, he knew, he knew that area, even when he was blind, it's like I was, I started driving when I was probably twelve years old

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I drove for years without a driver's license, driving him around, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, uh, we'd take the hounds over there on the Rob Roy Ranch, which is in Eanes, and, uh the Patterson place, we'd dump our hounds, he loved, he loved to hear them, I mean, I didn't, I wasn't into that shit, you know what I mean, he, he liked to listen to them, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: the hounds, you know what I mean, he had six or eight hounds

Ken: How old was he then?

Ronnie: Uh, he, well he was pretty close to, uh, he was about, uh, sixty

Ken: Um-hum. That's a job

Ronnie: Oh, man, I mean, if somebody dumped four kids on my front porch

Ken: Yeah

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Ronnie: On one of my kids, I'd go 'Man, I've have to think about that'

Ken: Do you have kids?

Ronnie: Uh, yeah, I've got four

Ken: Four?

Ronnie: Yeah, and uh, but, you know, education wasn't important to them, you know, it's like that Irish thing, it's like, boys worked, but the girls would go to school, I mean, there's even a list of some of my aunts in there in those little schools, uh, uh, anywhere you see a Roberts, that's my, that's my relative.

Ken: Well there was a, as I recall, it was probably that book, a Tiney, Tiney Roberts

Ronnie: Tiney Teague, you know

Ken: Tiney Teague

Ronnie: Yeah, see, uh, I, I think some one of his, uh, sisters married, uh, a Teague. Or something like that

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: or, I don't remember, I was, I, I looked at a family tree, but I can't remember it, you know

Ken: So, did you ever hang out with the, with the cedar chopper kids, your age?

Ronnie: No, uh, but they all, uh, OK, they, they would bring, uh, what I remember, I'll just, you know, I'll tell you what I remember, uh, uh, there was a Ben Teague. He lived on Brody Ranch, which is where you, Brody shopping center it's right on Barton Creek

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: It's, it's at corner of Ben White, 360, and Lamar

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: They call it the Old Brody Place.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Ben Teague, he used to bring cedar posts up there, uh, to our, you know, yard, and, uh

Ken: Did he have a truck?

Ronnie: Yeah, they had a truck, yeah, and he'd bring 'em in, uh, the Brown brothers, Mike, Charlie, and Baldy, they cut cedar off of the, the Dellana Ranch over there in Eanes. And, uh, they were real regs, I mean the whole period at a time, when I was growing up, time I was probably eight years old 'till eighteen, you know, for quite a few years

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Ken: Right

Ronnie: They would bring it in. And like I say at one time their family owned land over there

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: But they lost it, you know, either couldn't pay the taxes

Ken: Taxes

Ronnie: or legal, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Needing a ... pilfering it off. The lawyers suck 'em dry

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: (Laugh)

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Ronnie: I wouldn't say they sucked 'em dry, but, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: But anyway, and so they were, they were like, uh, you know I would say, you know, my granddad was, he got in, somehow he got in, you know he was blind, he got into the wholesaling business, so, he, he started the yard on South Lamar over there at, uh, Lamar, and, you know it was back in the, back in the boondocks, back in the day, and they was right across from that Brody shopping center

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: It's at Lamar and 360 and Ben White.

Ken: Right

Ronnie: He started out there then he moved, uh, to Oak Hill, uh, there's a place called the Bult (?) Place. He had about ten acres on 290, which was the old 290, and, uh, then he moved into, uh, Old Fredericksburg Highway where I grew up

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And then he had a yard with his brother here in Dripping Springs. I called him Uncle Ollie, he was my granddads brother, he was my great uncle really. And, uh, uh, there, there was some, uh, articles in a magazine at my aunt Virginia's. If you ever, if you ever get a chance

Ken: I know, I met her. She's

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Ronnie: Talk to her, you know, 'cause she has, I think, she has some articles that was in a magazine, I don't know if it was like Texas Monthly or some kind of magazine about, had an article about my Uncle Ollie. Uh, Roberts, Ollie Roberts.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Uh, but anyway, she

Ken: This Aunt Virginia, is she the one that – Virginia Turner

Ronnie: Yeah, Virginia Turner, yes

Ken: So she's the one that knows this Millie Williams, who's in Burnet

Ronnie: Was it Williams, or Simons?

Ken: Uh, what?

Ronnie: Simons?

Ken: Millie , Millie , uh

Ronnie: Well, I was gonna' show you something here, you know, I don't know, uh, I thought you said Simons. Because the article in this, uh, in Medina

Ken: Gol-lee, I haven't seen that

Ronnie: It's got some articles about, uh, Cedars fed many a family. Willie Simons, he grew up with the Bull Creek area, so there was a whole different clan, I mean they was different clans

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: than the Bull Creek

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: There's rough country, see. My granddad had a whiskey still back in the day, back in the prohibition.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Yeah, I mean, 'cause they liked it, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: you know, it's like this Irish shit, they liked livin' out in the woods

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012

At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: And they liked their whiskey, and, uh, but here's a thing about this Willie Simons that I thought you might enjoy, uh, a couple of stories about Rex, I mean look at that log, that's Rex Simons, he's still living

Ken: Isn't that amazing! He can pick that up

Ronnie: Hot damn, I mean, that's, that's a big ass log

Ken: It is. Man, this is a cool book

Ronnie: Yeah, it's cute, it's got some stuff, there's uh, some things that some of my other relatives on the Patterson side lived up there, that, uh, uh, she has a like-a history of that area, people in the _____

Track 3

Ken: That post must weigh

Ronnie: Oh, shit

Ken: 300 pounds

Ronnie: Oh, at least. I mean they got a strong, man. I've seen that yard, uh, I've been up there in Medina

Ken: Is it still there?

Ronnie: I don't know if it's still there, a few years ago it was, and he still had a, he works, I think Rex worked for the County, but he's still a, he might be somebody you could hook up with, you know

Ken: Yeah, his name is, so this is Rex Simons

Ronnie: Rex Simons. Willie Simons is probably not alive, I don't think

Ronnie: The one before that is Willie, Willie Simons, his dad.

Ken: Willie Simons, OK

Ronnie: See, he grew up in the Bull Creek area there

Ken: Oh, man. I'd love to make a, I, I'll just buy this book, I imagine it's for sale

Ronnie: Uh, yeah they've got it up there, there's a little store called the, uh, uh, Lovelace Orchards. They called Medina the capital, I mean the apple capital of Texas.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, uh, there's this Love Orchards, this lady sells the books in that

Ken: OK, I know it. I know, we were there

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012

At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: They've got the great apple pies and stuff

Ken: They've got the

Ronnie: They put 'em in this, uh, little series, they've got like Series I, and Series II. They used to be little books and then they combined them, so I've got, I've got another book in there, the Series I, uh, yeah, Series I, that has the stuff about some of my other relatives, the Sutttons over there.

Ken: That's a pretty river

Ronnie: Oh, it's beautiful out there.

Ken: It really is

Ronnie: It really is beautiful up there, I mean it's just, it's kind-of back, uh, I mean, you feel like you're out in nowhere out there, you know.

Ken: This says Hatfield. I wonder if they're related

Ronnie: Uh, she has a real estate business. You might call. Uh, Hatfield Real Estate.

Ken: Oh, OK

Ronnie: Just, just write down Hatfield Real Estate.

Ken: You know, we were just out there, like a year ago

Ronnie: Oh, really?

Ken: Last spring break. Uh, we went to, um, Camp Wood.

Ronnie: Oh, yeah

Ken: Which was a huge ...

Ronnie: That's right by

Ken: cedar cutting place

Ronnie: Oh, yeah. See that's, and that's why, uh, my dad went out there was, I was going to show you one thing here, uh, I mean (laugh) let me see if the uh, address or phone book, or phone number or something. 1997, I don't know if she's still alive, but, it's got some interesting stories. Another good thing in one of these books, it's like two Series, this is Series II. What I enjoyed was, uh, they give a very descriptive method of how they used to burn their coal kilns, kilns, burn coal

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: Which is what my granddad used to do, my uncles used to do, my great uncles,

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Right

Ronnie: And my grandmother even burned coal to buy clothes for school.

Ken: She'd make ... make charcoal

Ronnie: Charcoal

Ken: And where would they sell that I wonder?

Ronnie: They would peddle it in town

Ken: Just like off of, off of a wagon

Ronnie: A wagon, yeah, and, uh, in this book here it talks about my great uncle Lon, Lonnie Roberts

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: That this guy talks about how he, people requested his coal because it was such good coal

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: I remember my granddad talking about it. He said, you know, you had stay up all night with that kiln, you couldn't let it go because if it flared up, they built it like a teepee. And then they covered it with dirt.

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: I mean, it would be up pretty high. But if it ever got like a little opening in it and you went to sleep, it would be nothing but ashes

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, uh, my granddad talked about you had to stay up with that. And then they would, when it was cooked, then they would rake it down, rake it out, and, uh, cool off, and they'd put it in, a, burlap bags

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And they'd go peddle it. He put it on a wagon and take it to town. So they were just living off the land.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They were living off the land

Ken: You know, I wonder if that didn't, think about Ireland, you know, you know, I wonder if that hadn't passed down for generations and generations, see, 'cause they burned peat

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: And stayed up all, you know, and all that stuff

Ronnie: Right. Uh, but, yeah, its' a, a, I was gonna' show you something here. Oh, let me give you this guy's name, right here. It's probably one of the biggest cedar yards I'd ever seen. And I bought, see all my fence posts out front out here

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: I hand hewed every one of them by hand

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: With this axe. This is like, I kind-a did it as, uh, as something for my grandfather

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah, right

Ronnie: I hand peeled it. This axe that I grew up with, that I've got a big 'ole scar right here

Ken: You don't

Ronnie: Time I was eight or ten years old, I used the same axe, I hand peeled the bark off of every one of those posts by myself.

Ken: I'll be darned.

Ronnie: It took me weeks and weeks. And it was just kind of like a little memorial, but anyway, this

Ken: Is that a cedar axe you've got? A double-bit cedar axe

Ronnie: Oh, yeah. It's called the Kerrville axe.

Ken: I would like to see that axe

Ronnie: I'll show it to you (laughs).

Ken: OK (laughs)

Ronnie: The Stephens, uh, Stephens Cedar Yard, it's been there since the 1930s. S T E P H E N S. Uh, his name is Jerry, Jerry Stephens. And it's been run by his family since the 1930s.

Ken: And where is it located?

Ronnie: In Ingram, Texas. I N G R A M. It's close to Hunt. It's between Kerrville and

Ken: Oh, Sure

Ronnie: On highway 39

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Right, right, right

Ronnie: And, uh, his phone number is, uh, I'll just give 'ya his phone number

Ken: OK

Ronnie: (talking over each other) go ahead

Ken: go ahead...he's related to you, right?

Ronnie: Yeah, it's 830-367-5341. And man, he's he knows my dad

Ken: Oh, good

Ronnie: He's, he's been around

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Uh, I ain't noticed any such ... I mean he's got cedar that's back almost tall as that elm tree, I mean it's a huge

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He's still operating a big time operation. You know, it's a little different. They use forklifts now.

Ken: Well, if you lived in Llano you'd probably, I don't know, you, I mean Mason, you, well you probably went this way. But if you go through Lampasas

Ronnie: There's probably

Ken: There's a huge cedar yard right outside of Lampasas

Ronnie: Oh, really? Lampasas

Ken: And that's where I've been getting (talking over each other)

Ronnie: Well, see, in, uh, in, uh, Cedar Park used to be one of the biggest ones, Kings

Ken: Kings, yes

Ronnie: King Cedar Posts, uh, he was a wholesaler

Ken: Right

Ronnie: Uh, you know, big thing, but, uh, there's nothing there now, but all the cedar's out, you know, people moved, and like I say, it's, it's really more like timber business.

Ken: Yeah

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At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: You know, uh, they would buy, uh, like a, say a guy that was a wholesaler, he would find a ranch, that this guy wants the cedar cut off

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: OK. Like my granddad. I mean, this is what they would do

Ken: Your granddad would be one of these guys that would find the ranch

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: uh-huh

Ronnie: And, and you would give them, uh, 10%, like at that time in the '60's it was about 10%, so when the guys, say if they brought in a hundred dollars worth of cedar, \$10 went to the rancher.

Ken: Um-hum. And the rest of it went to the cutter.

Ronnie: Correct, to the cutter, yeah. And the other thing was they called it flat cutting. Uh, usually that would be free, like, the cedar would be free, you, but you had to cut, say if my ranch, you know, say if I had a thousand acres. You had to cut every cedar tree and then you take the posts, they're yours.

Ken: Right

Ronnie: But you didn't pay anything.

Ken: Right

Ronnie: They called that a flat cutting.

Ken: You're preparing that for grazing

Ronnie: Yeah, they wanted to get rid of the cedar.

Ken: Right

Ronnie: For grazing

Ken: but when they cut that off, and, and, by the 10%, and they cut it, and they sold the posts, they could high-grade that cedar they could just, they could take what they wanted

Ronnie: Right, yeah

Ken: and leave the rest

Ronnie: leave the rest, pick and choose, yeah

Ken: Yeah

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Ronnie: They'd go get the good, you know, the good, but you see the thing about the further west you go, like especially, uh, Medina, and, uh, Kerrville, it was virgin timber, I mean

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: In fact that guy, I, you know, it's been a few ago when I wadn't very involved in these posts, but, I mean, he had some cedar logs 'bought this big, straight as an arrow, and probably eighteen – twenty foot long. I mean that's virgin

Ken: That's amazing

Ronnie: That's virgin timber, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: But it, yeah, yeah, you know, it gets down in these, these are the virgin timbers down in these creeks and places hard to get to

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: Get it out of

Ken: Right

Ronnie: Like this, I think even some of this story about this Rex Simons and his dad, I mean, it's, it's rough, you've got to get it out.

Ken: I wonder how they got that, I mean

Ronnie: Well they cut roads, we, um, I mean, they would cut, they called them cedar brake roads, you know, it's like

Ken: Right

Ronnie: They would make their own little road, you know, wind around somehow, you know, to get their truck down in there

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: and load this stuff up, and, uh, it was pretty wild, you know, I mean, uh, I think I mentioned, uh, uh, there was another family that lived on the Gaines Ranch. Taylor Gaines, which is, uh, it's at Mopac, 360

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: They owned all along Barton Creek on both sides

Ken: I heard that

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Ronnie: of, uh, uh, there was an old family, but there was a, a, family of, uh, Mexicans, that, uh, lived on that ranch and they would bring a lot of cedar to my granddad, granddad, you know,

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: and they cut it off of the Gaines Ranch because it, you know, was all along Barton Creek, and there was just, a lot of virgin timber down in there. And, like I said, the ranchers wanted to get rid of that cedar, so, it was interesting, you know, we used to raise our own cows, we'd milk our own cow, I mean, I kind-of lived that life, you know, the subsistence thing

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, we raised our own cows, we raised our own hogs, we had our own chickens,

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: We had our own garden

Ken: What kind of garden?

Ronnie: We would can, uh, can everything, you know, like you'd have your big garden, I mean our garden was probably as big as this back yard our bigger, and, uh, canned the tomatoes, canned the okra, canned the, the beets

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: I mean, all these different things, the turnips, uh, you know, we were just, I mean I guess that's kind of how I learned to live

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: It was a, it was a throw back to that day

Ken: Right

Ronnie: Back over in England, you know

Ken: Right, right

Ronnie: And, uh, we lived, you know, we lived... just lived a pretty subsistence – I mean my grandmother, the only thing she'd go to town to buy flour

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: Uh, chicken feed

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: And she'd take the feed sacks and make her clothes

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Ken: Oh, is that right

Ronnie: Oh, yeah, I mean, we're, I mean, I grew up in a, you know, much earlier year than my age

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: Because, see, my granddad's born in 1902. And, uh, uh, my grandmother was born in 1904, so they're, you know, the culture in the era that I grew up in was much further back than, say somebody that was normally born in 1915

Ken: Yeah, yeah, yeah

Ronnie: uh

Ken: I've seen this change, I mean, it was a very, you know, back place, I mean, there was UT, it was the

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: That was, there were the jobs there,

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: But apart from that there were no jobs

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: I remember, I worked at the south, I worked for the Holiday House

Ronnie: Oh, man

Ken: I worked at the Holiday House

Ronnie: Which one?

Ken: I worked at the one, mainly the one on the Drag

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: and we would go, of course, you probably remember this

Ronnie: Oh, the one on North Burnet Road

Ken: All the way, all the way down, was it, uh,

Ronnie: Barton Springs

Ken: Yeah, there, well Barton Springs Road, we hit that one, and then there was, what's the name of that place over on South Congress, the furthest, it was the furthest south

Ronnie: The Pig Pen?

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At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Pig, pig, pig stop...pig, pig

Ronnie: Pig something – pig pen, Pig Stop

Ken: Yeah, well, we'd drive from there

Ronnie: Everybody would cruise - we'd cruise back and forth

Ken: Yeah, go back and go all the way up

Ronnie: Oh, man, there was a lot of fights, like, if you were from North, if you were from North Austin

Ken: All of the time

Ronnie: and you come 'ta

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: The one on Barton Springs

Ken: Oh, I know it

Ronnie: If you're lookin' for, cruising for trouble, they had the rods, you know

Ken: Hell, yeah

Ronnie: Hot rods and

Ken: A whole bunch of kids ...

Ronnie: (laugh)

Ken: piling out of the car at one time

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: and go, throw

Ronnie: Throw things

Ronnie: Yeah, 'cause everybody used to hang out across the street from the Holiday, like, you'd go over there and then you go across the street, well, it was like this big 'ole pecan trees, and everybody'd kind of hang out

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: up there, and then, you know, people drive by, you know, "hey"

Ken: I know, I know

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Ronnie: (laugh) it was crazy, uh. I'm trying to think of, uh, well, see, another family that, uh – all I'm gonna show you this stuff real quick, see, this, I say where I lived and where I was born. I lived in a tent, Where my dad had his first business

Ken: Wow

Ronnie: I think I've got a picture of it, probably

Ken: Some of those cedar choppers lived in pretty

Ronnie: There's a picture of me and my, my dad, he was loaded up. Me and my brother. There's my dad with some

Ken: Yeah, yeah, yeah

Ronnie: I think that was over on Bandera Road

Ken: Look at you guys

Ronnie: I've got to find that tent, here

Ken: (laugh)

Ronnie: I want to show you where I lived when I was born. I've seen it in here somewhere.

Ken: Those pictures stayed in pretty good shape

Ronnie: Yeah, they're kind of old

Ken: We have a

Ronnie: See that's me, we lived in Hunt, Texas. Man, you talk about, I looked like a little Mexican

Ken: Uh-huh. That's some big fish

Ronnie: See, I, we could walk to go the North Fork or the South Fork.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Of the Guadalupe River

Ken: Look at that. Bass is it

Ronnie: Bass, yeah, bass

Ken: Big

Ronnie: I've got barefooted

Ken: Yeah, yeah

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Ronnie: I mean that was the life

Ken: It was the life

Ronnie: That was the only good part of my childhood, right there, I'll tell ya. Yeah, I don't see that tent.

Ken: (laugh)

Ronnie: We lived in Hunt, there. That's me with my pole. I've got a picture of the tent and my first fishing pole there (laugh)

Ken: The old tackle box

Ronnie: My dad, see, he liked to hunt and fish too

Ken: Um-hum, so did my dad

Ronnie: Yeah. Oh shit, we're out of pictures again

Ken: I don't think there were many deer out in the hill country by the time I was a kid.

Track 4

Ronnie: That's a picture of Hunt School

Ken: Look at that, yeah

Ronnie: Hunt School, that's me and my little cousin

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: My cousin, we were the same age. That was 19...probably 56. Damn, I don't know what that, damn, uh

Ken: ____ 0:00:16.2

Ronnie: Oh, yeah

Ken: That's a nice car

Ronnie: It was

Ken: nice car

Ronnie: It was.

Ken: ____ 0:00:21.1

Ronnie: Yeah, I used to been out here ____ 0:00:23.1 I was skinny then. I've gotten fat and shit

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
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Ken: I still like to go fishing on the Llano River

Ronnie: That was me and my, looks like some of my sisters in my granddad's cedar post yard, he was selling cedar posts back then

Ken: uh-huh

Ronnie: You see that truckload

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Ronnie: I, I want to show you something else too. I want to show you my _____0:00:41.4

Ken: rebel period, here?

Ronnie: Oh, yeah, yeah, we's, yeah, that was back in the

Ken: (laugh) '60s

Ronnie: (laugh together) That's their house there. That's my sister (dog barking) _____ picture that came out _____ that was my mother, uh, I want to show you that tent, I can't find it. There is my grad, my dad

Ken: Cecil Roberts

Ronnie: Look at that

Ken: Cedar Yard

Ronnie: Telephone B E A

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: (laugh)

Ken: B E A, yeah

Ronnie: 1 2

Ken: Cedar post staves and logs

Ronnie: This is a cool picture. He did this big _____0:01:22.8 thing. He had his hounds. He loved hounds.

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: And they got a, they got a live fox up there on this _____0:01:28.6

Ken: Oh, how funny

Ronnie: Going down to Kerrville _____0:01:31.1

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Ken: Oh, my goodness ____ that fox

Ronnie: Look at all that, that, they got the cedar hanging off the side, and the hounds, the hounds are barking. There's foxes here

Ken: Oh, my gosh, that fox must have been going crazy

Ronnie: Oh, that's me and my granddad there. We was loadin' cedar posts.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: We used, we used to haul them

Ken: Whew

Ronnie: to south Texas, like to West Columbia, Columbus

Ken: You know, that reminds me of a question I've really been wanting to ask you, so, um, I'm guessing a lot of these cedar posts ended up fencing the West, I mean, other parts of, other parts of

Ronnie: You know,

Ken: You have any idea?

Ronnie: I think, I think it started out for, uh, railroad ties

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I'm thinking the 1880s

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: started out, you know, when they, they were really, uh, they were really, uh, humpin' to get the railroads in

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Texas, and, uh, that was a big part of, it started out, I think, a lot of that. Well, barbed wire didn't come out around until the late 1800s.

Ken: That's right, um-hum

Ronnie: And, uh, then after the, the railroads, you know, come, got that going, 'cause they had some good virgin timber, you know they could get these big ole' cedar posts and make ties out of them, railroad ties

Ken: right, uh-huh

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Ronnie: And, you know, they used to actually float them down the Colorado River, around Mt Bonnell and, you know, they'd float them down and they would get 'em out of the river, and, and, uh, put 'em on the rail, and, and, uh, you know, take 'em and build railroads. But then, uh, when the fencing thing come around, then it really boomed, you know.

Ken: I wonder when that, you have any, you know, when that happened, that, 'cause the charcoal thing played out when electricity came in.

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: That's what I get from these books

Ronnie: Yeah, yeah, yeah it did. Yeah, I, uh, they just did that, you know, I think the charcoal thing was just, uh, they did whatever they had to do to

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: to survive. They wasn't, they didn't really give a damn about money. It was just survival.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, and

Ken: Well

Ronnie: But, you know, when, when that played out, it's like then it'd become a, and, and, like I say, you know, it's, if, if you lived in the northwest it would be logging

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: It's really a logging industry

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You're going in and, you know, you're assessing a plot of land, so you're, uh, Kenneth has, a, you've got a 5,000 acre ranch, you know. I come over there, and I'm a wholesaler. I say, you know, I go around – look on your ranch, and say “yeah, you know, you've got some good timber here, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Kenneth, uh, you know, I'll give you, a, I mean it, it isn't always 10%. It might be, uh, I remember it being, you know, 15%. It would depend on how good the

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: quality of the timber was. I might give you 25%

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ronnie: So, Ken, I'm gona give you, uh, you know, you've got some good virgin timber here

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: you know, uh, I'll give you 25%.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Which is a lot, you know, you get, you know, so that's, that's income for the rancher, you know

Ken: Sure it is

Ronnie: or County

Ken: There wasn't, and there wasn't much for ranchers back then, even, I mean, it was

Ronnie: No, I mean you'd do

Ken: It was hard times

Ronnie: You'd do whatever you can get, whatever

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: whatever, you know, and, so like, see like this cedar here, it ain't worth a crap

Ken: No, right

Ronnie: There's no posts in it.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: It's, it's young. It's been, this has all been chained off, or bulldozed

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: in the last, probably twenty, thirty years

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, this, this is scrawny, there ain't no money to be made in that shit

Ken: No

Ronnie: But, uh, anyway, you know, that's what they did, you know

Ken: But over by the Eanes School in the cemetery, that Teague Cemetery, have you, you, well you would if you drive, I just drove along west, is it, uh, Westlake Drive.

Ronnie: Have you been over there, to the

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Ken: In school

Ronnie: ___ Teague Cemetery

Ken: Um-hum. I just went, I, 'cause I was in that, that, that's, the Old Eanes school is the Eanes History Center, which is

Ronnie: Right

Ken: which is not, you know

Ronnie: Have you been inside it?

Ken: I have.

Ronnie: That, that was, that old wood cook stove is my grandmother's sister's. She cooked on that for sixty years. Edna Pierce.

Ken: Huh

Ronnie: She cooked on that stove for sixty fuckin' years.

Ken: My goodness

Ronnie: 'Till she died.

Ken: When did she die?

Ronnie: Uh, not that many years ago. Uh, I know they put that, they donated that stove to the Eanes History, and it's, you know, it's not open anymore. You can't buy these books. They're not publishing these books anymore. My daughter went and bought, she bought the last one. She conned this lady into, this was just a few months ago, I told her, I said, I'm gonna snatch some of these up, you know, because

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, uh, she had like eight. Eight volumes - or eight copies of that. She, she had eight volumes left and, uh, she said, told my daughter she would sell her one, one issue, and she said I'm gonna donate the rest of 'em to the Eanes Library. And they're not published anymore, so

Ken: I've gone, I bought one

Ronnie: you did. I'm glad you got one.

Ken: about a year ago.

Ken: I don't know where I got it from, but it was the best thing yet. And I talked to the lady who, uh,

Ronnie: Wrote it

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
At his house in Dripping Springs

Ken: Who wrote it.

Ronnie: She's still around. She's

Ken: Yeah, she's, she's pretty young back then

Ronnie: She, she did a lot of, quite a bit of research.

Ken: She really did

Ronnie: Yeah. There's a lot of stuff, I mean, I'm, I'm related to so many of these people in here, I mean, it's, uh, it's kind-a scary.

Ken: Well, you know, this is what I found, is, is, people have told stories about cedar choppers, and about the industry, you know, in all these different sources. But, there's never been – hey, let's put all these together – 'cause I think they're just a really, and interesting people. A people who didn't want to absorb in like you said with the rest of the, with the rest of the modern world

Ronnie: right, exactly

Ken: You know

Ronnie: See that's my, that's my, the way I thought of this too.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: It's, it's, they, they didn't want to be bothered

Ken: Uh-uh

Ronnie: And, you know, if you look back at the history of the, the Appalachia area, it's like Eanes was just a little colony of that.

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: It's like these people don't want to be, I mean, you know, if the damn, uh, census taker come around, they don't want 'em

Ken: Uh-uh

Ronnie: ShoShit, you know, I mean

Ken: Well

Ronnie: They don't want to be bothered

Ken: Emmett Shelton was telling a story about when a couple of professors moved out to the Eanes School District, and, and there was lice, right, and so they say, well we can't, like, solve this problem unless we get everybody to go in

Ronnie Roberts, March 25, 2012
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Ronnie: (laugh) good luck!

Ken: So Emmett Shelton had to go around, one by one, house by house, and, and, explain, you know, and say

Ronnie: They would

Ken: Would it, would it be OK if

Ronnie: They would accept him.

Ken: Yeah, they would accept him and they would then let 'em do it.

Ronnie: But they ain't gonna accept

Ken: But this is back

Ronnie: nobody

Ken: Uh-uh. This is in '60, back in 1960.

Ronnie: Oh yeah?

Ken: ___1950s, you know

Ronnie: yeah. Uh, a Homer Teague, he's buried in Roberts Cemetary, they call it the Roberts-Teague Cemetery.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He had two sons. Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee Teague. And they would bring cedar over – the two boys. I mean, I knew Homer

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And I remember my granddad knew him, Cecil

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Uh, but they would bring cedar over, I mean, these guys looked like they were right out of fucking Appalachia. I mean, you know, they're, shit, they're rough (laugh).

Ken: Were they, you know

Ronnie: But that's the way they grew up

Ken: I know.

Ronnie: You know

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Ken: You've got to be really tough to do that

Ronnie: I mean, they were tough. I mean, like, Homer Teague, shit, he used to walk around with a pistol. He was, he considered his self like the self-appointed sheriff (laugh) of that area. And he's buried in that

Ken: Is, is he the one that, that, like had a feather in his hat, or a rattlesnake around

Ronnie: Oh, probably

Ken: That they rode around, yeah

Ronnie: I mean, he, he lived, well I remember him when he lived, there was this old school house that sat right on the corner of Patterson Lane and Bee Caves Road. And Patterson Lane is, went into my family, my whole family's ranch. You know, they probably had a, 1,500 acres. Wasn't worth a shit, but

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: you know. Uh, but he lived right on the corner there, in this old school house. It was the old Brewton Springs School House that they moved up there and he lived there, you know, I mean, uh, he was crusty, shit, man, I mean, you know, nobody jacked with him

Ken: (laugh)

Ronnie: But he's buried in the Roberts Teague Cemetery

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: You know. It's pretty, pretty

Ken: I was going to ask you, 'cause I was there and there was some of these straight, straight, tall cedar trees about the size of this post, here.

Ronnie: It's a nice post

Ken: This is the one, that, some of the ones you did?

Ronnie: No, I just did them on my fence out there

Ken: OK. I saw the, but there in the cemeteries – tall, straight, maybe two or three times as tall as that

Ronnie: Yeah, they're old, that's an old tree

Ken: See that's got to be old growth cedar

Ronnie: Oh, yeah. That's old growth cedar

Ken: Yeah. And excellent posts.

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Ronnie: Yeah, oh yeah, that's, that's, I mean, yeah, that's what I'm planning on. I'm not be buried there, but I'm gona put my memorial there

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: I want my kids to maybe help keep that cemetery, 'cause it's hard to keep people to,

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: The cemeteries get dried up, 'cause I know, I've got like several family cemeteries that we have no access to. Like, there's a, in Bee Caves, on Little Barton Creek, there's the Otten (?) Cemetery that's on private property. Uh, there's the Freitag Cemetery that's, you know, it's all getting industrialized around it, you know, and, uh, then out at the Patterson Cemetery and the Roberts Cemetery, and, uh, you know, it's kind of sad, and I want be. We had that, uh, we had a history, I finally got a historical marker on the road at Teague Cemetery over there because, uh, and we had to get the, the, uh, neighborhood association to go along with it because they had to donate, you know, it was, it was in a, actually a what do you call them, a green, green space area. But anyway

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And so we got an easement to it

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And stuff like that

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: So it's, but, um, anyway

Ken: I wonder how many, you know, back you were talking about somebody cutting posts and 10%. I wonder how many posts a man could cut in a day with an axe.

Ronnie: (sigh) Those guys were good. Like the Browns that I was telling you about.

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: They were good with an axe. Mikey stayed, uh, Charlie, and they talk about Mike, Charlie, and, I called him Baldy, I always named him Baldy, but he's got another name in this book. But, uh, they were very efficient with an axe, I mean, it's amazing

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: 'Cause they used a very sharp, sharp axe, I mean, they, you know like most people, you know, you know you hack on it and it'll be like, but if it ain't sharp. But they knew how to use an axe, I mean, every, you don't waste a, a motion.

Ken: Right

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Ronnie: They didn't, they didn't waste a motion.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: You know, like everything was, you know, just, you know, everything, ever, every motion had a purpose. And they'd just go around the tree, and of course they'd come out with chain saws about in the '60s, you know.

Ken: I wondered about that, about 1960?

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Uh, Baldy used a chain saw. Mikey and, uh, Charlie used an axe. So they, they brought some in with an axe and then, uh, Baldy cut it with a chain saw. But, you know, they were pretty uh, primitive uh, chainsaws, you know, back in the day

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, they were just, they weren't like they are now, man, like, man these things now, you know, get ya a Stihl or something like it, right

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Yeah, it's pretty interesting. But they cut beautiful cedar, I mean, they had some beautiful cuts on them. You know, they had to be six foot long. Now that cedar, like when I went and bought them posts up there, they cut 'em seven foot long, you know. They, like, cut 'em longer than they used to

Ken: Uh-hum

Ronnie: At, uh, by one of the Stevens Cedar Yard up there to buy to buy some, my posts there, 'cause I didn't know, you know, that was the closest place I could find to buy a post

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: I think they've got a little, uh, cedar yard up there now, but the other side of, uh Johnson City is a small yard

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: you know, but, uh

Ken: Who, speaking of cedar posts – right there at the turnoff – there's some massive cedar posts, uh, right there on Hamilton Pool Road. Turning, turning left on, you know?

Ronnie: Uh, where?

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Ken: On the right hand side, probably a little, looks like a restaurant there, or something, I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention

Ronnie: Are they for sale, or – oh, oh, I know where you're talking about, I know where. That's, uh, that's red cedar.

Ken: OK

Ronnie: That comes from Bastrop

Ken: OK

Ronnie: That's a different, that's a different

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They call this, like, Mountain Cedar

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah. It didn't look right

Ronnie: They bring that up and they make mantles out of it. They make siding out of it

Ken: OK

Ronnie: Yeah, they've got a mill there. It's, it's, it's nice,

Ken: I see

Ronnie: Yeah, it's pretty cool. They even have some big 'ole Mesquite logs out there that they make mantles, uh, out of this wood, really cool

Ken: That would be

Ronnie: Really cool. But, yeah, I know what you're talking about, yeah. That's, that's, that's from, uh, east

Ken: Yeah, East Texas

Ronnie: Bastrop

Ken: OK. I've never seen it there

Ronnie: Yeah, it's, it's different. It's not as hardy as Mountain Cedar

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Like this is mountain Cedar. They, uh, I called it, you know, I've always referred to it as red cedar. It, it rots a lot quicker than mountain cedar. It doesn't have as much oils in it

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Ken: Right

Ronnie: Uh, mountain cedar has more oil in it.

Ken: On our place we still have one, one side of the place

Ronnie: These are all out of mountain cedar

Ken: Oh, absolutely. We just, we just called it cedar (laugh)

Ronnie: Yeah.

Ken: Damn cedar! (laugh) somebody said!

Ronnie: My granddaddy used to take me over there and he showed me these fences that

Track 5

Ronnie: That he'd build. Um, I want to tell you, he made a dollar a day. He would carry his crowbar, this is over in, uh, close to Lake Austin. Back then it was a river, you know, they didn't have the dams built

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: And, uh, we'd drive, he'd, I'd go, he'd like to go reminisce every once in a while. You know, we'd go over there, we'd stop and he'd get out and, he knew, he was blind, but he knew where he was at.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He had a good sense of direction. And, uh, he'd check them posts. He said he would take him a sack with a, a, what'd they used to call that? A salt pork? Salt pork. Fried salt pork and a biscuit for lunch

Ken: For lunch

Ronnie: And a jug of water and his crow bar and he'd walk a mile or two and go where they'd dig these holes, and he, he just, he loved to get out. He'd show you the post, you know, when they were still there, like from the 19—probably twenties, because he went blind in the forties. And, uh

Ken: There's no harder work

Ronnie: Oh, shit, I mean, I think about that. You know, I feel so privileged. And yeah, but, education wasn't important like. My granddad has six, uh, nine kids. Nine kids. He was fucking blind. And, uh, three boys, six girls. He sent the girls to school

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: He didn't have much use for girls. But boys were, he'd work them.

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Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: I wonder what age do they, uh, start cutting cedar, doing that kind of work?

Ronnie: Uh,

Ken: Fourteen

Ronnie: Oh, no, shit, no. Eight or ten

Ken: Oh no

Ronnie: Oh, they started me out, work, I, I, I didn't, I never cut cedar, we used to cut some firewood

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: And, uh

Ken: With an axe?

Ronnie: No, back then the chainsaw was around.

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah

Ronnie: But, uh, he threw my back.

Ken: Yeah!

Ronnie: Uh, you know, everybody thinks that time in the Fire Department did me in but that ain't what did me in. I, I used to load those, hell time I was nine, or ten years old I'd be up there handing them posts up. We had loaded them by hand

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: One at a time. I mean, you, you take a fifty or sixty foot trailer, a flat, they called them a float, you know, with a truck, tractor on the front of them and you could put like five or six decks, you know, six foot long cedar, and you'd hand them up one at a time. Well that's what I did. And they would keep me out of school. I mean

Ken: What size were these. Were they as big as these posts here? Or were they

Ronnie: oh, various diameter

Ken: Various diameter

Ronnie: Yeah, that, or bigger

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Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: It depended on what the people wanted, you know, they could be that big

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: And, I mean, you know, you'd hump 'em up, I mean, I would

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: You know, and it's, it's just repetitive

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Lifting, lifting

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: I mean, and all summer long, uh, every day when I got home from school, uh, they'd keep me out of school like if they had a truck coming in to be loaded up. They'd keep, 'cause education wasn't important. I mean

Ken: So, I wonder where these trucks went to with those cedar

Ronnie: Uh, all over, uh, a lot of them, like I said, lumberyards like, uh,

Ken: Calcasieu?

Ronnie: No, further, like, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: like West Columbia, down on the coast

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Uh, you know the lumberyard would sell these cedars

Ken: For posts, probably

Ronnie: For fence posts

Ken: For fence posts.

Ronnie: yeah, and I think that's before, before, uh, steel posts got popular

Ken: Right

Ronnie: Now, you know, every fence you see know is, uh

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Ken: T-posts

Ronnie: Oh, yeah, they've got T-posts, and then they have iron, they used that old drilling steel

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, for corner braces and then they put t-posts

Ken: Right

Ronnie: And, that's the way to do it.

Ken: Oh, it is

Ronnie: Like those posts out in my fence, they were like seven bucks a piece.

Ken: Is that right!

Ronnie: Seven dollars a piece

Ken: I have to look closer at this fence 'cause what I saw was a, I saw a smaller fence

Ronnie: Oh, the stays

Ken: The stays

Ronnie: Yeah, the stays

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Yeah, you know, that's, that's just, uh, there not in the ground, they just kind'a support the wire, but I just did that mainly for looks. We like the security of having a fence, you know, where people can't just drive in.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, you don't have the solicitors

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know, the Jehovah's Witnesses and shit, I just like, I guess it just goes back to my privacy thing, I like my privacy, you know

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I don't give my gate code, the only people who've got my gate code is my kids, you know, and if somebody's coming over – if they can't call they can't come in – 'cause I'll, you know, if they call I'll go open the gate.

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Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I don't give anybody the code. I mean it ain't a big deal

Ken: No

Ronnie: It's just, it's just a privacy thing, you know, but, uh, yeah, it's, it was the wild west over there, you know, I mean, hon, honestly, Ken, I'd hate to of lived over there in that time. Then it was a hard-assed time

Ken: It was hard and there's nothing ____

Ronnie: But they liked that

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They liked that, you know, they____ There's a Brown Cemetery over there, actually, uh, you know where that, there's a little, uh, convenience store, you familiar with 360, OK, 360 and Bee Caves?

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Got that

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Uh, if you go west on Bee Caves it's probably the first street, the first street to the left. There's the Brown, the old Brown Cemetery. It's not very well maintained. But that was

Ken: But it's open?

Ronnie: Yeah, you can go in, you can go in there and look around,

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Yeah, and, uh, you know, I went over there, and looked around, and I always wondered where Mike and Charlie – my granddad used to take them money. I remember when I was a kid that, you know, they'd get in a little financial bind. I was like, uh, I was like his right hand man, I guess. 'Cause I was, you know, was like, he'd say, I tell everybody I always thought my name was goddammit boy until I was ten years old. (laugh)

Ken (Laugh together)

Ronnie: Goddammit boy. He used to get mad at me. He'd say goddammit boy. He'd say come on boy. He called me boy. We'd go over there, we'd go over there and, uh, they lived, at that time they were living over there off of, uh, uh, Brody Lane, just a little shack, you know, and, he'd go over there and he'd give 'em some money, you know, somebody was sick or they needed a little money

Ken: Uh-huh

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Ronnie: They would help 'em, you know, he would help 'em out

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He had two billfolds, I mean, he always wore kakis. And, uh, he was blind, but he, he'd keep like his hundreds and his fifties and twenties in one billfold and his ones and fives and tens in the other billfold.

Ken: Huh

Ronnie: And, uh, shit, he was always loaded with money, I mean, you know, just cash – they did everything on cash

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: When they, when they, uh, we had to put him in a nursing home we went in there and, uh, they had a metal box, shit, there was thousands of dollars. I mean just a little metal box sitting in the closet.

Ken: Um

Ronnie: They was old, I mean, some of that money was so damn old it had, uh, what did they used to call them, uh, silver certificates or something

Ken: Yeah, or,

Ronnie: Before, yeah, I mean they were like old

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I mean this shit, they had for god knows how long

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: I mean, they didn't, I guess during the Depression they didn't, people got turned off of banks I guess

Ken: I guess so.

Ronnie: Yeah, you know, they were afraid of banks or something, you know.

Ken: I've always wondered, uh, what brought, you know, I mean, I know what ca, people came, you know, from my, my grandfather came from Tennessee too

Ronnie: Oh, really?

Ken: yeah, and, uh, you know, and, uh, I just found out about it, but anyway, you, you know, that was way back, that was when he fought in the Civil War and all that, 1800s and all that stuff. But I'm, I'm wondering, did they, they didn't come here to cut cedar. I mean, you know, when they ended up, when

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they, I was wondering if they were ever farmers first. If they ever, you know, 'cause cotton was, cotton was king

Ronnie: I don't think that the, the Irish, see, ha, here's my take on that. The Germans, you know, they, they wanted farmers when they was asking for these immigrants

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They wanted farmers.

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: you know. The Germans come, you see, my mother's side of the family is all German – pure bred German, so I'm like half German, half Irish

Ken: Exactly what I am

Ronnie: I grew up in a, I grew up in an Irish culture. The Germans stayed put. If they landed in New Braunfels, if they landed in Castell, Fredericksburg,

Ken: Um-hum, Um-hum

Ronnie: They stayed put. But it's like the damn Irish, they were always looking for a little greener pasture, you know, like, they just, they were restless

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: You know. They, they, to me, they're the ones that settled the west

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: 'Cause they were always looking for something better. You know, they hopped around, they didn't stay put too much.

Ken: Well I wonder then when they finally got to the Hill Country didn't they, they, seems like they stayed put quite a few generations.

Ronnie: Some of them did, but a lot of the just kept moving on, I mean, Yeah, 'cause they moved, you know, like I say, they kind of migrated down from Pennsylvania

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: Down into Appalachia, and then when Texas opened up

Ken: Yeah

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Ronnie: You know, in the 1830s, you know, the, the, they declared independence from Mexico, man, they just come swarming in and they just kept moving, I mean, they call that, uh, what was that word they used to use for the westward expansion, uh, anyway

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They had a word for it, but anyway, they, they, I think they were the ones that kept moving, 'cause the Germans and just about every other culture, just, stayed put

Ken: Right

Ronnie: you know, I guarantee, there's generations of, all in around Fredericksburg, their families go back to, you know, 1840s

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: You know. They stayed put. But, it's like the Irish were just, always a little more restless.

Ken: Well, what I'm thinking is, then they finally get to the Hill Country and there's nowhere further west to go. There really isn't. I mean, you're in west Texas then.

Ronnie: Yeah, well, that's true

Ken: You know, so may, it could have just been, this was the final frontier.

Ronnie: Yeah, the final frontier

Ken: I don't...

Ronnie: I, I don't know why they stayed. You know, it's like, uh,

Ken: 'Cause they really

Ronnie: Joseph Roberts is buried in that Roberts Cemetery, er, Roberts Teague Cemetery, uh, he served in the Union Army

Ken: Huh!

Ronnie: He was from, um, Missouri, and the story goes that he had a wife up there but he stayed here after the Civil, I guess after he was cut loose, you know, from the war. He settled here for some reason, but he got married again so the story goes that he had another wife in

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: Missouri, you know, the truth, I haven't really researched it that much yet. (laugh)

Ken: (laugh together)

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Ronnie: Some things – I keep telling my Aunt, she did quite a bit of genealogical research, and I kept telling her, I said “Aunt Virginia,” I said “you know you’re gonna find out things you probably don’t want to know.” I said, I kept telling her, I said “You’re going to find out we’re related to the Teagues, the damn Simpsons, the Daugherty’s”, (laugh)

Ken: (laugh together)

Ronnie: Sure enough, we are, you know, directly, I call them more family ties.

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah

Ronnie: It was a small world over there

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: My granddad, he rode a horse when he was, when he was courting my grandmother, he rode a horse to church, he’d go to church, he’d ride his horse and she’d walk along as she’d go back to her house and they had a little courting thing, they had a dog trot house, which I’ve got a picture of it in here, if I can put my dog up maybe show you

Ken: Uh-huh. I’d like to see that

Ronnie: They had to sit out there and it was very proper, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: He had to sit out there, you know, like we’re sitting here, there was a table and two chairs and they call it a, (cleaning throat) courting table

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: And, uh, that’s the way they, they got their thing going then.

Ken: Tell me, were there any Roberts from, uh, on Bee Cave? You mentioned Bee Cave

Ronnie: Oh, Yeah, they, he grew up over there, yeah. Yeah, Joseph Roberts donated the land for that cemetery

Ken: OK, how about Bull Creek?

Ronnie: Uh

Ken: ‘cause there’s a whole ‘nother group of people that lived over there

Ronnie: Ah, yeah, there were some roughians up there, you know, I call them roughians. They were just same brand, same brand of people

Ken: Uh-huh

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Ronnie: you know, they liked, 'cause there was some deep dark canyons over there, you know, you could live over there, and hell, nobody'd know.

Ken: Have you been on Bull Creek Road, Spicewood Springs Road

Ronnie: I haven't been over there in years.

Ken: It's a trip back to the past

Ronnie: Is it?

Ken: If you turn left, off of 360, OK, Spicewood Springs Road goes all the way from the Mopac, you know, all the way out to 183.

Ronnie: It comes out on 183?

Ken: It comes out way on 183, but, if you, if you're going on 360 go past 2222

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: there's a light there. Turn left. And it hadn't changed

Ronnie: Yeah

Ken: I mean, it's all on both sides, dark, deep canyons

Ronnie: Kind-of spooky looking, isn't it

Ken: Yeah, I mean, way, way up high are all these fancy subdivisions.

Ronnie: That's where the Simons come from, by that Bull Creek

Ken: OK

Ronnie: See there's the Boatrights out there

Ken: Yes

Ronnie: Boatrights, uh, actually one of my sisters married a Boatright

Ken: Uh-huh

Ronnie: From that, I call them a clan, or whatever

Ken: Um-hum

Ronnie: You know, they were, all in backwoods

Ken: Um-hum

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Ronnie: They were backwoods people, you know, just

Ken: Yeah

Ronnie: They, they just liked

Ken: (goes into hummingbird conversation)

END