



# The FBI Oral History Project

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## **INTERVIEW OF**

**Former Special Agent of the FBI**

**JACK H. BORDEN**

**Years of FBI Service 1942 – 1945**

**Interviewed on August 18, 2009**

**By Brian R. Hollstein**

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**Interview of Former Special Agent of the FBI  
Jack H. Borden (1942 – 1945)  
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Borden/

(B): This outfit that chose me as the Outstanding Older Worker in the United States for this year; really I think I told you is a part of the Department of Labor and they urged people to continue to work. There are so many people that at least in, well all over the United States that really don't have enough income to support them for their daily needs. Their Social Security and any retirement they have is not sufficient to support them and these people teach them an occupation or trade and help them find a job ....

Hollstein

(H): Right.

B: ... to support them and these people teach them an occupation or a trade and then helps them find a job in that trade or occupation. The reason that they choose someone like me as more or less their role model; look at what this 101 year old man did.

H: Yeah.

B: Do you come from a long lived family?

B: No. I have a brother that's three years younger than I; ninety-eight years old and I had three sisters. They're all dead.

H: Oh boy.

B: My mother lived to be almost ninety and my grandmother on my maternal side lived to be ninety-four.

H: Well that's pretty good for years ago.

B: Yeah. I think the reason I'm still living is that God still has something for me to do and that He needed me here to do it.

H: Well that's good.

B: Somebody said, "To what do you attribute your longevity to?" And I said, "Not dying."

H: (Laughing). I guess that's a pretty good answer. I'll have to keep that in mind if I ever make it where I get that far. That's great.

We just got to talking and I forgot to identify us.

My name is Brian R. Hollstein. I'm talking to Jack Borden and today's date is the 18th of August, 2009 and we're making a recording here.

Jack, before we get started just a little bit of background. I'm going to send you a copyright form to sign and return to me if you would please.

B: Okay.

H: And what it says is that the copyright to this conversation belongs to the Society of Former Agents of the FBI and, I needn't tell you as an attorney, that the copyright only applies to this particular conversation and not to other conversations.

B: Do you have my mailing address?

H: I have it in the directory I think. Then there's a little background before we get started.

We don't want to talk about the names of informants or their administrative designation.

B: Brian, I'm not gonna tell you anything that I think that hasn't been; what am I trying to say?

H: That's classified?

B: Yes, classified.

H: The next thing in fact, you must be looking at my notes here. We don't want to have any classified information and we also don't want to be discussing sensitive investigative techniques.

B: Yes.

H: Now once we've done this interview, we'll have it transcribed. I'll send you a copy in draft so you can take a look at it and check that the names are spelled correctly or if there's anything about it that you're not happy with let us know.

H: Then once that's done we will send it to the Bureau for pre-publication review and they look at it for classified information, and once that's done it'll come back. We'll make a nice copy for you and your grandchildren and also send you a disk so you can make as many copies as you want. Then the original will be going into our archives at the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C. So that will be made available to scholars and researchers who are interested in the people of the FBI. So that's what our program looks like.

Let me ask you where you were born and where did you get your education? How did you find the FBI and what have you? So let's start off with that.

B: Okay. I was born on a farm about eight miles east of the town of Weatherford on a creek, Clear Port Creek, which is a year round running creek. On a farm of a hundred and sixty acres that my grandparents Borden homesteaded and received a patent from the State of Texas to it. My dad was born on that farm and I was born within three hundred feet of where he was born.

We were tenant farmers. A tenant farmer is one who furnishes his own equipment and all to do the farming and pays a, well on wheat, a third went to the landowner. On cotton and corn a fourth went to the landowner. The difference being is that if you sow wheat then you don't have to do anything else to it until it's time to cut it.

H: Right.

B: And oats are the same way, but if you plant cotton and corn, later on peanuts, why thereafter you have to hoe where you have to cut grass out of and so that's where I was born. I grew up out on that farm, went to a country school. There was a school house across the road from where we live and it was called Borden School. The reason I guess is that my grandparents, they might have given it, I'm not sure about that the land, for the school. But they were the earliest settlers there.

Well when I was just little it was a two teacher school and they taught the entire twelve grades. The kids that are in school now are shocked when I tell them that the first through the seventh grades all sat in the same room.

H: Yeah.

B: And they'd teach the first grade, the second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade every day; that was the way it went.

H: Just in passing, we closed down our last one-room school house here in New Canaan, Connecticut, I think in 1958.

B: Well, you know what Brian? In 1900 we had a hundred and two public schools in Parker County. The reason for it was that the kids had to walk to school.

H: Sure.

B: And those schools were just three miles apart and that way a child didn't have to walk over a mile and a half to get to school. It showed that our ancestors believed in education.

H: Absolutely.

B: Which I believe in also.

H: Well it had to be, it had to be tough. You know the times were hard in terms of people trying to get farming going and Texas certainly wasn't an easy place. There was a lot of hard work and to make that commitment to education was really important.

B: It was. When I got out of the eighth, the seventh grade, why, they had quit teaching the last of the high grades of what we would call high school. I transferred to a school in the next one closest to it. We were about two miles from that school, the location of the school house and I rode a horse every day to the school house. My dad built this little barn and shed like thing up there and they kept oats to feed the horse and it was pretty nice out there.

H: Did the horse get an education too?

B: Well I had a Baptist preacher tell me, I'm a Baptist, that his parents and brother and aunts rode a horse to school. When they got there they turned the horse loose and it went back home and it came back at four o'clock to pick the kids up. Now that sounds like a chore to me (laughing).

H: (Laughing).

B: There's a story that we tell about my younger brother. He rode behind me and I rode the saddle and he tells that when he started riding behind me when he was in fourth grade, and he's been riding behind me ever since.

But, anyway, I went to high school but when my senior year came dad wanted me to graduate from Weatherford High School. I was still going to the community high school but it was still a two teacher school. So by that time we'd gotten a Model T Ford and I drove it daily to Weatherford which was six or eight miles and attended school here.

B: Well, the depression started in 1925 really. It started then as a recession and we had just starved out on that farm more than once and dad had come to town to get a job. We kept a bunch of cattle and he'd go out and take care and a look at the cattle once a day and see if they had plenty of feed and water and everything, and we just starved it out. Dad had some friends who lived in Yuma, Arizona and they had migrated from here in Parker County out there. They kept writing him and urging him to come out there because they said it was the land of milk and honey. So we went to Yuma, Arizona. I wasn't supposed to go. I was going to wait and come with mother and the two girls and graduate from high school.

Well I've got a little plaque on my desk here that says, "Diplomacy is the ability to let somebody else have your way." So I've been working on that for a hundred years now. I talked to my dad the morning they were leaving, he finally said, "Okay, get your clothes." I said, "They're already in." When we got to Arizona I worked on the farm for a year or so. I decided there must be a better way so I went down and found a job at the hardware store. Then it appeared that all the young people that I ran around with were all going to college. The bug sort of bit me again and I thank the good Lord because he's the one guided me, and I decided I would see if I could go back to school.

Well we had a Weatherford Junior College here in Parker County in what a lot called a community school, colleges, two year college.

H: Right.

B: I found out if I was twenty-one years of age I could enroll in Weatherford College without a high school diploma. So I left Yuma, came down here and we were really in the depression then. I enrolled in Weatherford College and went two years there and graduated. Well I guess I had some honor in graduating. But I graduated. I got a scholarship to go to ... I don't know if you want all of this or not.

H: Oh that's okay. Sure why not?

B: Easy for you. You can weed it out. I got a scholarship to go to Texas Tech and it had not been opened very long ... for football, and I really I think maybe basketball. And I got up there and the university had a bunch of top athletes and I weighed a hundred and fifty-five if I had all my clothes on and they weighed two hundred and two hundred and fifty. I finally decided I wasn't getting any closer to a law degree and I quit. I went back to Yuma. The hardware company I previously worked for sent me to refrigeration school. That was just the beginning when the electric refrigerators had come in. In those days they had a compressor that you worked on just like you did on a Model T Ford. So I got to be their refrigeration expert.

When I went back to Yuma, I scrounged around and found me some tools. I worked the rest of that year and I ended up with about five hundred dollars. That was an awful lot of money in 1931.

H: Yeah.

B: So in thirty-two, I enrolled in the University of Texas, took one year up on the hill, the academic part. Really I was working on a combination degree - business administration and law degree - and actually the first year there then I went into law school and graduated on June 8, 1936, seventy-four years ago.

H: Now that was UT at Austin?

B: Yes.

H: Oh okay. Well our daughter graduated from UT.

B: She did?

H: Yes, in the eighties, 1980s. Yeah, so we've got some connections there. Our son-in-law is also a graduate there of UT, and as was his father and I guess all his family; so great school.

B: Great school is right. You know when I went down there in 1932 there were about four to five thousand people as students down there, and now there's fifty thousand.

H: Yeah, yeah.

B: That little old community college. They have four or five thousand in it now.

H: Well, that's how people are saying how important education is. That was fairly rare to go off to college in those days.

B: Well, my people were poor. We grew up poor and I had the best parents of anybody. They taught me that, or told me, "That you know we're poor folks but we're just as good as anybody else. When you go out, you go out with your shoulders back and your head up and you look people square in the eye and treat people like you want to be treated and you won't have any problems in life." Well, I found that that's true.

H: Darn good advice, yeah. How did you find the FBI then?

B: Well I was district attorney here and when I got out of law school I came back to Weatherford and went in as an assistant district attorney. It was sort of a practice here then that young lawyers started out as district attorney and they spent four years, two terms. Then they moved on and let some other young fella have it.

B: Well, this is what happened. The man that I was working for, well he did not run again. I ran in thirty-eight and was elected for a two year term, took office in thirty-nine and then I ran again and was elected. I was really fortunate. I was elected without an opponent. It's pretty hard to get beat if you don't have an opponent.

H: (Laughing). You really have to work at it.

B: I got unhappy with the city manager and I ran for mayor. Again I ran twice, they were two year terms and again I didn't have any opposition and I wasn't having trouble getting elected. As the prosecuting attorney I worked pretty closely with the Army. We had an Army base at Mineral Wells, which is only about eighteen miles west of us and I had gotten well acquainted with the intelligence officer over there and the man had been calling on me was a sergeant. So I asked the major, I said, "Could I get in the Army, Army intelligence and get to be a sergeant?" And he said, "Well, Lord, if you could get in, you'd be an officer."

Well I filled out a form. They sent me to San Antonio for an interview and they came back and they said I'd been accepted, subject to a physical examination, I would enter as a second lieutenant. Well I tell people, you ask me to say something and I got to tell you the whole background. So after that I was really color-blind. The highway patrol were my good friends and with their help I memorized the Ishihara multi-colored dot test. It was one that I look at and I might see a three and you see an eight.

H: Oh yeah, yeah.

B: So I thought, maybe I'll get by. I went over there and I had that physical and they threw out a bunch of balls of yarn and I was lost.

H: Oh no.

B: So I got a letter back that said, "You didn't pass the physical on account of your color vision and we can't use you." Well I called my friend the major and told him and he said, "Jack, have you ever tried to get in the FBI?" And I said, "No." He said, "They're really need you worse than we do." Now I was thirty-three years of age at that time and he said, "Why don't you try them?"

Now Paul Kitchen was SAC over at Dallas. I called him and I said, "Paul, can a man that's color-blind get in the FBI?" He said, "Well, Jack, who wants to get in?" I said, "I do." He said, "I'll send you an application." He sent the application, I filled it out, sent it in and the next thing I knew they were doing a background. Well, in less than thirty days from when I sent in the application I received a telegram to be in Washington, D.C., on a certain date.

H: I'll be darned.

B: I wanted to do something. In fact when my draft board found out I was going to the FBI they came to me; all four of them, five of them, and tried to talk me out of it. They said, "We need you here." I said, "Well I just feel like I ought to be doing something and this is what I can do maybe."

So I went up and stayed in Washington for, oh I guess a couple of weeks and then we went to Quantico. Well knowing my color vision problem and then, I don't know what they do now or not, but you went for your physical the second week you were down at Quantico. So when we got down there I went into the SAC and told him that I might have a problem passing the physical and asked him if I could go that week. I said, "No need for the Government wasting its money on me and wasting time." I said, "They're holding my job open in Texas until they find out whether I'm going to pass everything or not." He said, "Well, okay, you can go today for the physical." I went and the physical part itself I had no problem whatsoever.

So they gave me, the lieutenant, the doctor said to the yeoman said, "Take him in and give him a color vision test." I thought oh my gosh here we go. But I went there and lo and behold they had the Ishihara test. I missed one and he came back in and told the doctor, the lieutenant, he said, "He missed one." The lieutenant said, "Wait a minute I got a letter about him, I think." And my doctor, before I left, had written a letter and told them that I was partially color-blind. Now mind, you're either color-blind or you're not color-blind.

H: Oh yeah, well, well. My son-in-law has got some color vision problems.

B: Actually what happened - the Army found out later that people who were color-blind, if they looked at camouflage, it didn't bother them, they could see what was there.

H: Oh yeah, yeah.

B: I was in my first office. No, I might have been in Miami and I got a letter from the War Department saying I'd been awarded the commission as first lieutenant and to report so and so. Of course I turned it in to the agent in charge and the Bureau had that stopped. But that's how I come in the FBI.

H: That's a pretty good story.

B: Well I think that heredity may be the cause of that. I had two great uncles that volunteered in the Civil War, they were Confederates. In fact after the Civil War we had the Indians on the reservation in Oklahoma and they'd break out of there and come down here and raid and kill people, massacred one wagon train. They organized a militia here in Parker County and my grand-dad Borden was part of that militia.

B: I'd rather think that at the time they tell about those Indians and they called him Major Borden. But anyhow my Grandmother Borden received a pension from the Federal Government because he helped run those Indians back across the state line, forever. They never did come back down here. But I guess maybe that's the reason that I wanted to help out.

H: Well you have a military family and it does seem to pass through the generations very often. No question about it. Let's talk about training for just a minute, when you went through training at the Bureau. At that point had they used firearms right?

B: Yes.

H: It wasn't that long before that that they were, you know that Bureau agents didn't carry firearms.

B: When I went in, we had firearm training course. I went back then to in-service one time and Davey O'Brian, who was a real all-American quarterback in TCU, and his buddy who was a big guard, they were the instructors. Yeah, we had firearms I guess nearly daily.

H: Yeah, oh yeah. That was a big thing.

B: When I got out and went into field offices, every so often we'd have firearm training.

H: Right. Well it was actually in the late thirties there were troubles with the, you know, gangster era there and they brought a bunch of people in that were known for their abilities as gunmen. Things changed around very quickly in the Bureau in terms of firearms.

B: When I got out of the training, my first office was Savannah. When I got down to Savannah well the agent in charge said, "Okay here's some files and by Monday morning you're going to take off for South Carolina, and that's going to be your territory." So we had a resident agent at Florence. But I would take my files and I'd take off for South Carolina. I'd been there only three months and I got transferred to Miami. I thought well that's strange because at that time I'd figured that you had six months, at least that much, in your first office, and a year maybe two in your second office.

H: Yeah.

B: And I just went on down there. Well I was out on a surveillance and had been out on it for ten days and I came back in the office and looked for my files and there was a transfer to New York City. I'd only been down there about three months.

And I went in. Paul Kitchen had become the Agent in Charge in Miami there and I walked in the office and I said, "Paul did you see this transfer?" He said, "Yes."

B: I said, "Well Paul if I were your best agent or your sorriest agent I could understand it but I don't understand. I've only been here three months." And well he said, "That's the way the cookie crumbles sometimes." I said, "Paul, I'm not going to New York City." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "There ain't no place in New York City for an old country boy from Weatherford, Texas and I'll just quit and go home." Well he said, "Let me see what I can do." When he called me in two days later and said, "Okay, I've got that one cancelled."

But, Brian, I was older. I was thirty-three when I went in. I had spent six years already and I did a lot of investigation because I was the kind of a district attorney that didn't believe in losing. I believe that you ought to win them all and I lost one. Because of that, my age and that experience I guess was one of the reasons. See this is in forty-two and that was when we were hot in the war at that time.

H: Oh yeah.

B: And so he when told me that he said, "Now I've got to get another transfer on your record." He said, "I'm gonna transfer you to Tallahassee." Well it so happened that the agent in charge, that the resident agent up there was a classmate of mine at the University Of Texas Law School.

H: Oh what do you know?

B: But he had submitted an application I guess to go to South America. They were sending a lot of agents to South America then.

H: Right.

B: And so he had volunteered to go. So they transferred me to Tallahassee and that was the best place for, well there was one resident agent down there that had it better than I did. I was only five hundred miles from the main office, that's Miami. Joe Colglaser was over at Pensacola in the panhandle and he was seven hundred-fifty miles. Now we were, we were petted. The other agents had to drive in when they had to go down to Miami.

H: Right.

B: But Joe and I were allowed to fly. So it was just far away (laughing).

H: (Laughing) that was a big deal in those days too; flying around.

B: Oh yeah it was. Well I stayed in Tallahassee. I loved it because all the weather was similar to what it is here in Weatherford, Texas. I got to be well acquainted with all the people up there and I didn't want to ever leave there as long as I was in the Bureau.

B: Dick Danner got to be Agent in Charge down there and he and I were friends. He came up to Tallahassee and said, "Jack, we're gonna transfer you to my old territory, Palm Beach." And I said, "Dick, I don't want to go to Palm Beach. I'm happy right where I am." And he had been resident agent at Palm Beach at one time and he painted a pretty picture, and it was. The main thing I was to do was to keep up with the big shots that were down there in the event of a kidnapping or something. Well I would know who to go to find out whatever information I needed.

Well I kept refusing and John Madala was Assistant in Charge and he came up there and he said, "Now, Jack, if you don't go to Palm Beach, they're just going to punish you by sending you to Tampa." And I said, "Oh my Lord, I don't want to go to Tampa." So I was transferred to Palm Beach and I stayed there until after the war was over and then you could request a transfer to someplace you wanted to go. So I requested that I be sent to Dallas; if not Dallas, San Antonio; if not San Antonio, El Paso. I didn't mention Houston. Well, you know where I went.

H: No kidding?

B: Houston! And when I got there the agent in charge handed me a bunch of files and he said, "You're going to be travelling up to Huntsville, and all around there." So I'd leave on Monday morning and come back Friday afternoon. And that's what I did when I was in Savannah. But I enjoyed it. It was good work and I was fortunate that I got well acquainted with the state officials. If there was something that was actually confidential, I was able to go to the Attorney General and tell him what we wanted and, bless his soul, he'd just pull the files out and say, "There's a room here." He'd turn to one of his assistants and say, "If he needs any help, you help him."

But anyhow after I got to Houston, well I stayed there until, I think, the end of either October or November and Paul Kitchen again. He'd gotten out before it was over, he'd gotten out of the FBI but there were some other agency, and I won't mention on this, that wanted an investigation done and they came to Mr. Hoover. He said, "No, we cannot do that. It's a private matter." He said, "Now I can recommend somebody" so he recommended Paul. Paul then called me and said, "I want you to come and help me." I said, "Paul, when?" He said, "Now. I'd like for you to be on the train tomorrow." Then I said, "Well you know this takes thirty days. You gotta give them a thirty day notice." He said, "You go into your agent in charge and tell him that you want to resign immediately and, if he has any questions, tell him to call the Bureau."

So I did just what Paul told me and when the agent in charge got through talking he said, "Have you got all the equipment that belongs to the government with you?" I said, "No, I've got a briefcase and something else at home."

H: Yeah.

B: He said, "Well bring it in, you're through." I spent oh, a couple of months, Paul and I on the investigation.

H: I'll be darned and so that was the end of things then with the Bureau?

B: I just enjoyed really the work. There were some times that were a little rough but for the most part, why everything was good. I had a funny incident but I really don't need to be wasting your time and telling about it.

H: No, tell me.

B: A young agent by the name of Charles Wright III of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, a graduate of Yale Law School, the people he ran around with were the Ford boys. They sent him up there. I chewed tobacco and I came into the contract garage one day and Charles came in right behind me. I said, "Charles what in the world is all over the side of that car?" "Well I've been meaning to ask you, how can you chew tobacco and spit it out the window and not get it all over the car." I said, "It takes a lot of time and experience, you'll never get it. (laughing)"

H: (Laughing).

B: I got a call that they believed they had a forest fire at oh, what was the town in Florida, something city. Anyhow, but they had suspected sabotage and when we'd go down there to investigate it and said, "You can take Wright with if you want to?" We went down there and spent four or five days riding around with the forest ranger and checked it out. The forest ranger told me when we got there he said, "I know what it is. These old nesters have been burning off for years." And he said, "The fire got away from him and burned the forest. And said that, "it's not sabotage."

Well all my stories are getting longer.

H: That's okay.

B: Friday afternoon when we came in why they told us that they had a black man, a black boy down in jail, didn't have a driver's registration. So I told Charlie, I said, "Well I gotta go in tomorrow and find out a few more things and you go down there and talk to that black boy and we'll take him back to Tallahassee and turn him over to the United States Attorney and let him do whatever he wants to."

I went out, Brian, if you were from Texas they felt that you grew up with that six shooter in your hand. Your teething was on that six shooter and they just bait you to get you to shoot at something. So we were coming in and a squirrel ran across the road in front of us. We're out in the forest, it's just an old forest road. The forest ranger stopped and he said, "Can you shoot that pistol?" And I said, "What are you talking about?" Well he said, "That squirrel, I'd like to have it for my dogs."

B: I said, "Well, where is he?" "He's on that limb up there." He pointed that finger about twenty-five or thirty feet up. It was a live oak but it had gray moss all over that limb. He said, "Do you see him? He's up there. You can just see his head." We argued and argued and I couldn't see him. So I took that six shooter out and I aimed and I squeezed one off and the squirrel fell out of that tree and he said, "I believe you hit him in the eye." I said, "If I didn't hit him in the eye, I'll throw this gun away." Sure enough I hit him in the eye.

H: (Laughing).

B: We started to get back in the pick-up and a snake ran across so I just pulled my gun out and shot from the hip and killed that snake.

Well when we started back to Tallahassee and I had that black boy in the back seat I started telling Charlie what all happened and then I said, "Oh and by the way I killed a snake." He said, "What kind?" I said, "Rattlesnake." "Now you promised me if you found a rattlesnake and killed it you'd get the rattlers for my mother." Now he just starts chewing on me and finally I said, "Oh, Charlie it was an old coach whip." He said, "Well what's a coach whip?" So I told this black boy, I said, "Tell this man what a coach whip is."

Well, he said, "He's a big, old, long snake." He said "He's black and gray" and he said, "if you out in the forest why he chases you" and said, "you can't outrun him." He said, "He catches up with you and he wraps his body around your body and then he starts beating you with his tail" and said, "every once in a while he'd stick the end of his tail up your nose to see if you were still breathing." I had to pull off the side of the road (laughing).

H: (Laughing) That guy was, he knew how to make friends right?

B: Oh yeah. So I told him, I said, "Bill, when we get to Tallahassee I want to take you to the United States Attorney and I want them to register you and let you go back where those coach whips are." And that's what they did for him.

H: So after you left the Bureau, you did this investigation whatever it was....

B: Yeah.

H: ... and that lasted what, a fairly short period of time.

B: Yeah three or four months. I got home a little bit after the first of the year, in the year 1946. I was in the Bureau about four years, forty-two through forty-five. Came back and went into partners with the man who was the district attorney when I got out of law school.

B: We had a good partnership and the district judge decided to retire and I was sort of a pet of the judges and a lot of other people I guess. But he told me, he said, "Now I'm going to retire and I want you to succeed me and I'll tell the governor I recommend you." I said, "Judge, I just don't think I'm judge caliber." I said, "I rather stay and practice law, why don't you take Frank?" I said, "He has a knack for the law as almost intent and instinctively that's what the law is or what it ought to be."

Judge Carter told me, "Frank's not much of a worker." I said, "Well if he gets to be district judge he's going to have to work." So Frank went in as district judge and then I was practicing by myself. A young fella that I'd known the family forever came in. He'd just graduated from Duke University and he came up to the office and talked to me about this and that. He said, "Jack, I'm really on the fence, I've been a reserve in the Navy and I know they're going to call me up." And I said, "Well now let me tell you what you do, you join the FBI." And I said, "When you do that they won't bother you." I said, "It would be as good education that you'll ever get by going to their school and then doing the investigations." So he did and he stayed there a couple of years, got out and came in as my partner. Then, lo and behold, he decided he ought to be district attorney and he run and he got elected.

Then I got another agent, I.B. Hand, a friend of mine, and I got him to go into the FBI when the war first started and he had gotten out about the time I did. So I took him on as a partner and we were partners until, oh 2000, and then he started in with Alzheimer's.

H: Oh my.

B: We were about to move where we are now and he first said, "Yeah, I'll go." And then later he came to me and he said, "I'll tell you, Jack, the practice of law doesn't interest me anymore. And the bank has offered me a seat on the board of directors in one of the banks," and he said, "I believe I'll just retire." Well he later died with Alzheimer's.

H: Yeah, that's awful stuff.

B: Yeah but now I have my nephew. He ain't no kid no more, he's sixty and he was in here not long ago and I told him about doing this and doing that and he said, "Hey, when you were about my age, I remember you trying your last law suit." He said, "Your doctor had told you that you either had to quit practicing law or you were going to die." And he said, "Now don't be telling me that I need to keep on practicing." I said, "Well you've got expensive habits that I didn't have. You need to." He has two children, and both of them have done real well.

But I guess it was, when I was about seventy, I might have been seventy-two or three that I went to my doctor. I hadn't been for a physical in a couple of years and somebody came to the office one day and said, "When have you been to see the doctor?" And I said, "Oh my Lord, it's been a couple of years." Well they said, "Your face is awful flushed, you better go see him."

B: When I went in the nurse that took the x-rays and my blood pressure and everything, ordinarily she would have given it to me, but she said, "Well I'll let the doctor tell you." So I went in and I said, "Well, doc, how you getting along?" Because he was a neighbor of mine before I went into the FBI. And he said, "I'm all right but you're not." I said, "What's wrong with me?" He said, "You're about to blow a fuse." He said, "Your blood pressure is 208 over 110...."

H: Oh boy.

B: ... and you're just ready to blow a fuse. You've got to quit practicing law." I said, "Doc, I can't quit practicing law. I don't have anything else I want to do." And he said, "Well what can you practice that you don't have all the pressure? I know when you get involved in law suits you eat it, you sleep it, you drink it, that's all that's on your mind." He said, "That's the reason your blood pressure is so high." And I told him, I said, "Well, I could do probate with some estate planning and I could do real estate and I'm not under pressure on that." He said, "Well okay."

But you know what Brian; I made more money when I quit trying law suits.

H: I think a lot of people have found that out.

B: Well, I grew up in the county and, at one time knew everybody. I went over to try a case one day with my former partner who had resigned as judge and was back in private practice. We had jury panel out there and on board order I got up and I verified my list of jurors and tapped it on the table. I called almost every one of those jurors by name. We had a firm out of Dallas that had a trick of being able to do that; and when I got through he said, "Oh you've got the Strasberger thing, talking to the jury like you knew them." And I said, "Well, Frank, I knew almost everyone on that jury."

H: Isn't that something?

B: But it helped me, it helped me down the line. I tried a lot of law suits; didn't lose any. I was trying one, the lawyer was out of Dallas on the other side and we had a little recess. He said, "Jack, how many of those jurors are the doctor's patients?" I said, "Six of them." "How many of them are your clients?" I said, "Well, there's five, out of the rest of them, plus some of the six that are my clients." "Well" he said, "at least I've got one juror on my side." And I said, "No, no, you don't have." "Well why not?" I said, "Well, that young man is a student at Weatherford College and my wife is one of his professors and, if I don't win, he ain't gonna pass." (Laughing).

H: (Laughing).

B: He said, "I just lost it." I had another one that the judge had told the jury, "Now you cannot fraternize with these lawyers during trial." Once again I had a lawyer out of Dallas and he said, "I know that most of you do not the man from Dallas," and called his name, but he said, "I'm sure that a lot of you know Jack. So just relax." So I said, "Good morning" but that's about all you can do. Well we tried it for a day and a half and we had a recess. This lawyer from Dallas and I were going down the stairs to get us a Coke. The jurors were all gathered in the hallway outside the courtroom and one of them came up to me and said, "Jack, can I tell you something?" And I said, "Milford, you heard the judge, you cannot have any conversation with me as long as this trial is going on." Well he said, "Is anything wrong with me telling you how much our church appreciated all that legal work you did and didn't charge us anything."

H: (Laughing).

B: They went all that way.

H: Yeah.

B: Now I just started talking and I don't know whether I've given you anything you wanted to know or not.

H: Well I think you did, yeah. I was interested in how things, what the feel of the Bureau was back in those days when you were going through, during the war years there and the transfers and the nature of the work that people were doing and, that's valuable and I appreciate it very much.

I'm going to shut off here.

B: Well I was on, when they were suspected of being maybe, well in fact one time, a raid we made was on a man who was captain of the submarine in World War I.

H: Oh really.

B: Brian, his son was a captain of a submarine in World War II.

H: For goodness sake. He was resident there in Miami?

B: Yeah in Miami.

But it was interesting. As I tell people when you got up in the morning you never knew when you were going to get back home.

H: Yeah, yeah.

B: An old agent, thank goodness, he gave me a little advice, he said, "Jack, get you a fifty dollar bill and hide it away in your billfold." I said, "What for?" Well, he said, "One of these days you're gonna get a call and they're gonna tell you, 'catch a plane to go so and so'" ....

H: Right.

B: And he said, "You won't have any money." He said, "That way you'll have money." And so I still carry a couple of hundred dollar bills with me.

H: Yeah, well that's changed a little bit, hasn't it over the years?

B: Oh yeah.

H: But yeah that's the kind of advice I had. I started in Tampa so I know something of the area there and went down to Fort Meyers and then over to Miami. I just had a few months in Miami and then down to Puerto Rico and then up to New York. Yeah that was good advice because you just never knew especially when we were up in New York. If something had happened and you're headed out and very often you wouldn't come back for a couple of days.

B: Well I had one, I had several surveillances. But on this one it was for a whole ten days, and if you didn't have some money, well you're in bad shape.

H: Yeah, yeah and you don't want to keep hitting up your buddies that's not good either.

B: Well you were in Tampa?

H: Yes, sir.

B: Well I was in, for a short time I was in Miami. I worked a territory up at Fort Meyers. I went up there, around Lake Okeechobee.

H: Yeah, when I was in the Fort Meyers RA for a couple of years. In fact our youngest child was born there.

B: Well I really liked Miami in a way. I'd just gotten to Miami and they called me and said, "There's a man and his wife and little boy on their way and they're under surveillance and have been in New York." They were German. They said, "You need to pick them up at the railway station and you keep with them and find out." Well you just don't put them under surveillance.

H: Sure.

B: I said, "Well, will I know them?" Well the man's got on a certain color suit and certain color tie and the woman's got certain colors." I said, "Oh my god, here I am color-blind." They told me, "You could pick out some other agent." I had gotten acquainted with another agent there so I asked him if he'd go with me and he said, "Yeah." So we were at the railway station waiting for the train to come in and I said, "I sure am glad to have you." He said, "Well why?" And I said, "I'm color-blind." He started laughing, he said, "That's the reason I didn't get into the Navy. I'm color-blind too." (Laughing).

H: (Laughing) That was the blind leading the blind, right?

B: That's right but we found out where they were and we followed them for a couple or three days until they moved on.

Brian asked me what, and I tell people, "You asked me why so and so and I tell you a story because that makes sense unless I tell you this story."

H: Well that's good and I appreciate it. I'll shut down here.

***Mr. Borden added the following:***

*I am amazed at the reaction I get when I tell people I am a former Special Agent of the FBI. Most of them think the FBI is the greatest organization they know. I also get the impression that they sort of envy me for having once been a Special Agent.*

**INDEX**  
**Jack H. Borden**  
**Interviewed on**  
**August 18, 2009**

**A**

**B**

***Borden, Jack H.,***

Assignments,

    Houston TX, 11, 12, 13

    Miami FL, 9, 16, 17, 18; Tallahassee

    FL RA, 10, 11, 12, 13; Palm Beach

    RA, 11

    New York NY, cancelled, 9, 10

    Savannah GA, 9

Award, Outstanding Worker in U.S., from

    Department of Labor, 1

Early life & education, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Entered FBI, 6, 7, 8, 9

Resigned and back home, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
    16

**C**

Colglaser, Joe, 10

Copyright, 2

**D**

Danner, Dick, 11

**E**

**F**

**G**

**H**

Hollstein, Brian R., interviewer, 1, 2

Hoover, J. Edgar, Director of the FBI, 11

**I**

**J**

**K**

Kitchen, Paul, 7, 9, 11

**L**

**M**

Madala, John, 11

**N**

**O**

O'Brian, Davey, 9

**P**

**Q**

**R**

**S**

Surveillances, 9, 17

**T**

**U**

**V**

**W**

Wright, Charles, III, 12

**X**

**Y**

**Z**