

Ron Brun

Nanakuli, O`ahu



Born on Kaua`i in 1939, Ron learned to rope and brand cattle on round-ups when he was 10 years old. His Dad taught him to train and shoe his own horses. As a teenager, his uncle would take him to help ranchers catch wild cattle in the mountains and bring them down to the corrals. In 1968 he moved to Honolulu and earned a reputation as a cowboy ready to help if someone needed a hand to round-up, catch or brand cattle. Besides being a cowboy all his life, Ron's readiness to lend a hand is the quality that makes him a true paniolo.

Series 1, Tape 5

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ron Brun (RB)

October 5, 2000

at his home in Waianae

BY: Anna Loomis (AL)

AL: Okay, I guess the first thing I wanted to ask you about was growing up on Kauai.

RB: Mm-hmm.

AL: Maybe you could tell me about the town where you grew up?

RB: Okay. Yeah, I was born in—actually born on Kauai, where the little town they call Ele'ele. My dad used to work for MacBryde plantation, and we stayed there a few years, then we moved to the town called Kalaheo. That's where I spend most of my young days. That's where my uncles—where, where there were most of the cowboys, in Kalaheo. And as a young boy we always had to work. My uncle had a lot of piggery and cattle, my dad had cattle, and he also had a little store where he would cut meat and sell

meat. And then my uncle Joe would have a big slaughterhouse. So we would kill the cattle there and piggery—there was no choice, we had to go to work. And learn about everything.

Then as a young man you learn about the horses and they teach you about horses and shoeing, and how to brand the cattle. And those days at ten years old you don't ride horses. You stay on the ground, you do the dirty work. 'Till you get old enough to get on the saddle there.

But it was very interesting, and today when I look back at all of this—because a lot of young children don't understand how this kind of, you know, work that we did. And I'm glad that my children had a chance to see all this kind of things.

I brought them to Honolulu, and we worked with Albert Silva on his ranch, and Kualoa ranch with Abe Akau, and also Paddy Pauline on his ranch, where my kids had a chance to learn and see all this kind of things.

Kauai right now, there's a few, few ranchers. It's not like before, so the children don't have an opportunity like I had when I was a young man. 'Cause as a young man you go and help everybody. There's just mention cattle and you there. No use soap box you want to go.

AL: Did everyone in your town have cattle?

RB: No, not everyone in our town had cattle. But mostly I guess it's nationality, I guess—mostly the Portuguese people had cattle and horses, and most of the big farmers—there was a big farmer there that we helped a lot was Mr. Madeiros. He had a lot of cattle, and he also had a chicken ranch. So a lot of the children that were young those days used to work in the chicken farm, picking up eggs ... one of my sons worked there too. But I was never a chicken man, so I never worked on the chicken farm. Mostly with the cattle and horses. But I learned a lot, you know, from that.

And the old timers—there's nothing like an old timer to teach you the right ways of doing things. Because some people think, oh, you just get on the horse and rope a steer or what-have-you. That's not so. You got to know what you're doing. You got to know your horse. You got to know your horse really well, because the cattle—most of the cattle are wild. They're not, you know, tame cattle. And if they come for your horse, the horse has to be fast enough to get away, and he has to know that. There was a lot of people got—got hurt. Horses got killed. Because the horses wasn't well trained for those kind of things. And I was fortunate; I never got hurt, you know, doing wild cattle, I mean seriously—not seriously hurt. But, you know, scrapes and bruises, everybody get that. And I was fortunate to have the right people to teach me, you know, the right way of doing it.

AL: What do you mean by "wild cattle"?

RB: Oh, wild cattle means that they out on the range, and they don't see people, you know, sometimes one year. Uh, you know, we used to have so much cattle and, you know, babies are born, you don't know they're born. And they don't see a man, they don't see a horse. And then one day they say, hey, we're going to drive all this cattle down and—whoa! You got a bunch of cattle coming down, and babies, and some one year old, two years old. And that's wild cattle, because they never saw man and never saw horses.

So, the first thing they see, they looking at us and say, I never saw you before. So once you put a rope on them, you know, whole hell brokes loose right there. So that's when you got to have a good horse, and you got to be really paying attention. Because those animals that you caught, they going to fight for they life because they caught. See, so the first thing they going to do is get away from you. And if they cannot get away from you they going to go **for** you. So that's where people [who] don't know how to do this, their horses get hurt and they get badly hurt. Real badly hurt.

AL: Who do the wild cattle belong to?

RB: Some of the cattle belong to my dad, my uncle. We used to go and help Kekaha Plantation, because they had a lot of wild cattle. And those days, when we made rodeos, the plantation would lend us the cattle, providing we go and catch it. And when we caught those cattle, we had to bring down enough cattle for the plantation so they could have those cattle slaughtered. So that was the deal that we made, so That was where you learn a lot, because it's in the mountains, like here, you see all these rocks and stuff, it's like that. I mean, there's—not like one arena where there's all dirt and a fence, no.

AL: When was the first time that you got to go along and help catch the wild cattle?

RB: That they let me on a horse? Twelve years old. Ten years old, eleven, and twelve, you stay on the ground; when you get good, then you get on a horse. They don't let you on a horse—I mean, you ride, you know, to the pastures, but you cannot rope anything until they know that you really sure and you can do it correctly. That's the way we were taught. I mean, even my kids, I taught them the same way: that you don't just go out there and throw a rope and expect everything to happen. Because they—if it does happen you get hurt I mean, my oldest son, he's almost forty, but about five years ago he was out catching wild cattle. And I always told him, you never use a stiff rope. Find a long rope that is soft, that you can control, but you know, nobody listens, right? And he roped a steer, and unfortunately, his thumb got stuck in the rope an he lost his thumb. So he's with only half a thumb today.

AL: Why do you use a soft rope?

RB: Well, the soft rope is much easier to handle, and—see, a stiff rope, when you throw a stiff rope, it's really stiff. And if you want to coil the rope up, it's so stiff you have a hard chance of coiling. But if soft, you can coil up and pick up the slack and, you know, tie it on your saddle. But a stiff rope, you don't have that chance, and if the rope runs in your hands, you can not stop that stiff rope. But the soft one, you always can hold and control that rope, see.

AL: How do you catch a wild cow?

RB: Well, there's several ways that you catch a wild cow. If they in the range and the horse can get in that range, why we usually get after them and rope them. And I usually tie, on my saddle. I don't rope and try to dally up wild cattle, I usually tie it hard on the saddle. And when I do catch them, I just stop my horse and let him do the work. But some people say that's too dangerous, because the steer can turn over the horse, and you can get killed and—hey, you can get killed walking down the road. But I always tie on my saddle. And if they too wild, and if the mountains are real bad that, you know, the horses have a hard time, then sometimes what we do in Hawaiian they call *kepuka*. That is, setting up a rope on their trail where they walk all the time, you know, we set up a little rope there, and tie it to another tree so when they run through there, they caught, you know. But we put a special type of knot, so they don't get choked, you know, not to die, eh? And then the next day we go up, and check all the trails that we put that rope on, and if there's anything on the trail then we'll bring them down.

AL: So it's like trapping...

RB: Yeah, you trap them, yeah.

AL: You said earlier that mostly, the guys who owned horses and ranches up in Kalaheo were Portuguese.

RB: Yeah...

AL: Did your dad ever tell you stories about why that was the case?

RB: Well, no, my dad never told me the story, but it seems that it's a rough—you know, rough type of job. And it's not easy. And I guess the Portuguese people—there was Hawaiian people too, that had the ability to do stuff like that. I mean, you have people what we call backyard cowboys, that raise three or four cows in the backyard in a pen and stuff like that, but not in a big way, where they would have thirty, forty head of cattle. And the reason why is because they dangerous, so they wouldn't get into stuff like that. And I think it's like every place you go.

I mean, as time got on—like now I know on the Big Island, on Maui, there's some Japanese people that has ranches. But if you look at the ranchers, who are the workers? They are mostly Hawaiian, Portuguese people doing that type of work. Because it's a rough job, and some people don't want to get hurt, and they don't want to do that kind of job, and the pay is small, so.... But, back our days, we don't get paid for helping people. But it's an enjoyable work, you know, it's really enjoyable. And anybody call, it's for free and we go. Because it's—it's just like golfing. Everybody wants to hit that ball so far. And the thing with us is that—ho, which big one you going to catch today.

AL: Challenge...

RB: Yeah, it's a challenge. And like I always had good horses. I never was afraid that my horse wouldn't be able to hold a steer, or anything like that. I had no problems like that. And, to me was a challenge to do those kind of things.

AL: When did your dad and your uncle start letting you get on the horse?

RB: Like I say when I was twelve. Twelve years old. They start you off—when you bring all the cattle down there's a lot of young calves got to be branded, and stuff like that. Then you rope in the corral there. They teach you how to rope in the corral, how to, how to rope them in there—and you don't rush them, and you cannot use a long rope because you going to tangle the next rider. So that's when they teach you. And then if your abilities are good, then you can go out on the range and rope. So I was about twelve when I started roping in the range already.

Cause as a young kid, you're always with a rope in the hand, cause that's how they play. They call it yo-yo's, up-and-down, well, us was with ropes then. We rope bottles, or dogs or anything that pass. Our game was—I mean was dangerous, but at that time we didn't think about it, you know. But we wanted to see how good we was and how fast we was, we would have somebody ride a bicycle, and rope him off the bike (laughter). But, you know, at that time, people got hurt, fell down, scraped their knees, but, eh, we thought was fun. So that's how we learned how to be, you know, quick. Because, the bike they can pedal how fast they want, you don't tell him, but that's how fast you got to be able to swing that rope and catch them. So—but when you catch them, we don't pull them off the bike, we just let them go, see. But sometimes, you get accidents, they fall down.

AL: Could you tell me about your first horse and how you got it?

RB: Okay, my first horse, her name was Lady Jane. I used to live next to my cousins, they were part Hawaiian-Portuguese. And the dad, in his young days, he had a riding academy. And you know, horses, those days, were valuable for the riding academy, so they don't let us ride. Our job was just to go feed the horses, give them water, cut grass. So, well, I enjoyed that—so I would be with my cousins all the time, and I was nine, ten years old. So I always told my dad, you know, I want to have my own

horse, I want to have my own horse. He said, well, when you really can take care of horse, you know, so.... And I was about nine and a half already, almost ten.

Came home a day, and here was this horse in the yard. So, well, my dad used to buy a lot of horses and sell a lot of horses. So I felt, well, that's another horse that he's going to sell, right? So I got home from school and this horse was tied in the yard. And, it was a white little horse, nice little horse. So, I went up there, pet the horse, this and that, I decide to ride the horse. So I put a rope around her, and I rode her without saddle. And I started going and I rode down to the town. And we were really in the country, so I rode in the heart of town. It's not a big town, but anyway And then my dad was coming up the road. And he saw me on the horse. He says, "you know that horse is not well trained?" Say, "well, she didn't hurt me." And he says, "how come you don't have a bridle, why only that rope?" I say, "well, I couldn't find the bridle." So he said, "well, you better come on home." So, went on home. When I get home he says, "you want this horse?" I said yeah. He says, "well, you better take care of this horse, I bought him for you." Said, "oh, thank you!" And those days, was cheap. Thirty-five dollars. He bought that horse, for me.

AL: Was that the first time you'd been on a horse?

RB: Oh, no, no, no. No, I been on a horse several times. I can remember when I was, oh, four, five years old, my dad holding me on the saddle with him. I remember that. But that's the first time I own my **own** horse. But, you see, us kids—when you work in the pens with them and then the horses are tired, that's the only time you can get on the horse, is to walk the horse off, cool the horse down. You cannot run, you cannot—you know. So you just got to walk, and so that's the only time they would let us ride. But then, when you get your own horse, now it's not only to ride, you got to work, see. So that was the first time that I got my own horse.

AL: You must have been—well, when you were little and you'd see the men riding around and roping and you must have been really eager to ...

RB: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. And you see, in those days, too, you used to get a lot of cowboy movies. Like Tom Mix—I don't know if you remember that—and Roy Rodgers, and all of those kind of things. And that was always my goal, to get a horse like Roy Rodgers, a palomino, like Trigger. And I always looked for that kind of horses. Today I got four of them. See, but from before, I had two palominos, and they were good roping horses, and now I got my own bloodline that I breed now. And I don't breed with anybody's horses. It's got to be—the people got to be good, because I don't want the babies to be ill treated, stuff like that.

Yeah, that was the thing. So when you see them, you know you see the, um, uh, what was that, probably you don't even know. They called Tom Mix (laughs). Uh, Tom Mix was a—Tom Mix and Poncho. Remember that? Okay. They were Mexican people, eh? And he had a black and white horse, and you see them running through the mountains, and all this kind of

things, and that's one of your envy things you want to do too. And when I got my own horse, that was one of the things we used to do, is run like crazy all around the place, playing Indians and cowboys. But when it was time to work, well, there's no play. Got to—you know, you got to work. But, it was enjoyable. We enjoyed doing this kind of things.

And then as you get older comes high school, and then there's more work, and more work and But it came to where, I was about sixteen already, and my dad had bad legs—he got hurt so many times and his legs would get swollen. So he was unable to ride the horses too much. So he would make a list. See, every Saturday, that's when we kill cattle. So Thursday, he make a list, "okay, go to this pasture, you got to catch this cow, that cow." And then Friday, "you go here, you get this one and that one."

So my brother was young at that time, but he used to come to help me, and I had couple other, my friends, and for Saturday we would butcher all these cattle. You know—and take them to the slaughter house. And of course we got to, we got to go there. And, then take them to my dad's meat market. And Saturdays that's what I used to do, is cut meat, for the market, on Saturdays. Then Sundays, sometimes, that's when we go out on the range and that's when they check cattle. And see which ones has to be branded and wormed, and then you find out, hey, you get a couple of wild ones there. So you got to—got to try to get the wild ones, to bring them in. So, then if we don't do that, Sunday's our day of horseback riding around town. And, if there's a cowboy movie, then we tie all our horses by the movie theater and we all go to the movies. (laughs)

AL: What kind of fun things did you do with your horses?

RB: Ah, well, we used to do a lot of—well, we don't have to work, we go to the movies, or we go in the mountains, take a long trail ride. Because up there, they have some nice, beautiful places where you can go swim. So we'd pack a lunch, and ten, twelve of us used to go. And that's a whole day, whole day ride, up there. Or we'd ride our horses from Kalaheo all the way to Koloa where's the beach. Go down there and swim for a couple hours and ride them all the way back again. Cause those days, nobody going lend you a car. So if you want to go, you ride your horse.

AL: You ride with saddle or without?

RB: Without saddles. And no shoes. Horses had no shoes, those days. So only—after while, uh, gee, it was . . . my God, in the—I cannot think, it was in the late forties or early fifties. Horseracing became a big thing. Up there. Real big. This people started bringing in race horses. And since you chase the cow, you think your horse is very fast, eh? So, my uncle was in charge of that. My uncle John was in charge of that. We had a big field up there, only grass, so everybody got together, they got a tractor, and they went and make a big, round circle. And they say, we're going to have horse racing this and that, so then you learn how to feed your horses for race, see? What you have to feed them and whatnot. And then my uncle says, oh, you have to put shoes, you have to put a special type of shoes. So, he's teaching me about these shoes, and I was shoeing the horse, and everything.

Then, but then he says, oh, your horse is not a race horse. It's a cowboy horse. I say, why, my horse get plenty speed, I catch the cows! He said, yeah, but the race horses get more speed. So, ah, you know, you're young, you don't want to hear that, right? And, those days, I have eight sisters and one brother. So, money's hard. I cannot tell my dad that I need the oats and I need this, you know? So I used to work, help the people with the big race horses so I could get grain from them. Then a guy told me, he said, you know the best feed to give them is tea. I said, what do you mean? He said, yeah, put the tea in the grain, and when they eat the tea they come hot, they—they're on. So, okay, so I was feeding my horse tea.

AL: Was it like ti plant or like drinking tea?

RB: Drinking tea. So my dad used to drink a lot of tea, so I used to steal his tea bags (laughing) to feed my horse. Anyway, then you exercise the horse, and ho, she was real fired up, she wants to run, run, run. So I told my friend, I said, "oh, this tea must be good. 'Cause, you know, she have plenty fire." He said, "now go change to Chinese tea." I said, "where I going get Chinese tea from?" So I said, "oh, I go talk to my uncle." So, we tried the Chinese tea.

So, okay, the big day came. Oh, there was a lot of people there. And then they match you up, races, and this and that. So the first race, I lost the first race. So

I asked my uncle. He said, "I told you! Your horse is not a race horse, it's a cowboy horse!" I said, "why you folks don't make cowboy race then?" You know? So we can get into that? So he said, oh, good idea. So, then they make a cowboy race, where you got to put a saddle on, and then you run so far, there's another cowboy there, take off your saddle, throw your saddle on that horse, and then come on down. So, that was good, I won that, that race.

So every time they got cowboy races I would get into that. 'Cause then they started bringing horses from the mainland, thoroughbreds. We cannot compete with them. But we learned a lot, about breeding of horses. What kind of breed, and what the horses are for. See, before our days, we wanted the big horses, like Morgans and draft, because we had big cattle, and those horses can hold the cattle. So, I told my uncle, I says, "oh, why don't we get one of these thoroughbred horses; they're so fast, we can catch the cows real quick!" He says, "yeah, but they're not strong enough to hold the cattle." You know? So that's why we get these big horses. Say, "oh, oh." So that was a part of learning about animals and their breeding and stuff like that.

And when we used to go to Kekaha sugar to help them—the manager there, Mr. Baldwin, was a good family friend of ours. He told me, "oh Ron, I got to show you this horse that I have." So, I said, "oh, okay." So I went there, [he] show me this big, beautiful animal. I said, "God, this horse is so big!" He said, "yeah, this is a quarter-horse, Morgan." I said, "God, that horse is so wide!" I said, "Jesus Christ, this horse would hold any bull!" He said, "yeah, that's what we're going to be breeding, from now on." And I had my little mare, you know. He says, "you know, you work a lot down here this ranch, and I want to give you a free breeding." I said, "oh, that's great, let me go talk to my dad."

So, talk to my dad, this and that, he said, “what are you going to breed your horse for?” He said, “you breed your horse, you cannot work!” I said, “no, but you got to go see that stallion, I said, it’s so beautiful!” So he said, “well, when I go down to Kekaha.” So, he went down, and he looked at it, and he said, “oh, yeah.” He says, “well, we’re not going to breed your horse, we’re going breed mine.” So he bred **his** mare. And oh, she had a beautiful, beautiful colt. And then I asked him to have mine bred. He said, oh, no, he says, yours is not the type, this and that.

So after several years went by, then I wanted to have her bred. So I took her down to Kekaha without telling my dad, and had her bred. So she was about six months pregnant, I think. And then his horse got hurt. So he says, “oh, I’m going to use your horse today.” I said, “well, be careful with her because she doesn’t care for anybody, you know. And especially you go in the water, she’s going to lie down.” He said, “oh, no, she better not!” I said, “well, I’m telling you now.” So anyway, he used her and they crossed a river, and she lie down in the water. Oh, he was mad. He came home, he started cussing her out and this and that and whatnot. He says, “and damnit, you got her pregnant!” I said, “well, she ran away when I had her down Kekaha.” (Laughs). So she had a beautiful, beautiful baby. By the time there, I was—I was going into the service. So, he told me, oh, too many horses, and he was going to sell her and the baby. I say, yeah. Just as well. When I get back, I’ll, you know, get another one.

AL: You said that she was green when you got her ...

RB: Yeah ...

AL: ... Lady Jane. How did you—you trained her yourself?

RB: Yeah, I mean—and by watching, and when I rode her, my dad would tell me, and

my uncles would tell me, oh, you don’t do this, you don’t do that. You do this, you do that. Which was good, because then you learn the right way, see? And then she came good! She came a very good horse. But that’s when I learned, see. I used to give her so much attention. Even with this horses here that I got right now. I give them so much attention that if somebody else try to ride them, or anything, they don’t pay attention. They just reject them. And that’s what my dad said, he said, you pay too much attention to your horses.

Oh too, if they get out of line they get a few whacks from me too, you know. But, eh, it’s just like a baby: you go over there afterwards and you talk to them, ‘cause **always** talk to them. And I tell them, “what the hell you did this for? Why you doing this?” And—they know! Then I, sometimes if I’m mad and if I cuss them out, God, you watch them run to one corner. ‘Cause they know—see?

And a few times after this last rodeo—and I got sick, I went to the hospital? I had Robert go up there and feed my horse. And he's in a big paddock, a real big paddock. And there's a—a kind of nice little hill up there, he stands up there and watches everything. And Robert called him to feed him. He would not—wouldn't come down. So he called me at the hospital, he said, "eh, you know, your horse don't eat his food! And I call him, I call him—he don't come!" I say, "well, the third day he's going to eat, 'cause he know I'm not coming." Sure enough. They know, you know?

And most of my horses are like that. And that's what my dad was mad about, was nobody else can ride them, because of that. I mean, even if I have Sandy ride them, they—they want to do their thing. In other words, saying, you know, you don't belong on me! That's the way. But—I really like my horses, and I treat them the way they supposed to be treated. And they all get jealous if I go to one first and not the next one. In fact I have two little—I have one stud colt now, he's nine months old. And the sister is a year and six months, I think. And if I go to her first, the father gets mad. And when I go there, I got to be careful because they'll try to nip me. So either one does that, 'cause they—they spoiled, eh?

AL: Did your dad train horses too?

RB: As a young man before I was born, my mom said he used to train, you know, his own horses. Then, as I came along my dad was very, very busy. He had his own butcher shop, and then he raised a lot of cattle. And then he got into restaurant business. So he didn't have much time of training horses. But my uncles was there, always. It came to—well it was when I was about twelve already, it came where very seldom he would go out on the range already. 'Cause he was busy and [he would] just tell, okay I want this, I want that. And drives off with his truck, and we're the workers so we got to go do it. (Laughs) That's the way it was.

AL: You said he used to make you a list of jobs you were supposed to do ...

RB: Yeah ...

AL: What kind of a man was he? What kind of a boss was he?

RB: Very, very strict. Very strict. And I mean, you know—which is good. Uh, I have no regrets. I mean, I had a lot of beatings, a *lot* of beatings. But in those days, that's the way people were brought up. And my dad was one person that—he only tells you one time. Not two times; one time. And if you didn't pay attention the first time, if you did it wrong, there's no excuses. Okay? He's going to say, "how come you did that wrong?" "Oh, I thought that's what you said." "You **thought?**" One slap in the head. "You don't thought, you make sure." And that's the way he was.

But he took care of us. I mean, there were some times that I thought, gee. You know, I used to work so much. I used to think, gee, he probably trying to kill me working. You know, he don't love me. But that's not so. You don't learn this when you're young, young kids, about love of parents and stuff like this. I mean, I never did, at that time. Because everything was (sigh) work work work work work. But—which was good, I learned a lot from that.

And as I got older, and I had my own son, then I realized, you know, what my dad was trying to teach me and trying to tell me. Of responsibility. And every time you out on the range, he would always say, "and you get out there, you pay attention. And you listen to the other ones, your adults, you listen to them. Okay? Because don't come home and tell me you got hurt because of this and that. Because it's not their fault, you understand?" "Yes, Dad." "Don't tell me 'yeah' and you come back get hurt!" So that stays in your mind. So you be very, very careful. You know, not **afraid**, because—I took a lot of risks, and most of the people who know me see me catching wild cattle, they say "hey, you crazy" or "what the hell you doing?" But, I get confidence in my horse, that I can do that.

And you can ask Bobby Napier; one time they had a whole bunch of cattle with Buddy Gibson, run away up Kunia. And so they asked me to go help them. So I said, okay. And they had this big steer was coming up on a hill, and he was between a tree. Soon as he got out, I roped him, but I had him tied. And Buddy Gibson was passing. And he said, "ho, my God!" he says, "your horse going to hold that?" I said, "yeah, yeah, it's going to hold it, don't worry about it." I says, "why don't you jump down, put a rope around his neck and we tie him to the tree?" Buddy Gibson says, "no way!" He says, "he's going to come for me!" And Bobby Napier was there, and Bobby says, "as long as you hold him, Ron, I tie him up." Bobby got off his horse and he tie him to the tree. Because he trust me.

You got a good horse, you know the horse is not going to let the rope slack or hurt the next guy. And that's what they teach you when you're young. all those kind of things: do your job but be safe, and try not to hurt the next person, that's—that's what it is.

I mean, I've seen a lot of horses get hurt, accidents get hurt, as a young man. And that don't get away from your mind, that stays there.

I mean, I must have been about fourteen, I think. I was driving a lot of wild cattle, bulls and all, coming down from the mountain, and comes into a river. And two sides are all walls. And we had, about maybe fifty, sixty of them coming down. And, well, this was a cousin of mine. And he was much older than me, and he had more experience that I was, but—I guess not paying attention. We yelled from the front, they all yelled back, be careful, the bull is turning around. Well, if the bull turn around, he's going to come whatever's in his way. He went and try block it. The bull caught his horse right under the tail. The horn came out and lift him on a tree. All we saw was hands and legs climbing the tree. But, the horse died, because the horn went through. So those kind of things you see and—'cause experience. You know, you got to be careful. But not afraid, but just to be careful.

AL: You said that you take risks because you trust your horse. Were there any times when you were surprised, or when ... the trust wasn't enough, or when you got in trouble somehow?

RB: No. Sometimes was because I was not careful enough. As far as the horses is concerned, I had good horses; I had no problems with my horses. But sometimes, because of that, you take more chances. See? Like one time—I wasn't supposed to do it, but I was mad, and I got disgusted, I says, "the hell with this." We was down in Kahuku, helping a friend of mine. He [had] died, and the wife was with all these cattle, and she got to get rid of this cattle. And they was in one awful place, with lot of trees, and a swampy area.

Now these cows been in there for so long, they know how to get away. So soon as they come out in the clear, they go under the trees and they run in the swamp. So we cannot catch them! Because they're in the swamp. So we sent the dogs in there, chase them around again, come out in the clear, try rope them again. They go back in the swamp!

Now, I'm mad already. I'm mad as hell, and I says, "Lawrence, the hell with this. If this cow's going through that swamp, I'm going through the swamp too." He tell me, "you cannot—the horse going sink!" I said, "well, if he sink, I'm going catch them first." And I had a brand new pair of spurs, one of my friends gave me. So I went in the swamp. I caught the steer.

The next thing I know, my horse is sinking down. Then the water is right to my throat already. Full of branches, mud, and he says, "let the steer go! let the steer go!" I said, "no, I not letting nothing go." I says, "it's going to stay right to this horse. She going hold him over here." I says, "you know what, I going make her follow the steer. When the steer get to the other bank, you rope him from on top there, and we take it out. **Then** I take off my rope." They say, "you going drown!" I say, "no, I not going drown."

But there's a lot of branches and stuff, so I was stuck in the branches, I couldn't move because my spurs were stuck in the branches, and I couldn't see. And I had one—one nice lei on my hat. The hat was under water. Found the hat, couldn't find the lei. When I got out of the water, there was my lei and my spurs stuck in the mud, someplace. Still today, still there. (Laughter) But that's the kind of choices that, you know, I not supposed to take. But sometimes you get teed off and you do it, see? But after that, the rest of the cows wouldn't go in the water. Because they knew we were going to follow them right through, see? So—well, it cost me my lei and my spurs. Ah, that's an experience you go through, you know?

AL: You said—I think last time I talked to you, you said your uncle was a saddle maker.

RB: Yeah...

AL: Did you ever watch him...

RB: Oh, yeah, my uncle John Ornellas, a very good saddle maker, very good saddle maker. And my other uncle Willy used to help him. My uncle John Ornellas used to be the head cowboy for Oahu sugar, before when they had a lot of cattle. And he would repair the saddles, and stuff like that—and my uncle, as he got older, would repair saddles. My grandfather, which is my mother's side, he used to be a plantation boss, you know it those days they used to ride a lot of horses, yeah? So, we call him Uncle John.

Uncle John made that saddle for my granddad, and he kept that saddle. When he retired from the plantation, I must have been fourteen, fifteen, I think. And I kept that saddle. And, you know, using that saddle so many years, the saddle got all beated up, and whatnot. But the tree of the saddle was very good. So when I move from Kauai to Honolulu, I brought that with me. And then my Uncle John saw the saddle, he said, "oh, this is the saddle I made for grandpa! Oh, you get it all bust-up!" I say, "well, when you catch wild cattle—you know?" He said, "oh, I'm going to take it home, fix it up for you." I said okay.

Oh, he made the saddle like brand new. Brand new he made the saddle. Nice. Then I didn't want to use the saddle. So, I kept it in my patio. You know, for long time. Then, my son says, "dad, when you going to use that saddle?" Said, "ah, maybe someday when you guys"—'cause I was training them in the 4-H and stuff, yeah?—says, "when you guys get to the 4-H, and when you big enough then you can use that saddle."

Then I had my small boy, Adam. I told Uncle John, I said, "look, I got to have one special saddle for Adam, he's so small." [He] said, "oh, I have a special stick." And then he made that saddle. And—then my boy got big, and he told me, "dad, can I have this saddle?" I says, "you can have this saddle on one condition: that you take care this saddle, and when it needs to be repaired, you repair it. 'Cause this saddle is for all the grandchildren, the small ones." And he still got it till today. Yeah.

AL: Did you ever watch your uncle at work?

RB: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

AL: Can you tell me a little bit about what he did?

RB: Well, Uncle John would have his own printing on his saddle. And I don't think you find it today. He would have bones, special Hawaiian bones, with all different kind designs, and he would show us how to make the patterns on this thing. And he would wet the leather, show us how to wet the leather, and make it all stiff, really stiff out, and then he'd do the printing. And then he would teach us how to sew. And you got to sew, you know, put the saddle together. He says don't put too much rivets—because then the rivets get old and rusty—but learn how to sew. If you sew the stitches, he said, the stitches get old, you get the holes you can repair, repair the saddle.

And, you know, as a young man I never took the interest in doing it. But now I'm getting into, what, middle ages? (Laughs) I got a book in there I just got. How to, you know, put back saddles, and how to make leather. So I'm thinking, eh, probably when I get seventy, seventy-five, make this into a saddle-making room, make bridles, and chest bands and stuff like that. I repair my own but, you know, not for anybody else.

AL: What makes you get interested in that now?

RB: Well, I guess, like anything else, you not going be in top shape to be roping wild cattle outside, so you got to find another interest—I'm not a golfer. I'm not going to hit balls around the place. So, I said, well, maybe, at that time, because now my grandchildren is coming up, and they got horses. And I'll probably make bridles for them, stuff like that. Just to keep busy, eh?

AL: After—when you were a little bit older, I think it was even after you were married, you went to Kahoko ranch on Maui to work ...

RB: Molokai.

AL: Molokai?

RB: Molokai, yeah. That's what I wanted to show you. Now, excuse me, see if I got them over here (he gets up and looks in a closet)

Uh, and that was a very good experience for me, I mean, I got to work with a lot of people on the ranch. And that ranch was owned by Mr. Murphy. Mr. Murphy used to own Aloha Motors, he was a big car dealer, he was a millionaire. And he bought that ranch, had his own plane and stuff like that, to fly over. And—oh, stop that thing.

(The tape is stopped while he leaves the room to look for something, which turns out to be a box of photographs. He shows them. One is a black and white picture of his father as a young man. Ron resembles him strongly. Most of the other pictures are from the 1960s, shots of Ron and his own children on Kahoko ranch.)

AL: So this is a picture of, uh, you with a horse ...

RB: Yeah, that's one of the young horses that see, when I went up there, my brother was—my brother is younger than me, and he didn't train a lot of horses as a young man. I did most of the training. So my dad asked me to come up there, because there was a lot of horses to be trained, and a lot of wild cattle up there. But I was married already at that time, and I was a truck driver. And I had a vacation, so, I says, "yeah, let me come up for my vacation and ride a few horses for you." So, we did that, we went up there. And—this is an old picture of a round-up at Albert Silva's (indicating a newspaper clipping). We would bring the cattle down to be branded.

This picture here is when I was married. (indicating photo of himself holding a small boy on the back of a horse) I had my first son, and I got one of the pictures with him around here when he was only three months old. (indicating photo of himself on the back of a horse) Well, this you can see, this horse is ready to take off and buck, and then I trained him. (indicating photo of a large bull standing next to a fence) And this is the kind of bulls we had to catch out there. Big, big wild bulls like that. So you need—you needed a good horse, and Mr. Murphy had lot of good horses there, but nobody was there to train them. So, that's what my dad asked me to do when I went up there.

(Tape runs out and is turned over.)

AL: (Indicating photo) That's your brother?

RB: Yeah, that's him right here, yeah. And this is a—well you can get up there someday, Molokai. This is the lookout, looking down to Kalaupapa [the leper colony]. And the middle one is my brother-in-law, and my dad, and myself.

AL: (Pointing) That's you?

RB: (Pointing) No, here.

AL: That's you.

RB: Yeah. Skinny, yeah, was? (Laughter)

AL: Now, in this picture, you're wearing jeans and cowboy boots . . .

RB: Yeah . . .

AL: And you have a hat.

RB: Yeah, straw hat.

AL: Straw hat, and you have a lei on the hat?

RB: That one, no. That one, you only tie one rope.

AL: A rope on the hat?

RB: (Laughing) yeah.

AL: Why?

RB: Well, those days you no can afford leis! (Laughter) So you tie one rope. Yeah. (Indicating another picture) This one I got leis. This one was a big parade that we won first place, that was on Kauai. That's years ago, God. My goodness. (Indicating another picture) Look, this is on Molokai, 1961. So I was teaching this horse to calf-roping. So I roped the steer, and teach him how to work the—work on the rope, eh?

AL: So that was your main job, was . . .

RB: Yeah, training—training those horses for the wild cattle, up there. Yeah.

AL: What—could you tell me a little about the other cowboys that you met up at the ranch?

RB: Oh, yeah, sure. There was a whole bunch of them. There was seven of them, up there. Mostly—mostly Hawaiian people that worked there for Mr. Murphy on the ranch. They were good ground people, good to work on the ground, but they weren't experts in roping wild cattle, and how to lead the cattle, stuff like that, so my dad had a pretty rough time. So that's one of the reasons why I went up there, was to train—make good horses and teach these cowboys how to handle cattle. So I stayed up there I think three months, I think.

But, as you can see, this picture here is my little boy, my oldest son. He was three months old when we went up there. And after three months, well, during the three month period, he was always getting sick. And where we were, that's the end of the road. And was all dirt roads, there was no paved roads. So from the top of the ranch there, down to town to the doctor's office, that's a two-hour drive. So, it got so bad, he would be sick, and when I got home from work, my ex-wife would be so upset that she couldn't do anything, because he was sick and this and that. So we had to take him in the truck and ride around the pastures, then he would fall asleep. Then we'd come on home and have dinner and he's screaming and yelling. I had no rest, I had to be driving him all around the darn place.

So, after that I says, "you know what." I tell my dad, "I got to go back, and take this boy to the doctor." I says, "going down Kaunakakai, that's too far. If something happens, that's two hours!" So. He says, "well, yeah, take the boy to the doctor, see what's wrong and then come on back." So I told him, "look. This ranch work is good, I like this. But the ranch pay is little too small." And I said, "I got a wife and a kid. It's a little too small, this ranch pay." So he said, "oh, Mr. Murphy's going to help you out, he's going to give you a house free, and you can have all the meat you want free." But the pay, it's too small. You cannot get nothing. I said no. I says, "a truck-driver, while a truck-driver on Kauai, I was making \$1.45 an hour. But—still if I go overtime, I make some money, right?" And over there, you work overtime, you don't get paid. You get the same amount of pay, \$280 a month. It's too small. So I said, well, we see.

So anyway, I came back home, took my boy to the doctor, and he had—what they say—he had some kind of problem in digesting the milk. So if he drank Carnation milk, stuff like that, he would have gas pains. So, was causing a lot of problems, so he had to go on a special medication and things like that. So then I, after one month, I told my dad, "look, I cannot go back 'cause the boy's sick," and this and that. Ah, you know, sometimes fate comes in. And he says, "yeah, you better not." He says, "things are hard now, over here, real hard." And then he came home for vacation for three days, and when he went back, he got caught into a flash flood, and he died. In fact this year—this month, the end of the month, that be thirty-five years, that he died.

AL: What did he mean when he was telling you that times were hard?

RB: Well, times were hard because, he said, Mr. Murphy wanted more cattle out, and the workers was unable to do it, see? So he and my brother had to work extra hard, and he said that Mr. Murphy wouldn't pay me any more money. So he said it's not worth it for me to come out there and work on the ranch with less pay. So—but like I say, fate was in the works there, because he died. Now, if I took the job and quit my job [as a truck driver on Kauai], I would be stuck. Even if they made me the ranch boss, they're not going to pay me as much as they paid my dad, because they're going to say, oh, you don't have that experience, and all of that, so . . . so I think was in fate that I come on back home.

AL: Was the work dangerous? I mean, you had been working over there yourself. Had you had any type of premonition or fear that something dangerous might happen?

RB: Oh, no. No. Never. Uh, I mean, everybody has fear. But I don't know—me, when I get on a horse, it's a total different world for me. I have no fear of nothing. And why is that, I don't know. I mean, I've gone chasing cattle on ridges, where the trail is just [as wide as] the horse can walk. And people are yelling to me, "get the hell down from there, you going to go off the cliff!" But

my theory is, if the cow went through there, there's no reason why the horse cannot go.

Of course, I learned one hard lesson—I went off the cliff one time. In fact, was right up here in Lualualei. Was a young horse, and I had too much confidence in him, and this cattle was running away, running away, and I yelled across the ridge for the other guy to go further up to block the cattle off. But I think he was afraid, so he wouldn't go. So I kept on going. But as I kept on going, the trail got narrow. Then when I looked down, I say, oh boy. Down two sides of the cliff. All this horse have to do is make one wrong step, and I'm going off the cliff. So

I decided to continue going and see what happened.

Okay, I got to the—almost to the top, I blocked off the cattle. And the trail was so narrow, but my horse was very big. When I went lean on him like this, he stepped right off the cliff, and he went over the cliff [to the right]. So, when I saw him going over, I didn't want to go over with him on the right side, I bailed on the **left** side. So when I bailed off on the left side, there was a water ravine, a small little ditch like, [and] I fell into that ditch. So he went over me. Oh, about six, seven, eight times he went down that cliff! And there was somebody on the ground down there, and they were yelling to me.

Well, you know, when you hit the ground it's pretty hard, eh? So I kind of went out of wind. So they were yelling, "you all right? you all right?" So, I said, "yeah, yeah." He said, "oh, you sound weak." I said, "ah, I just got the wind knocked out, I be okay." When he went to the horse, the poor horse had a stick right through his belly, came out the other side. So he told me, "oh, I think your horse going die." I say, "why?" "Oh, there's a stick right through him." Said, "okay, I be right down."

So I went down. Sat, looked at him, I said, (sighing) "oh my God." So I took off the saddle, everything from him, and then I took my pocket knife and I cut that branch off, because was still on the tree, eh?

So I said, well, I don't want to pull it out now, 'cause if I pull it out, you know, the bleeding, and his guts might come out, and everything. I don't want him to die over here. So we took it off, we walk him down the cliff, took him to my trailer. Then I took the stick out. Then I packed in—I had an old shirt in the truck and I packed him up. And left him there, and then we had lunch, and somebody else loan me their horse and we went on our happy old way. So I felt, gee, by the time I get back, this horse dead. He didn't die.

When I got to the trailer, he started crying for me. So I went there and said, "what's the matter, boy?" And he's making like this, you know (gestures), turning his head to the sore. So I pull out the rag, and oh, man, pieces of stick and everything came out. So I had medication in the truck, I had some peroxide and alcohol. So I flushed it out with that, put some old t-shirts back in, took him back home to the stable, wash him down, gave him his medication, everything. And they said, "ah, he's going to die." He didn't die.

I guess he had that will, you know, to live. But after about three, four months, then I try to ride him again. He would—I know he was hurting because when he run he would [grunt] **unh! unh!** So I said, "ah, no more cowboy work for you, pal." So I gave it to a girl, she was at Barber's point. She was a young girl, thirteen, fourteen I think. And she always was around there helping people, and she wanted a horse and the parents couldn't afford. So I talked to the dad and I says, "look—I don't want this horse to be roping anymore because he got hurt. But for your daughter just to play around here, gymkhana and stuff, I give you the horse if you take care the horse." So he said, "oh yeah, sure." So that's what I did with him.

But that's the kind of risks you take—I mean, shouldn't have done that. But, then again, when you see the cattle, you got to go get them. The other guy says, "you crazy, you shouldn't—" well yeah, we all crazy, so what can you do?

AL: After you were on Molokai, you moved back to Kauai . . .

RB: Yeah.

AL: And after that you moved to Oahu.

RB: Yeah, in 1968 I move to Oahu.

AL: And if I remember correctly, there were a few years between—between the time—it was a few years after you moved here before you started getting horses again.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

AL: What was that time like?

RB: Uh, I moved here in 1968. And it was like hell, trying to find a house for my wife and kids because people, those days—"how many kids you got?" and this and that. So after a few months we found a place, and I was managing a condominium in Waikiki. And—well it was close to work, because I used to be a salesman at the time. And as my kids were growing up, and then I started the bakery business [Mary's Malasadas]. Then I told my wife one day, I says, we got to Well, she got badly sick, and so we had to get out of the apartment. And she wanted a house, so I bought a house for her.

And then since we had a house—we bought it in Pearl City—then I started thinking, well, maybe it's time I go hunting for horses and stuff. So I would take my kids when they have the 4-H shows, see if they was interested in stuff like this. And then to the polo fields, you know, they running, chasing that ball, all these kind of things to see what kind of reactions my kids had. 'Cause I felt, if they don't have this interest, make no sense me spending the money.

So yeah, they were interested all right. They were, "hey dad, I want to do that!" you know, this, that. So okay, so that's how I call my uncle, and I says, "eh, you know anybody who's got some horses for sale, cheap, we can afford?" So, by the time we started, I got my kids into horses, was in 1972. I got them into the horses. And ever since then, till today.

(Tape stops while he readjusts the microphone.)

AL: So I think you were talking about when you first started buying horses on Oahu.

RB: Yeah, for my children, yeah. That's what we were talking about. Yeah, so then I asked my uncle if he knew anybody. So he had a few friends, and we went and see a few horses, and we started buying. First we had two horses—and like I say, my goal was to get a palomino. So I got one from a friend of mine that he couldn't train. And I bought that horse, and that became one of my best roping horses. And then I taught that horse was for me and my daughter. My daughter used to use that horse for barrel-racing.

And then I got—my two boys, then I bought horses for them, and they did the 4-H thing. So they all got their ribbons and trophies, and when they was doing that

4-H, then I started going in to rodeos and stuff. Then I got into rodeos, then they wanted to get into rodeos. So those days were good, because we had Barber's point—my friend used to run Barber's

Point down there, and we got into a little club. So we taught the kids there, we had some tame ones and taught them how to rope, and how to control the rope their hands. And then I had another friend here, out in Waianae, Joachim Joseph, who had a small little arena in his backyard, and we used to go there. So we used to rope, gee, three, four times a week before. So that's how my kids really came good, was 'cause lot of practice. Practice on the ground, practice on the horse, until they—today they better than I am.

AL: There was a period of maybe four or five years when you were on Oahu and you didn't have any horses, and you weren't riding. What did that feel like?

RB: Oh, felt like you was lost. I mean, those years we were living in Waikiki. And well, at that time there was not thinking of horses, because I had a daughter that was in Shriner's [children's hospital], and she was in there for a little over a year. She had a lot of hip surgeries, and so our concern at the time was to get her strong and healthy. So we wasn't, you know, thinking of horses. And after she came home, there was a lot of therapy. We live near the beach, so we went to the beach almost every day with her. 'Cause she had to learn how to walk, and stuff like that. So there was no time to think about horses and things like that.

Of course, when you see them on TV, or you go to a movie and it's a cowboy show, that comes back to you. And then it's when the kids, "hey, dad," this, "when I get a horse?" and—so I always got to say, "where you going to put the horse? We live in one condominium, you going put him in the elevator? We got no time for that now. We'll find the—find the time for that." So. But it was—well, was real hard. Was really, really hard. You know, you see the parades—I used to do all those parades. And stuff like that. And living in Waikiki. And that was a jungle there, for me. But I had no choice, until—till I moved to Pearl City. Then I—then that's when we got our horses.

But it's hard, I mean if you get into horses young, then you have that separation period, it's hard. I used to dream about them at night. When? I know the kids want one, and I'm thinking to myself, when I'm going to have them? And if I live in Waikiki, that's never. But, you know, everything is time. It's got to be in time. It's not—cannot force it.

AL: After you—after you started getting your horses you would help other people at their ranches.

RB: Yeah, that's when I After my kids got pretty good at 4-H and stuff like that, that's when I would take them out to different ranches. Albert Silva was real, real good in helping my kids and stuff. He always would say, "hey Ron, we do things every Saturday, so if you're free, come on down, give me a call, come on down." So, we would do that on Saturdays, come down, help him drive. And sometimes he would castrate, or change cattle, change pastures. And this was good, because my kids learned a lot to that kind of things.

And then, we would go out to Kualoa ranch again. I would see Mr. Akau, and one of my good friends—I would call him my Uncle—Shima Kapahu, used to go out there a lot. So he used to tell me, “eh, you know, you got to bring your kids out here.” So I said, “yeah, okay.” So we used to go on Saturdays. And, well, we had to go real early; we had to leave home at 4:30 in the morning, because Kualoa ranch is far. And then, we got to go get our horses, get ready, and go out there. Well, that was good, because then the kids learned, eh, you got to get up early if you want to be a cowboy. But they always was ready. They was ready for that.

AL: You told me once that you used to trailer your horses in the back of the truck ...

RB: Oh yeah, that’s—I guess it’s the cowboy’s Kauai-style. In those days, I mean in the 1950s, we had no trailers. No trailers. We had cowboy trucks, big cowboy trucks, and that was for the cattle. So, sometimes you had to ride your horse to the pasture. And then one of my cousins, Charles Vidhina, he had an old Fargo truck. And he passed me on the road with his horse on the truck! I said, Jesus Christ, here I got my truck at home and I’m riding this horse and this guy passing me on the road! So when we got to the pastures I tell him, “eh, Charley, how you teach your horse how to do that?” He says, “easy!” So, I said, “well, show me how.” So he showed me how to do that, and that was it, that was my trailer. My pickup truck. And everybody thought we were crazy. But we got around. That’s how we got around. And not riding for miles on the horse.

AL: And how—you would load the horse into the—tell him to jump into the ...

RB: Yeah, he just would jump in. Yeah. And he would—what we did, we took off the bumpers, you know the back bumper? We took the bumper off so when he gets off his legs don’t get stuck in the bumper there. And four little posts and one little rope right around. Close the tailgate. That was it. There was no problem.

AL: When—when you would go help other people at their ranches, what kind of work did you do?

RB: Well, it was all—all kind of work. Sometimes you just going to drive cattle to another pasture, and then sometimes you get cattle that don’t want to go, so they jumping fences and you got to go out and rope them. When you go on the ranch work you never know what you going do. I mean, you plan for one thing, something else comes up. You got to be ready for everything. And then sometimes it’s just to go chase wild cattle. They got out of the pasture, they in the wrong place. Like the one in Kahuku, they were in the nudist colony. So we had to go get them out of there.

AL: Will you tell that story?

RB: Oh (laughs). Yeah that was ... oh, God, I think it was in the 80s, I think. They—I think it was about fifteen, sixteen head of cattle that got out. And first they got out, they was in the—they were making prawns. You know the prawns down at Kahuku, at the mill? [The prawn farms near the old Kahuku sugar mill]. They were making all these big ponds there to raise prawns there. And the farmers were raising a lot of bananas there, and these cattle all got out, and they were damaging the bananas and the—I think the corn.

And then they started traveling onto the beach there. And that was the nudist colony. And we didn't know. We hear of those things, but we don't [go] out there swimming and watching nudist people. So, anyway when we're out there they would call us and say, hey there's cattle out here, so come on down. So we would saddle up and get down there as soon as possible. So, this was on a Saturday. There was about five or six left, and they was the smart ones, they knew how to run away and hide, see.

So one of the caretakers that take care that park over there came and says, "you know there's always a few runs on the beach." So, I asked him, I says, "well, is there any on the beach now." He says, "oh no, no, no, there's nothing on the beach now," he said, "because we put this fence up, so they cannot come through." So, "oh, okay." So we had the dogs and looking around for this cattle, and sure enough, the dogs found the cattle and they took off. So one of the cows went over the fence. So, I'm after this cow. But my horse is not going to jump that fence, right? So I have a little wire cutter, and I cut all the fence off, and I went on this beautiful terrain they had there. "Oh," I said, "whoa." And he's in front of me, I says, now all I got to do is catch him just before he get to the beach.

So I'm getting on that darn steer and I'm kicking my horse to get faster, go faster, you know. But the steer gets on the beach. So I say, now there's going to be a problem because I'm heavier, and the horse going to be sinking in the sand, so I figure, this going to be my last chance. So I finally threw my rope. I usually carry fifty feet of rope, if there's—if I'm going outside rope. So I caught it. God, when I caught that cow, that cow started screaming! Then I see people running, People all naked! And I'm looking—which way, you know, I'm going to go. (Laughter). So one of the ladies says, "what're you staring at? Just get your horse out of here!" I said, "lady, put your clothes on!"

So anyway, I got the cow out of there. Then one of my friends came in the back and I said, "you know what, go get the trailer. Because we're going to have people chasing us out of here 'cause I cut the fence down there." [He] said, "oh no!" So they went back to my truck, put the truck and trailer, we got the cow in there. No sooner we look back, here's this guy coming down with a little pickup truck, all the dust in the air. And I says, "don't even look back to the guy, we just get **out of** here."

So when we got out of there, with the fence that I cut, we had somebody patching up the fence. So this guy stops over there, he's mad as hell, and said, "who the hell cut this fence!" He said, "well, we don't know who cut the fence, but, we figure somebody did, but we just helping you out and fix the fence" and this and that. And he said—the guy said, "who's that crazy guy on the damn beach? Don't he know people are naked out there?" So the guy told him, "hey, you think the cows know their naked? His job is to catch them. You the one made the complaint [about the cows]." He said, "well, tell that guy don't

cut my fence any more.” So the—this guy was fixing the fence said, “how do you know **he** cut the fence?” He said, “because I saw the pliers and they fall off his horse.” (Laughter).

So that was fun. That was fun. The first time I saw so many people naked on one beach out there. (Laughter).

AL: So, while you're helping other people at their ranches, you train your own horses here, yeah?

RB: Yeah.

AL: How long have you had that horse—how long have you had that breeding operation going on.

RB: Uh ... with this new stallion I have—okay, I raised this horse from the—well, I had this palomino mare. And, uh, I had her bred with a good stallion that used to be out at the feedlot at Campbell. And I got a beautiful, pure white stallion, with blue eyes and silver tail and mane. And I started training him—he was three years old. And I started riding him. And everybody wanted to buy him. Everybody. So, I said to myself, everybody wants to buy this horse. I don't feel comfortable, already. 'Cause too many people envy the horse. So finally, a friend of mine told me, “look, I give five-thousand dollars.” I said, “okay, fine.”

I said, anyway—I had the mother bred. What we call line breeding—I bred the son back to the mother, so you get all the good breeding. So I—I said, “look, I got her line bred with him.” I said, “but when she drops the baby, the second baby, I want to use this stallion to breed another mare.” So he said, “oh yeah, yeah sure.”

Okay, so she had the baby, and the baby was one month old, so I was going to bring another mare to have it bred. And—ah, you know, people get jealous. They shot the mare. They killed her. So the baby was one month old. I got so depressed and mad and disgusted. So I had to hand feed him. And I spent hours sitting in the pen with him, because he didn't have a mother, and I was just like his mother. And he wouldn't eat from the bucket. I made powdered milk, he wouldn't drink the milk. He only would eat from my hand. So I had to sit there and feed him. I think about a month. Then he got used to—and I would play with him, brush him and everything. Then he would eat from the bucket, and he was alright.

So after he was about twelve months, I think, twelve months, thirteen months, then I had a small mare—I still got her—and I had her bred with him, this palomino. And she's dark bay, very, very dark bay. She gave me the first palomino filly. So I said, wow! So, she had—then after she had the filly, I bred her back again with my stallion. Now he gave me a beautiful stud colt, palomino too. So she's going to drop one more time in December. Then I had my son's one bred—**she** came a palomino. Then I had two of my friends bred their mares, and all came palominos. So, now everybody's calling

me, “eh, can I have a palomino too?” (laughs). So I said, “well, the price just went up seven-hundred dollars.” You know, for breeding. So, it’s been now just about three years that I been breeding with him.

AL: And after having worked with horses for so long, you know, riding them, training them, what’s it feel like to have a hand in breeding them now?

RB: Well, breeding is a different thing. First of all, you have to have a stallion that is well-mannered, [one] that you can control. That’s the number-one thing, because you can get badly, badly hurt. Because if they get real ornery and all excited, they’ll leap in the air, they’ll try to get away from you, they probably try to kick and stuff like that. But with him, as a young—you know he was younger, I really made him pay attention and stuff. And now, yeah, he gets ornery every now and then, but if I talk to him, or if I give him a whack, he’ll pay attention. But not that I can say that somebody else can handle him, because then he won’t listen, see? So—that’s a different thing. And it’s a lot of self confidence when you know—because he’s big, he’s about fifteen-hundred pounds—that you can control a big animal like that. It makes you feel good that you done something good.

I get lot of horses—I train even for Robert, I train a few horses for him. And when—most of the horses that I get is because people don’t want to train them. They mean, and they ornery! And that’s the kind of horses they give me to train. And I like that, because it’s a challenge. ‘Cause when I’m finished with the horse, and they look at the horse and say, “oh, wow! this horse was a man-killer!” But not any more! And that—you feel good. When you can do that to the horse.

And other horses it’s because they were ill-treated, as young babies they had the wrong trainers, so the horses, all they know now is how to take revenge. That’s all they try to do. And once I get a horse like that, I treat him, you know, real good. And it’s simple, it’s not hard. When you go to the stall and halter them, I give them one or two hay cubes. And when I come to the hitching rack, I give them a few more. So they know they going get treated. They not going be ill treated. And then one day—when I’m finished with them I treat them again. And I try to teach everyone—once I take off their saddle and I wash them down and everything, I give them a treat. And I tell them, “okay, go back to your pen!” Take off the halter and they walk right in.

And when people see that, they say, “whoa! they going run away!” [I] say, “no, they don’t run away.” But I teach them. And when other people see that, makes me feel good. ‘Cause they want to try to their horse, and the horse runs on the road. But there’s tricks to do those kind of things. It’s all tricks, that. And it’s—it’s not hard. The simple thing is, put them in the pen every day the same place. And what I normally do is I get a very long rope. And when I let him go, if he passes the stall I jerk him back. So then he knows to go in there. After about the third or fourth time, he knows where he’s supposed to go. Then I take off the halter. It’s a simple thing. Because he knows he goes in there he’s going to eat. See? He’s thinking, “why should I run away, my food is here.” So that’s how I, that’s how I train them. And that gives you a good feeling. You know they listening to you.

And when you come up there, they waiting, they waiting for you already. See . . . and like I say, if you—any one you go to, the other one gets upset because you didn't go to him first, or her first. So they're like a bunch of kids. But I enjoy that. Sometimes I'm so busy, I go up there 11:30, 12:00 at night to feed them. And some of the guys say, "well, why you go so late? they not working, they not doing nothing!" I says, "I can not come home, sit down and eat, and thinking of my animals didn't eat." I say, "I cannot do that." I says, "I was taught as a young man, you feed those animals before **you** eat." And that was—that was before, like that. You don't go sit down and eat lunch if your horse didn't have some water or something like that before. So that's the way I was brought up, that's the way I do it.

AL: Well, thank you very much.

RB: Okay, you welcome.

AL: I think I'll wrap it up there.

RB: Okay.