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## 21st Century Shining Star:

### Captain Kirby Dendy Company F, Waco

Not only is Kirby Dendy one of the elite Texas Ranger captains, but he is also a member of a very small group of father-son Texas Rangers. His father, John Dendy, also wore the cinco peso badge. Other members of this exclusive club are: A. Y. and A. Y. Allee Jr., Richard and Tony Bennie, Buster and Jeff Collins, Jack and Kyle Dean, Bennie and Glenn Krueger, Bob and Randy Prince, and Hardy and L. H. Purvis.



Kirby was born in Dublin, Texas, on December 24, 1952. He was the only child of John and Charlotte (deceased) Dendy. He later gained a stepsister, Kathy, when his father married his second wife Vinita.

After graduating from Lancaster High School in 1971, Kirby entered the University of Texas at Austin. At the same time, he also worked for the Department of Public Safety's Communications Service. Kirby would continue to earn college credits wherever his work led him from then on.

Kirby's years of service to the citizens of Texas began with his 1971 job with the DPS. He knew he wanted to be a Trooper, however, so he applied and was accepted into the Highway Patrol. In February 1974, he began eighteen weeks of training at the DPS All Field Service Recruit School number A-74. Not surprisingly, the future captain was an excellent student. He was the recipient of the highly prestigious Norman Zator Award as the valedictorian of his class.

In June 1974, Kirby began his duties as a Highway Patrolman in the West Texas city of Fort Stockton. He served there until September 1, 1976, when he transferred to Waco. He was a Trooper in that city until August 31, 1979. From September 1, 1979, until May 1987, Kirby was a member of the DPS's Narcotics Division in Waco.

On May 1, 1987, Kirby achieved a personal goal when he became a member of the Department of Public Safety and joined his father as a Texas Ranger. Those who know say it would be hard to tell who was proudest of Kirby making Ranger—father or son.

While John Dendy was a member of Company F, Kirby was stationed in Fort Worth and was a member of Company B. While a field Ranger, Kirby set an example of hard work and excellent leadership qualities. By August 1, 1992, the DPS recognized his abilities and promoted him to lieutenant of Midland's

Company E. He didn't stay a lieutenant long. On November 1, 1995, he promoted to the captaincy of Waco's Company "F".

Kirby is a dedicated Texas Ranger, but even more importantly, he is a devoted husband and father. Kirby and his wife Donna have been married twenty-eight years and have two children. Their oldest, Andrea, is a cheerleading senior at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. She plans on being a teacher when she graduates. Travis, a sophomore, also attends SFA and is majoring in criminal justice. After graduation, he plans to apply for admission to the Department of Public Safety. Wouldn't it be something if John, Kirby, and Travis become the first three consecutive generations of Texas Rangers!

### The Snitch

The most difficult part of writing the *Shining Stars* column is trying to keep it short. Every Ranger could literally fill a book with his cases. For the sake of brevity, we present only two of Kirby's cases.

Not surprisingly, the one case that sticks out in any new Ranger's mind is his first homicide, but for Kirby there was an additional reason to remember it.

Kirby had been a Ranger for only a short time when he received a most interesting call. It was from a friend who was an agent in the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms). One of his snitches in the Tarrant County (Fort Worth) Jail wanted to make a deal. According to the snitch, police had developed information about a year and a half earlier that led to the arrest of a certain man. At the time, several pounds of methamphetamine had been seized. While sitting in jail, the man had decided that a supposed friend had snitched him off. To his way of thinking, that had to be the case because that so-called friend had been the only uninvited person to come by his house that day.

As soon as he had made bail, the man had gathered three friends and started looking for the snitch he was convinced had turned him in. The group soon succeeded when they found the man in a local west Fort Worth bar, dragged him outside, and threw him in the back of a van. Inside the vehicle, they tied him up with duct tape and then proceeded to attempt to torture a confession out of him while they drove around Fort Worth.

While one of the group had driven, the other kidnapers beat the victim with a large wrench. When the man continued to deny he was a snitch, the assailants took a can of ether and a cigarette lighter, improvised a homemade blowtorch, and burnt him repeatedly. Even with the beating and the burning, the man still refused to admit he was an informant. The kidnapers were unconvinced, so they drove to their speed lab in an old house in rural Hood County near Lipan.

Beside the house was an old, abandoned, hand-dug, rock-lined, water well. The men tried, convicted, and executed the supposed snitch on the spot. They put five .22 bullets in the back of his head and then dumped his body, head first, into the well. Wanting to make sure no one would ever find the victim, the men returned the next day with several sacks of concrete and lime. Assuming that the lime would consume the body, the men covered the victim with the chemical. Then they emptied the concrete bags into the well and poured in water.

What made this case especially important to Kirby, besides being his first

homicide, was that Hood County was in his father's territory. Kirby called his father and asked to set up a meeting with him, the local district attorney, the Hood County sheriff, and the ATF agent. This, of course, was quickly done.

Kirby and the Hood County officers met and followed the snitch's directions to the farmhouse where the murder supposedly had taken place. At the scene, the officers quickly found the well and noticed a white powder on the stones lining the inside. Armed with this information and the confirmation that a missing person report had been filed on the suspected victim with the Fort Worth Police Department, a Hood County search warrant was secured.

The officers returned to the farm site and headed straight for the abandoned well. They soon found what they were looking for. In the bottom of the well, the remarkably preserved body of the victim was found. However, there was a problem with recovering it. The well was so deep and the threat of a cave-in so great that it would have been dangerous for anyone to go in and try to pry the body loose from the concrete.

That left only one option. A rope was tied around the victim's boots, which were sticking out of the concrete, so the body could quickly be found in the event of a cave-in. A Grade-All operator chipped away the concrete that encased the body until it was loose enough to haul out of the well. Surprisingly, the body stayed in one piece.

With the names supplied by the ATF snitch, all the actors were identified, arrested, and convicted.

There is no question that the victim was acquainted with the shady world of dope, but no one deserves to die the way he did. Another thing: he had been telling the truth--he was not a snitch!

The case provided Kirby with the chance to work side by side with his father before he retired. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that very few Rangers have ever enjoyed.

### **The Rogue Chief**

Who is the worst criminal-- the killer, the thief, the rapist, the kidnapper? You pick it. In many ways, the most terrible of all is the dishonest policeman. The violence of his crime may or may not be that great, but the public trust he betrays is unspeakable. Early in his career, Kirby was involved in such a case.

Kirby received a call from a detective of the Haltom City (a suburb of Fort Worth) Police Department. The caller said that when he had been a patrolman on the Azle City (another Fort Worth suburb) Police Department, the former chief had approached him with a rip-off scheme that would make a lot of money.

According to the detective's story, the scam was being run by the onetime chief and a reserve officer. Their plan was simple but effective. They would attack local dope dealers, posing as police officers. Then they would serve legitimate-looking search warrants and confiscate any money or dope they found. They knew the chances of the dopers reporting the thefts would be remote.

The former chief, who was the brains of the operation, claimed noble reasons

for the thefts. Drug dealers and their merchandise were destroying America, but liberal judges and their lenient court rulings favored the criminals. This frustrated him. He claimed that once he and his partner got the money, they would do noble things like help needy folks all over the world. He dreamed big.

Initially, or so he said, the chief didn't want anything to do with the dope. However, upon further reflection, he decided it would be foolish to flush all that perfectly good money source down the commode.

Before the men could do all their wonderful deeds with their "earnings," they of course had to pay all their expenses, which would be extensive, and they would establish comfortable lifestyles for themselves. Then, if anything were left, they would extend their marvelous generosity to those in need.

The detective agreed to wear a wire. He was therefore able to tape conversations between himself, the chief, and the reserve officer. The resulting tapes were astounding. The conversations left no doubt that the men meant business and would use as much force as they felt was necessary to accomplish their objectives.

The reserve officer was a full-time gun dealer and would serve as the equipment supplier. They were going to use some heavy-duty weaponry, including flash-bang grenades, to make entries. Once inside, they would tie everyone up with duct tape and depart with the money. And, of course, society would then be better off.

Kirby and the Haltom City lawmen found a house in Haltom City that had been condemned for street construction. It made a good setup house. Kirby told the detective to tell the former chief that he had a snitch who knew of a lab that was about to finish a drug cook. When the product was ready, it would be brought to the setup house where a buyer would show up with a bunch of money.

The former chief took the bait—hook, line, and sinker. The only hitch was that the reserve officer was out of town on vacation. That wasn't a major concern, however; he could be gathered up anytime. (He was arrested for conspiracy when he got back.)

The trap was set carefully. A surveillance van was parked across and down the street from the setup house. The house and garage were full of Rangers. Besides Kirby, other members of Company B at the site were Lieutenant David Byrnes, Eddie Almond, Steve Black, Charlie Fleming, Ronnie Griffith, and Weldon Lucas, and Brantley Foster. Capt. James Wright monitored the investigation from the nearby surveillance van.

To make the deal appear more legitimate, the Rangers had borrowed a Jaguar from the DPS Narcotics Service. It was for the big-time "buyer" (Brantley) to drive.

The detective who had informed us of the crime was wearing a bust-alert signal, an alarm that he could activate if he thought something was going wrong. He was also equipped with a wire so that his conversation with the former chief could be heard as they drove around the neighborhood waiting for the buyer to arrive.

When the operation was set in order, the former chief didn't want to cruise

around very much. It didn't take him long to grow impatient. He told the detective that they would just "take him (Brantley) down on the street."

The detective immediately hit the bust alert, which broadcast a loud, repetitious, and irritating sound over the Rangers' radios. The Rangers tried to contact Brantley. They needed to warn him that they might try to do a street "pop" on him if they saw him prior to his arrival at the house. Unfortunately, Brantley had turned his walkie-talkie off and put it under his car seat.

For several minutes, Kirby and his group were extremely concerned that the former chief might run across Brantley before he could get to the house. Brantley was more than capable of taking care of himself, however. The crooks were fortunate that they didn't find him before he got to the house.

Thankfully, Brantley soon arrived safely. Video from the surveillance van showed the crooked chief and the informant detective driving by the house several times. They finally stopped and parked in front. Kirby saw the former chief put a pistol in his pants as he got out of the car.

There was no communication between the Rangers in the house and the garage, and they couldn't yell out without the suspect hearing. Fortunately, both groups exited the buildings at the exact same time with guns drawn and pointed at the wayward chief. It couldn't have been timed any better if the lawmen had the most sophisticated communication equipment in the world.

As the Rangers approached, the chief put out his left hand as if to tell the Rangers to stop as he backed up. At the same time, he moved his right hand behind his back. From Kirby's position, he could see that the chief's hand was not touching the gun he had stuck in his pants. Seeing this was the only thing that kept him from firing. He had no doubt that he would have been totally justified, but he didn't fire.

Kirby says that he felt sure that if he or anyone else had fired the first round, everybody else would have started shooting. If that had happened, there wouldn't have been much left of the crooked cop to take to the medical examiner's office. As it turned out, nobody got hurt and the bad guys went to jail.

Texas Ranger

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