

Interview with
AL CUELLAR
Texas Ranger, Retired

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Project: Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted at Mr. Cuellar's Home
Helotes, Texas
Monday—April 20, 2009

Interviewed By: Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray
Longview, Texas

Present at Interview: Al Cuellar, Nancy Ray and Eddie Ray



Introduction

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AL CUELLAR
TEXAS RANGER, RETIRED

NANCY RAY: My name is Nancy Ray and I am visiting with Al Cuellar of Helotes, Texas. This is Monday, April 20th, 2009. The purpose of this interview is to discuss Ranger Cuellar's career as a Texas Ranger. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

AL CUELLAR: Absolutely.

NANCY RAY: Ranger Cuellar, do you understand that this video will belong to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco, Texas?

AL CUELLAR: Yes ma'am.

NANCY RAY: And do I have your permission to present copies of this video to various historical organizations such as museums, libraries, schools and once transcribed to place on the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum's website?

AL CUELLAR: Yes ma'am.

NANCY RAY: Let's start by learning about you. Tell us your full name, when were you born and where.

AL CUELLAR: My full name is Adolfo ADOLFO Cuellar. I've gone by Al all my life and it's just kind of a hard name for a lot of people to pronounce or remember. Al is pretty simple. But I was born in Douglas, Arizona. That's in Cochise County. It's on the border with Mexico. It's southeastern Arizona. I went there through eighth grade. My father worked at a smelter, a copper smelter. The company was Phelps Dodge Corporation. They mined the copper ore out of Bisbee and then they'd ship it by train to Douglas and in Douglas they'd... I guess whatever a smelter

does. And anyway, they had an industrial type accident and he was killed right after my... eleven days after I turned twelve.

NANCY RAY: And what was his name?

AL CUELLAR: Adolfo also.

NANCY RAY: Are you a junior?

AL CUELLAR: Yes ma'am. Actually, I'm the third. And so at that time I had a brother that was nine, a sister that was three, an older sister that was thirteen, and an older brother that was fifteen or sixteen. And actually, they had moved out there. My mom and dad are from Zapata, Texas, and they moved out there seeking work in I think 1939 or '40, '41... something like that. And he found work over there, well he heard of work, and that's why he was over there. After... after he passed away, Mom kind of wanted to get back with her relatives so we moved to Laredo. Moved to Laredo in '59. I went to junior high, high school, junior college in Laredo. Went to A&I one year and then the draft was close behind me so I joined the Navy. I spent a couple of years in the Navy during the Vietnam era but I never got sent to Vietnam. I was always on the east coast. It's not because ... I was kind of foolish back then. I remember I was in Charleston waiting for the ship. Well just waiting for assignment and it was in '66 and the day that Ray Martinez was involved in that shooting in Austin, Texas, I saw that on the news with Chet Huntley and David Brinkley reporting. And I remember calling my brother and I said y'all made the news down there in Texas even here in South Carolina. And they said what are you doing and I said I just filled out my dream sheet. They said well what did you put in for? I said well I put in for the PT boats in Vietnam and I said I put in for a destroyer. And I put in for an aircraft carrier thinking that there'd be more excitement on them. And I wound up getting on a cargo ship on the east

coast (*laughter*). So we made fun of it because it was really an attack cargo. But they called it an attack cargo... there's such a thing... but the U.S.S. Beetle Geuse was an attack cargo ship.

NANCY RAY: Say that name of that ship again.

AL CUELLAR: Beetle Geuse... it's the largest star in the constellation Orion. It's in the belt of that Orion that... the middle star is called Beetle Guese and that's what the ship was named after.

NANCY RAY: I was trying to think of a name of a person.

AL CUELLAR: It's BEETLE GEUSE but they pronounce it like goose.

NANCY RAY: What was your job?

AL CUELLAR: I was a radio man. And I spent two years over there in Charleston, South Carolina... we're on the east coast. We did a little traveling. We went to ... went to Rota, Spain, and to Holyloch, Scotland. We were back forth to those two places. And one time we crossed the Panama Canal on Christmas Day and got a sunburn on Christmas Day. Two days later we were in the cold in Washington state. It was just like it was strange to have a sunburn and you're freezing to death. But anyway, after the Navy I came back to Laredo and... and I got a ticket for speeding and I really like his demeanor.

NANCY RAY: Of the patrolman?

AL CUELLAR: I really liked... of the patrolman. Even though he gave me a ticket I... I can remember that ticket so well. I remember everything about it. I remember I admired him. And I think I wound up putting in for the Highway Patrol shortly after that.

NANCY RAY: What was it that impressed you about him... the patrolman?

AL CUELLAR: Well I already had it in mind to do that because while I was in Charleston, South Carolina, they were advertising for Florida Highway Patrolman. And they said if you...

you could get out 90 days early from the military at that period of time if you were going to go into law enforcement. So I said I was but I had no inclination at all other than to get out 90 days early. And then after that encounter with him and ... I started liking it more and eventually I talked to a recruiter and he made it sound real simple. He said well you were in the Navy you went to boot camp. I said what's the patrol school like? Well you were in the Navy... it's like boot camp. Well Navy boot camp was easy. There wasn't nothing to it. I mean you had to get up early in the morning and march around but... when I went to the Highway Patrol, it was a rude awakening how tough that got... how that was. It really was. The physical was really, really tough.

NANCY RAY: Well before we get too far into that let me back up. Did you tell me your date of birth or did I just miss it? When were you born?

AL CUELLAR: June 10th, 1945.

NANCY RAY: And you mentioned your dad's name but what about your mom? What is her name?

AL CUELLAR: Her name is Josefa, JOSEFA. And her last name was Flores, FLORES.

NANCY RAY: And is she still living?

AL CUELLAR: No, she passed on my 50th birthday. But she was from ... from Mexico born in Falcon Heights, Texas, because her daddy brought her over... well her daddy brought her mom over because the revolution was going on and they knew things were very stable in the United States compared to Mexico. And ... I did a little history on that Mexican Revolution. I learned a lot about it... it was an interesting period of time. Very interesting and nobody even remembers how violent it was and how a country just about got taken over and then... and then it got split

up by all the different generals that were trying to... you know for the power. It was very chaotic in that period of Mexico. And I guess my granddad said let's be a little cautious over here and they brought her over. And luckily she was an American citizen. They didn't have immigration... you'd just ride your horse across the river I guess that's all you had to do. There was nobody to check it. But it was documented she was born in Falcon Heights, Texas. She was raised on a ranch... a country girl. And she had a lot of... a lot of expressions that I repeat all the time. They're old country expressions but they're Spanish. They're kind of interesting and very similar to country expressions that you hear around here that get right down to ... (*laughter*)... they get to the point real quick (*laughter*). It makes it easy to tell what you're talking about.

NANCY RAY: What's one that stands out in your mind that she would say?

AL CUELLAR: Well she liked things done well. She didn't like anything half... haphazard. And there's a saying... when she saw something that wasn't done right, she'd say... she'd say it in Spanish but it says it looks like you did it with your feet. But... the way she said it, in Spanish... people have feet, animals have paws and stuff like that. So when you do something with your feet it would be your *pies* but if you want to refer to you did it with your *patas*... you did it with your paws or your hooves you know... it was just... If she didn't like the way it was done, she'd say... *parece que lo hizo con las pies*... looks like they did it with their feet.

NANCY RAY: You knew exactly!

AL CUELLAR: You knew it wasn't done right and you'd better start all over again because if it was something she was supervising, you'd better get it right.

NANCY RAY: You were gonna do it over anyway.

AL CUELLAR: That's right. She actually raised us because my dad, you know I was twelve and she did a good job.

NANCY RAY: She had a big job ahead of her.

AL CUELLAR: Yes, five people... yeah five kids. And did a good job you know. Every one of us did something well. We all succeeded. Not a single one ever spent a day in jail. Not a single one ever in trouble. Of course we were not gonna be involved in drugs but... but anyway everyone succeeded well and doing well. She did a good job.

NANCY RAY: That's a good tribute to her.

AL CUELLAR: Yes it is.

NANCY RAY: When did you marry? Was that before patrol school or after?

AL CUELLAR: After patrol school. I actually met my wife, María... I actually met her when I was in the tenth grade. She was fifteen years old and I was seventeen years old and she was in band with me, high school band in Martin High School. And she played clarinet and I played the trumpet and later played the French horn. And we started going steady in 1963 before I graduated from high school and we just stayed together. And got married in '70, seven years later. She went on and got her degree and I was already... had been a Highway Patrolman a year in Kilgore when we thought it was right. She wasn't gonna get married until she had a degree. She wasn't gonna get married until she worked a year to have enough money to pay for a wedding. So that's why we waited that long.

NANCY RAY: Sounds like she had her mind set. Well what about children? Tell us about your family.

AL CUELLAR: My oldest one is Monica. She was born in East Texas, Longview, Good Shepherd Hospital in Longview... born September 2, 1971, a year after we were married. My second one was also born in Good Shepherd Hospital in Longview. She was born September 23rd, 1974 and ...

NANCY RAY: And what is her name?

AL CUELLAR: Christina, Christy is what we call her. And then my third girl was born here in San Antonio, her name is Tamara, we call her Tammy. And my fourth one was my boy, Justin, and he was born in '82 here in San Antonio also. I'm really proud of all of them. They're all super kids. They don't... they call with good news all the time and I don't know how I was fortunate enough to to have four kids and... My neighbor one time told my wife you ought to write a book you've been so successful with your kids. But they would think it was fiction because nobody has that kind of success. But I have to give Mary credit for raising those children. When the school bus would come, and they'd lead them out in front... they'd be walking out and Mary would go outside and they'd be coming down with their books and she'd say well... how did you do in spelling? How did you do on your spelling test you took today? Did you spell *principal* right? Yes... 'pal or 'ple you know. And she knew what... everything they were doing. I mean she kept up with them every day on every course they were taking. She was you know... just helping them with their homework and stayed with them and knew everything about them. She was on like the "cookie brigade" I used to call it. When kindergarten was going on, she'd take cookies up there to them. I don't think they allow that anymore. But she was always with the teachers and always following the kids. And after my son started school, then she went back and continued her career as a school teacher. She had taught one year in East

Texas and then gave it up to raise kids and when the kids went to school, she went back. And I don't regret that... she doesn't either. Because you know... it's pretty important to raise your family. And she did a wonderful job. I give her all the credit for it. I didn't do nothing (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Well I doubt that.

AL CUELLAR: ... on occasion I'd pop a belt (*laughter*). When they'd start having all kinds of problems and they'd be fussing at each other and they'd fuss and fuss and fuss and Mary would say "Daddy's gonna get the belt." She'd say well, you better get the belt. I'd get a belt and take it off and I'd just pop it (*made a motion*) like that and the kids would be running off screaming like I was gonna torture them with it. I never had to touch them with it but they were deathly scared of that belt.

NANCY RAY: The threat was enough.

AL CUELLAR: (*laughter*) The threat was enough, yes it was. It's funny. We talk about it now how I'd pop the belt all the time at them (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Well congratulations. I can tell you're proud of your family.

AL CUELLAR: Thank you... yeah, we're... You know when you sum it up, that's one of your biggest jobs as parents is to raise kids and to try... do the best you can. I've heard people say I can't wait until my kids turn eighteen so they can leave the house and you know that's when your job really begins because you have to support them through college and all. And college is a very rough period of time for them. Although they have a good time and they play and all of them got their degrees from A&M. In fact I've attended seven graduations at A&M. Monica's got her Master's, Christy's got her Master's, Tammy's got her Master's... that's two graduations, that's two, four, six and Justin got... he has his degree in mechanical engineering.

He went to work for... when he graduated he went to work for Bell Helicopter but he didn't like it. And I didn't know it but he wanted to be a Highway Patrolman. And after about a year of that he called and he said I'm putting in an application at DPS. Mary was scared and I don't know what... why are you gonna do that? He said the most exciting thing I do here at Bell Helicopter is click a mouse and he said I can't do it no more.

NANCY RAY: So he is a Highway Patrolman?

AL CUELLAR: Yes ma'am.

NANCY RAY: And where is he stationed?

AL CUELLAR: He's stationed in Madisonville. And he really loves his job... he loves his job. And he's a good trooper. We talk very regularly and I give him a lot of advice. He has a great attitude and he's a hard, hard worker. And he's... he's a drug hound... he goes after them drugs, that's what he loves. And he's really, really devoted to it and he loves his job. And I'm glad for him because he's happy. If you like your job, you're happy. If you don't like your job, you can be miserable.

NANCY RAY: And I don't think we've talked to a Ranger yet who didn't enjoy the time as a Highway Patrolman if they were patrolman. They didn't like it on Driver's License but if they were on the highway, they seemed to say that was a fun job.

AL CUELLAR: Yes, it was a very fun job. I loved it. I had a great time, I learned a lot. I made such great friends and met a lot of wonderful people and a lot of other patrolman. I was stationed in East Texas area in Kilgore and some of the nicest people live in Kilgore and that area that you've ever seen. I mean absolutely nice people. An odd thing, maybe a strange thing, but it's very common over there. And that's when you meet somebody and you get to visiting with them,

they'll say you need to come over and have dinner with us some day. They don't do that everywhere but they do that in East Texas. And there's something about if you break bread with somebody, you're friends. In fact in law enforcement, they know that. In law enforcement they know that and in these hostage situations, anytime you have a hostage and the time rocks on a long period of time, they'll say I'll bet you're getting hungry. We're gonna send you some food. And what they like to do is send the kind of food that they have to share a little bit. If you send three pizzas and you've got one bad guy and two good guys, if you send three small pizzas well each one will take his pizza and the bad guy will be eating pizza by himself. They like to send something that they all have to sit down and share that food together. And once they share that food together, it's very unlikely that they'll harm the hostage any longer. And it's just like what I'm talking about, once you make friends over dinner or breaking bread like they say, you stay friends. And we have some wonderful friends in Kilgore and East Texas. In East Texas, they have a saying "he's a good old boy." And they're very generous with that compliment. Other places are not as... I mean you have nice people everywhere. But people in East Texas are very quick to invite you over to dinner and they're very quick to compliment you... I know him, do you know him? Yeah, he's a good old boy. Everybody's a good old boy... he has a nice family... good people. They say that a lot, good people... and they say that in Spanish, the very same thing, *buena gente*. And I don't know how that came about but if somebody says *buena gente*, good people... it's nice to talk to people that talk well of other people. If people... if you visit with somebody and he's criticizing everybody else in the world, well he's gonna criticize you when you're gone too. But when they speak highly of the majority of their friends and

everybody in town, they speak highly of them... you know those are good people... and I like that about East Texas.

NANCY RAY: Now you said Kilgore was your first duty station.

AL CUELLAR: Yes ma'am.

NANCY RAY: Well let's back up to the school and talk about it and then we'll come back to Kilgore and ask some questions. You said it was hard, what was the hardest part about that school?

AL CUELLAR: The boxing. The physical wasn't too bad. I mean I could... I could run, do pushups, whatever they asked me to do I could do it. And I could probably be in the front of the class. But I was told to go down there... don't stand out, not in any way. Don't be good and don't be bad because you don't get rewarded. If you're real good, they're gonna say you did that too easy, give me ten more pushups. Or if you get there quick... that run was too easy, run another mile for me. So I just tried to stay in the middle so I didn't want to be... I wanted to stay obscure kind of like. Unlike my son, my son went down there and he wanted to be the best and the fastest and he wound up getting an award. He got the Major Goodwin Award. He had good grades and did well on his PT and did well on his driving. Did well in his ... in his classwork and everything else so he wound up with an award in his class. And while he was going through it I was telling him don't be like me... go ahead, go ahead (*laughter*). Go ahead and try your very best and he did. But I found the fighting a little stressful. And looking back, it wasn't all that bad but at the time it was stressful because you never knew who you were gonna fight. And you never knew when you were gonna fight. And people think it's well... big deal. But those fights were kind of tough. And I saw a lot of them that got fired right there... go home. If they didn't

do well, boom, you're out of the class. I mean you don't... they'll say if you don't put up a better fight, just hit the showers and go home. And they did. So you know not knowing if I'm a good fighter or a bad fighter or what's going on, you know... it was always nerve wracking you know. But if you ever put the other guy in the ropes it's such a good feeling because you know you're winning the fight and you know they're not gonna criticize you for it and you know you had a good day. But tomorrow was another day and you may have to fight again and it might be a bigger guy. And you never know what it was gonna be like. You know it could happen. The guy who fought in front of me... they knocked him out and he went to the emergency room and never came back. I never knew what happened to him. You know that could happen to me so I was always nervous about you know about what was the outcome of this fight be? And they never took that darn boxing ring down. So you were in the first and the second week you see a fight and then you start fighting and you fight the next week and then you don't fight for a week and then the boxing ring is still there and you think the boxing is over... now we're gonna fight today and my god, here we go again you know (*laughter*). So it was nerve wracking.

NANCY RAY: I guess. Well since your son went through it, could you tell any differences in the things that you learned or were taught versus the things that he encountered at the school?

AL CUELLAR: No... not really. In fact the training has gotten much better. Their training is very, very good. They're getting better down there at that school. In fact I think they've gotten a whole lot better. in every aspect of it the training is better. They concentrate a lot on defense... protect that person from the violator and stuff like that. And the more training you get the better off if... I think they had another philosophy years ago that if you wouldn't... if you're not gonna get out there and fight you may let your partner down and you know if you let your partner down

you could get fired for it or something like that. And that was always the fear factor that maybe you didn't fight good enough or something like that. While now they... they teach a lot of defense and a lot of it is very practical. I think they do a great job.

NANCY RAY: When did you enter the Highway Patrol? I didn't capture that date.

AL CUELLAR: I entered it in August 28, 1968.

NANCY RAY: All right... is there anything else when you were in the school that stands out in your mind that you want to talk about?

AL CUELLAR: No, I thought it was very tough and it was...

NANCY RAY: How many finished with you? How many started?

AL CUELLAR: We started with about... I think 113 and graduated 82. And so you know it was a constant... What I remember about that school was... I remember you'd be in class and then the door would open up and they'd call somebody's name out and you'd turn back and you'd see somebody from the school, a sergeant or somebody, they'd call a guy's name and he'd stand up and start going back and they'd say no, go back and get your books. So he'd go back and they'd tell him to go back and get his books. He'd come back and get his books and walk out the back door and you never saw him no more. And you'd say I wonder what he did? I wonder why he's gone? And you knew he was gone. When they said go back and get your books, everybody's stomach went *wumpf*... , something's going on. And that... you just had a knot in your stomach. You know this guy's gone and you'd look at him and say man, I thought he was doing a good job. I thought he was doing OK. But I don't know why. I'm sure it was justified but still it's kind of the unknown going on. And any minute you can be in class and the door would open up and they'd call somebody's name and... Later when the door opened up in back and man you got a

shot of adrenaline in your stomach... said I hope they don't call my name out. And so they'd come and go and you'd never see them again. *(laughter)* You'd never know what happened. You'd ask questions but nobody would tell you anything. Sometimes you could figure it out... you could figure out well he was kind of slack... grades weren't all that good or I don't know what else and I'll never know.

NANCY RAY: Well at least you made it and you went to Kilgore.

AL CUELLAR: Yes, I was so glad. I didn't know... I had never heard of Kilgore until I got assigned over there. But I met some of the nicest people you've ever seen in Kilgore.

NANCY RAY: What kind of... I know you were working traffic but what kind of things did you face while you were there in Kilgore as a patrolman?

AL CUELLAR: Well we started off the first six months there was a strike in Lone Star, Texas, in Daingerfield. And there was a strike going on and I think the... I came on in December of '68 and the strike lasted until May of '69 so the first six months I spent most of the time traveling and working all-night shifts in Daingerfield. And that time we stopped everybody that moved after 10 or 11 o'clock. And it was ... they were trying to identify and prevent people involved with the, with the union that were shooting, scaring, and insulting and assaulting and those... those people that were working there they called them scabs... the people that crossed the picket line to work. And so we're just protecting life and property is what they say and that's what we did for the first six months. So I knew that area better than I knew my assigned area in Rusk County. And it was memorable in a way because we got to work with troopers from all over... from 1B area they called it, from Dallas area. And you got to know all of them. It was a fun job. We had a lot of good times.

NANCY RAY: Well weren't there some fatalities from that strike or not?

AL CUELLAR: Yes, there were. There were two or three of them. There was I think... I know there were one or two crossed that were bombed. I mean they got in and turned the ignition and the car exploded. And then there were several incidents where these strikers were out shooting at cars. In fact they shot at some Rangers. Captain Mitchell was a Ranger at that time. They shot at him ... probably a bad mistake because I'm sure he didn't take it too lightly (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Probably not.

AL CUELLAR: And they probably wished they'd shot at somebody else but somehow they picked on Captain Mitchell. He was in an old pickup, came out of there and he came out of the plant in that old pickup and they followed him and they shot at him. I wish I could remember the whole story on that. I don't know what happened. I'm sure it's documented. Captain Mitchell knew... I'm sure he told that story sometime. And there's where I saw the Rangers... the first time I saw Rangers. The very first Ranger I saw was Bill Wilson. He came to the patrol school and basically he talked about the Ranger Service. And at that time I said man I'd sure like to be a Ranger... I sure would. But you know I didn't tell that to anybody. It's like reaching out for the stars... say I'm gonna grab me a star you know. It's just so... it was so far it was almost like impossible but I'll... you know it was in the back of my mind. It always stayed in my mind. I didn't tell anybody that I wanted to be a Ranger but I did. And you know I just tried to do the best I could over there. There's where I met Glenn Elliott. Glenn Elliott was very instrumental in me becoming a Ranger, very instrumental. He worked the Longview area and he was very well liked and did a good job. He's a working Ranger, there's no two ways about it. Glenn Elliott worked. And everybody liked him and everybody respected him. How you do this is like... that

everybody knew that Glenn Elliott meant business and everybody that wasn't an outlaw really liked him. And he was very well respected. He recommended me when the first time I... and I talked to him about it one time. It was kind of a lucky situation. I was able to apprehend a fellow that was a big oilfield thief and was on probation. He was a big problem to Glenn Elliott. And I apprehended him coming out of the woods with some stolen property. He had a truck motor, a truck transmission and the rear wheels. He was coming out of the woods with it. And I had just been to a school and in the school they mentioned that on these 18 wheelers, the truck tractors... the big ones, that the motor, transmission, and rear end are interchangeable with all of them you know except the Mack. But you can put the different motors in all these different trucks and transmissions so the most valuable part of an 18 wheeler is the motor, transmission, and the rear end... the differential. And he came out of the woods with a truck pulling a long trailer and there was a motor, transmission, and rear end. I'm thinking well that's what... So I pulled him over and couldn't determine it was stolen so I called Motor Vehicle Theft people that had just formed. That department had just formed. And they were able to identify it as being stolen and it was stolen out of West Texas. Ultimately they had a hearing on that. Well, the fellow that was... that stole it was on probation out of West Texas for some other oilfield thefts and they had a hearing so I traveled with Glenn to that hearing. And something happened... it didn't go to court so I made a second trip with him. And those two trips I got, or he got to know me and I guess he didn't think I was such a bad guy. Plus one thing Glenn noticed. He told me that he used to hear the traffic the Longview sheriff's office would call and they would say we need a Highway Patrolman on... do we have one? They'd call and say any Longview Highway Patrolman and nobody would answer... Need a Highway Patrolman and nobody would answer for the

Longview area. I was working in Kilgore. And when I'd hear that they were calling for a Highway Patrolman and make two or three calls and nobody would answer, I'd answer up "can I help you?" And they'd say we've got a wreck on the north side of Longview. Well I'd go over and work it on the north side. But I didn't even realize what was happening but he took notice that I volunteered for work when they ... if they needed a Highway Patrolman, I jumped on it. And I'm not gonna sit there and listen to them call a Highway Patrolman and me not volunteer. It's just not my nature when I had... But evidently he took notice of that so he knew I worked. And I spent a little time with him so I guess he didn't think I was a bad guy. And he knew I worked and that was an important thing for Glenn because he's not gonna recommend somebody that doesn't work. And so with the recommendation from Glenn Elliott... you go somewhere I'm telling you. Everybody liked Glenn Elliott all the way up to the top. Glenn would have been a senior Ranger captain had he wanted to. He could very well have run up the ladder but he wanted to stay. And you know that was... I heard that about Glenn Elliott and I've always felt about the same way. I didn't want to go up the ladder. I didn't want to check reports. I didn't want to be a supervisor. I wanted to get down to the work, the important work... the work that's on the ground level work.

NANCY RAY: Well I would say probably Glenn Elliott didn't recommend just everybody. I would imagine you impressed him.

AL CUELLAR: Well I certainly hope so. And I hear he's ill right now and I sure wish him the best of luck. But ... my wife loved Glenn Elliott. She said he's got the bluest eyes that ever was. In fact the other day somebody was saying what's that Ranger's name... the one with the blue eyes? *(laughter)* Glenn Elliott. He had cold blue eyes.

NANCY RAY: Well what about partners there in Kilgore. You're at your new station where it's so... was somebody your lead partner to kind of show you the ropes or what?

AL CUELLAR: Well when I got there... yeah I was broken in by a man by the name of Kenny, Kenneth Meadows. Kenny Meadows was a... he later became a pilot for the... he was a Highway Patrolman and after I made Ranger he became a pilot and boy he was a good mentor. He was good. There were a lot of good people up there but Kenny was one of the best. He was a no nonsense, straight... straight shooter. he stood up straight and looked the people in the eye and when he told them... he was kind, polite and nobody give Kenny any trouble because he just did you know the way things are supposed to be done. Very professional and he was the first fellow I worked with. I tried to imitate him. You know as a patrolman, you work with different people and you see different styles and I would see different styles of the way the violator contact would be. And I like Kenny's... one of the best. Later I worked with another Highway Patrolman in Kilgore and he was also a mentor to me... was Haskell Taylor. He'd been on the Highway Patrol 19 years when I was down there. Well he'd been on about 16 and he was there 3 years and then he promoted to Ranger also. And I got to work with him. And that was another style but he had his other qualities. And he had a very good outlook and also very... demanded respect but he was very, very nice with people too. He was just you know... perfect for the job. He told me something and I'll never for get it... and I've told my son. One day we were sitting drinking coffee and I said Haskell, have you noticed that this... the high school is running around in a brand new Ford with dealer plates on it... the high school driving... they taught driver's education. And I said you know that tag is a dealer tag for demonstration purposes and the high school is using it for , for driver's education. And I see it all the time. It's not

supposed... it's supposed to be registered. And Haskell looked at me and he said you're not gonna do anything about that are you? I said well that's why I'm talking to you about it, Haskell. He said let me tell you something. He said you know the Ford dealership loans that to the school. It loans them a brand new car so that they can be in a good, safe dependable transportation while they're teaching the kids. They're teaching them driver's education to do right and he said... but the dealer doesn't want to give them the car and the dealer just loans them the car but if you register it, it becomes a used car now. It remains a new car as long as it's not titled. So I said well shouldn't it be titled? He said look at it this way. If that's the worst that people done, wouldn't this be a nice a world? When he told me that, I said well you're right Haskell. And I've always used that philosophy. When you want to get things in the right perspective, you ask yourself something like that – if that's the worst they've done, wouldn't this be a great world? And yes it would. And so his attitude, his perspective, kind of helped you mature in your outlook. As a young trooper you say if it's against the law you're supposed to do something about it. And... anyway Haskell taught me that and I think the world of Haskell and Jeannie, his wife. They were very nice people... the kind that say come on over and have dinner with us.

NANCY RAY: So you broke some bread with them? (*laughter*)

AL CUELLAR: All the time... all the time. Haskell was a super nice guy... and a great Highway Patrolman. He would work... if he was on from 4 to 1 he would work... be looking diligently until 1 o'clock for DWIs. He didn't say well its 12:30... if I get a DWI I'm gonna have to work late. It didn't make any difference to him. He... and I worked for a sergeant named Eldon Thane, THANE, pronounced tiny. And his attitude was you put in a day's work for a day's pay and that was Haskell's attitude... we're still working and at 1 o'clock you might be north of

Longview and you've got to go all the way to Kilgore and ... he would work all the way home. In fact hoping he'd find a DWI which would carry him back to Longview and make him work to 3 o'clock in the morning. But that's the kind of work ethic that Haskell had and I tried to copy that.

NANCY RAY: That was your example.

AL CUELLAR: Yes, so if you work with people like Kenny Meadows that... that are very forthright and absolutely straight-laced. And if you work with people like Haskell Taylor who give you good perspective on what's right and wrong in every which way. And you take his work ethics and then you have mentors like ... like Glenn Elliott that you know how he does and how he's thought of in the community, well you have a lot to pick from to try to pick the best from each or try to do as good as them. And you know I was fortunate. I never got in any trouble and by the grace of God everything just went well for me. And I have a lot of people to thank. And Glenn told me one time. You have... there's always somebody that helps somebody that puts you in the right place. And everybody has a little help somewhere. And it was not... if somebody was to say yeah, you were a friend of Glenn Elliott's so that's why you made it. Well, everybody got help from somebody... but I... I was just fortunate I guess. And that's what I try to teach my son, the same thing. You know keep your nose clean and watch what the good guys do. Try to imitate them. Speak highly of your sergeant, highly of the Department and you're not gonna go wrong. You can't go wrong if you try to do your best... work hard, good work ethics.

NANCY RAY: Well in Kilgore, what were the... were there many DWIs? Was that a bad problem?

AL CUELLAR: Kilgore was a... it was a wet county and at that time Gregg County was the only wet county and it was surrounded by all dry counties. So on the weekends, starting on Friday, they came from as far south as Nacogdoches and I don't know how far other directions but everybody came to Kilgore to cash their checks at a liquor store. Buy liquor and dance and all the honky tonks there on Highway 31 and Longview had a lot of honky tonks and so there was a problem with a lot of drunk drivers afterwards. And you know that was our job then was to try and stop drunk drivers. And try to keep the road safe. And you know so we stayed pretty busy trying to stop drunk drivers. And during the time I was there in Kilgore, they had a capital murder at a Cabell's 7-11 right there by the college. Some suspects went in there and they shot a... they went in to rob the store and there was a poor fellow there that was a post master, I mean a post man, and he worked extra job making extra money. And I don't know why they shot and killed him. And when they left from there, they left and there was a security guard at the college and when they called in they said there's been an armed robbery and they escaped and the security guard happened to see a car driving really fast from there. They had one night security guard at Kilgore College and he described the car – white over blue Dodge Dart. And I was with a partner named Wayne Smith and we went south on Highway 42 and we met a car that was going really fast and crossing the centerline. And we learned then that could be a... when we turned on him we saw it was a blue Dodge. They threw out their guns and we arrested them and I had been on like a year and Wayne had been on a year and a month and we were both rookies and it was kind of strange that we captured them. We got a little ribbing on that because the two rookies caught them... well the rookies were at the right place at the right time and decided that we would go after this car for no reason other than it was speeding and passing in a no passing

zone. It was coming from Kilgore right after an armed robbery and I learned from that too. I learned that when somebody does something wrong and they're running, you can see the traffic and you can pick the guy out. You can almost pick the guy out. He'll commit the same violations that you were looking for anyway... passing in a no passing, speeding and things like that. He'll commit all those violations when he's fleeing from something. So often even without a description of the vehicle, you can just check the traffic and the person that stands out... that you would probably be looking at now, that's gonna be your guy. And sometimes... they could have described a red car and you see a black car and you say they said red but I said go after that black car because the witness could be wrong. And you're more right than the witness might be at times. That's the experience you get in law enforcement, picking out somebody like that.

NANCY RAY: Well were you ever in ... a dangerous situation for yourself like you were drawn on or...

AL CUELLAR: In the Highway Patrol?

NANCY RAY: Yes.

AL CUELLAR: No.

NANCY RAY: That's good. Where did you go after Kilgore?

AL CUELLAR: I made Ranger and came to San Antonio.

NANCY RAY: OK. So that was your one duty station.

AL CUELLAR: My one duty station, yes.

NANCY RAY: Well were you ever involved in any criminal investigations in Kilgore?

AL CUELLAR: No, I got my first taste of it though in East Texas. There was a ... a detective that worked for the police department. His name was Ralph Ferguson. And Ralph was a

detective there and I was a Highway Patrolman but I... I always would talk to the local officers and the sheriff's deputies about criminal offenses... what's going on... what are y'all working on? And I would see Ralph very regularly and he would tell me about the different burglaries so I was... while I'm working traffic, I'm also thinking about criminal offenses, the burglaries, the murders, the robberies, the armed robberies, and things like this. And I would help... When Ralph would get a warrant, he'd get it during the day and he'd call me and say I've got a warrant and I'm gonna serve it tomorrow. And Ralph was an early bird... I want to get up at 4 or 5 (*laughter*). OK, Ralph, so he'd take me because most of them would be out of the city and if there was a uniformed officer around it makes it easier when you're serving a warrant. When you drive up there's no question that the police are there. So I got experience with Ralph and Ralph got to utilize me when we were outside the city. And so there's where... And I did a lot with Ralph. I helped him a lot and I watched him take statements and watched how he took the statements and how he worked the criminal cases. I actually learned a lot from Ralph when I was down there. And I would go in the sheriff's office all the time and say who's giving y'all a problem and what's he doing and who is it? Who are the bad guys that y'all are looking for... who are the burglars, the robbers, and things like that. So I took a big interest in that. We had a... kind of a strange deal. One time we were going by ... I'm trying to think exactly where it was now. But we were going by a location and it was a honky tonk and the wrecker driver... they'd had a robbery first at the Luby's Cafeteria and ... like the day before. And there was three people involved. And so we're patrolling and we see something... these people outside a car. So we turn around and the guy is outside and about to get in his car and he's pretty drunk. And ... so we talked with him and we said well he's probably too drunk so we arrested him. And then ... called

the wrecker driver and the wrecker driver came and we left and were taking him into jail and then the wrecker driver called and said there's another guy out here won't let me take the car. So we go back over there and said what's going on? Said another guy came out of the bar and he won't let me take the car. Of course we thought... and he said he keeps wanting to go in the glove box, he wants something out of the glove box. And so we open the glove box and there was a gun. We should have inventoried first. Now you have to inventory first. There was a gun in there so we went back in there and got the other guy... so we brought two of them in. And I'm thinking you're probably too drunk anyway. So we take them both in and now we've got a pistol. We don't have anybody involved with a pistol other than he was trying to get the pistol. So we go to Longview PD and... because it's all inside the city of Longview. And we go in the back and there's a glass that if you come in the front there's glass and there's a glass case where the dispatcher is and then there's glass in back where you bring in the prisoners. Unbeknownst to us, they were working on that robbery at Luby's and they'd asked one of the persons, the manager as a matter of fact, to come on in to give a statement on the... Well when he came in to give a statement, we had these two coming in. And he said... he told the dispatcher... said I came in to give a description on the fellows that robbed me but I see you've got them already (*laughter*)... they're back there. I said wait a second, we didn't know we had them. So anyway, it just turned out kind of fortunate on that part. We're bringing them in when the witness was coming in. So after... you know after we said if there's a third guy involved I know who the third guy is because he always runs with them. These guys run with another guy. So immediately they put the picture together and he identified the third so we wound up... got all three that night involved in the robbery at the Luby's. No, it wasn't a Luby's... there was another cafeteria... it was

Wyatt's or Picadilly, one or the other. I think it was a Wyatt's. But you know I got a little lucky there. We got three armed robbers and a capital murder on the other one and helping Ralph all the time arresting burglars and all that. So I had a little criminal background. I knew that when I came here.

NANCY RAY: So you decided you were ready to try the Rangers.

AL CUELLAR: I was very anxious to... very anxious to like all the other Rangers.

NANCY RAY: What did you have to do first... to become a Ranger?

AL CUELLAR: Well we had to take a test. And after the test you go to the oral interview board. And I had already... on the first time I took the test I scored high enough and came in for the oral interview board. And actually it was in '78 and I was actually gonna go to Mount Pleasant when Red Arnold was gonna retire in Mount Pleasant. And Bobby Doherty, a Ranger in Dallas, he got killed and so they wanted to fill his slot. I don't know how it all came about that I went... I went to work three months earlier and I come to San Antonio rather than going to Mount Pleasant.

NANCY RAY: I show March 5th of 1978, that's when you entered the Ranger Service?

AL CUELLAR: Yes.

NANCY RAY: So you came to San Antonio.

AL CUELLAR: Yes. I got assigned to work for Captain John Wood. He's still around. Captain John Wood was 65 years old in October of '78 and he's still around. I think that makes him about 94 or 95, something like that. He was my first captain. A long, tall guy... he was... John Wood was my first captain. I didn't work for him very long. Everybody... seemed like everybody has a real loyalty to their captain. My loyalty came after when Jack Dean... when Jack Dean came. And he was great to me. Jack Dean has a very, very good way of supervising

people. He kind of lets them compete against each other. He doesn't say you've gotta work harder. You just know that if the other Rangers are doing a real good job and keep doing good... his attitude was the harder you work the luckier you get. And so every once in a while... it all started when I said Bruce Casteel sure is lucky. He is always solving all his crimes. He said yeah, Bruce works very, very hard. And you know like I was talking about... mentors and things like that. When you hear something like that... that the harder you work the luckier you get, it rings a bell. And so it stays with you. Sometimes the investigation drags on and it's just that... man, just knock on one more door and that may be the little thread you get that unravels the whole thing. And so...

NANCY RAY: *(pause to change discs)* You have become a Ranger now. Who else made Ranger with you?

AL CUELLAR: At the same time I did, Morgan Miller, Gene Kea, ... Foster, Brantley Foster, and a guy named Charlie Cook.

NANCY RAY: Well you got to San Antonio... was this your only duty station?

AL CUELLAR: My only duty station yes.

NANCY RAY: One as a patrolman and one as a Ranger. That's good.

AL CUELLAR: Yes, I don't move around a lot.

NANCY RAY: That's great because some have had to move.

AL CUELLAR: Like I said. Family is a big issue and once we're here, we're not gonna pick up our kids and move them out. We had a good school system here. They all did well. They all made it to A&M the first try. You don't do that unless you're a pretty good student... especially it's difficult to get into big universities now.

NANCY RAY: Well do you remember what was your first case... or what is the first case you remember as a Ranger?

AL CUELLAR: I remember it well (*laughter*). Well it doesn't bring back pleasant memories I'll tell you this but I'll tell you anyway.

NANCY RAY: Please do.

AL CUELLAR: It's the truth... the truth of the matter is Captain Wood had a friend that I think was in some kind of business at some high rise. And someone had stolen a check while the offices were closed and it was the cleaning crew. They stole the check and they cashed it and they forged it and they brought it to Captain Wood. And so about 4 o'clock one day Captain Wood... like I'd been here a month. He walked in the office and he said I've got this forged check and I want you to do something about it. You know the Ranger captains don't give a lot of instructions they just walk in and say something like here's a note, handle it. Captain Dean would just say handle it. He didn't tell you much... call that number, handle it. And so my first forgery check and first case that I got handed by a captain to do something and so I went out to the west part of San Antonio which is supposed to be a rough area but it's not. Poor Mexican people... they have poor ways you know but that's no reason... I can mingle with them all day long. I... it's not a bad area for me. Some people might say it's bad. But I went over there and found the payee's name on the thing and talked with him and brought him in. I was lucky enough that the guy put his true name on the check which is rare. You know most people steal a driver's license or use somebody else's driver's license and they wind up cashing them but this... they say he "true named" it on the check. So in talking to him I figured I needed to talk so I brought him in. And when I came in the office... you come in the main doors and you kind of make a

little left down the hall and a right down the hall and another left to where our office is. And every time somebody comes in the office you have to say go over here, now make a left, now make a right, OK now make a left. So rather than give instructions, when we got in there I brought the suspect with me and I said follow me. So we went down the hall and went in the office and went in my office and sat down. And he broke and he gave me a confession. So I took the confession and he signed it and I took him back. And after he signed it I left the confession there at the office and ... well the best I remember I said, you know I called the Captain and I said I've got this confession. This is the guy that did the offense and I gave him, showed the Captain the confession. Well I left at the end of the day and the Captain left about the same time. And the next morning I came in and the Captain was sitting there and (*laughter*)... dumb me... I said I'm thinking the Captain's gonna say that's pretty good. You got your first assignment and you solved it within a couple of hours, right? Well, luckily it was an easy case... guy "true named" his name and you know I kind of thought that was gonna happen. I walked in feeling good about myself. I'd done pretty good. So when I walked in the next morning he was in there and he said come here I want to talk with you. So he puts me in the office and he closes the door. I knew that wasn't good (*laughter*). I just knew that wasn't good. He said let me tell you something. He said yesterday you come in and you let that man get behind you and if he had taken your gun, he just as well as of taken your badge because you would have been fired. I'm telling you that right now. And I'm thinking to myself... I've been on ten years. I'm not gonna let nobody take... he was behind me but I kind of sized him up. And besides, I'm not where I was gonna let him take my gun... that's the last thing that's gonna happen. But anyway, he told me if you do that again, he said you're fired (*laughter*).

NANCY RAY: Popped your bubble, didn't he?

AL CUELLAR: Yeah, he popped my bubble. He didn't say a darn thing about the case... didn't say a thing, not a thing. And you know... so I'd entered another world here. I was a Highway Patrolman... I knew my job and I'd done a very good job... or I'd thought I'd done a good job. I was very confident and suddenly I'm not confident at all. And I'm at the bottom rung of... Things never got better with Captain Wood. Things never got better. I don't know what happened... it's over with but you know he never was my friend, I'll tell you that. And because to this day, I see him and we shake hands and fine... but... and he's probably forgotten it but I haven't. And you know that's part of being a supervisor. I think you have to know your people. Some people like pats on the back and some people don't like pats on the back. I like to be patted on the back. When I do something well, I need a pat. And if I don't, I feel bad and I feel like maybe I'm not doing my job. So when Captain Dean got here, it was like a big weight had been lifted off. So I was glad to see him. And things just turned around. I was a happy man from then on. Everything was good.

NANCY RAY: Well did you learn something from Captain Dean... what did you learn from him?

AL CUELLAR: Well, Captain Dean was... he is... he's also straight forward. When he tells you something, you know it's the truth. Some people talk to you, even supervisors, you have to weigh... now that's not exactly the way that happened and I think you know that. But when Captain Dean tells you something when you talk, he doesn't make up anything. He's always straight forward and it's always the truth. Now what I liked about Captain Dean is that you know he wasn't like other supervisors. If you do something wrong with some supervisors, they get you

down and they want to put their foot on your neck all the time. Well Captain Dean's not the same way. If you do something wrong, he brought you in. He talks to you, closes the door and we talk about the problem. We resolve it and you open the door and you go on about your business and it's not to be brought up anymore because the problem was resolved. There's no reason to go back and say now the last time you did it... and the last time you... so... and he was very... I mean you open the door – OK, let's go get a cup of coffee. It's over with. That problem has been resolved. He knows that you're man enough to take care of business and that's the way I want to be treated and that's the way he treats his people. And it was like... OK, go on to something else and you go on about your business. And there was nothing wrong with closing the door and talking if you've done something wrong or inadequate or whatever it was, the problem. But to harp on it for the rest of your life is not. And when you did something right, he'd pat you on the back. And he knew who needed patting and he knew who didn't. And you know he never got on anybody and stayed on anybody for any reason. You know if somebody'd done something wrong he'd talk to them and get it straightened up... and get the problem straightened up and go on about your business doing things the way you're supposed to do. And the men respected him a lot for that. They all... well there were many... by Captain Dean but you know he just... he always would talk in such a manner that you knew where he was coming from. You knew he was right... nothing was made up, and it's just you're treated like an adult and like you want to be treated. And his men always tried to do right. It was like me and my children. My children, when they do something right, man they call me up... guess what... I got an award. Guess what you know... And I work to call them up. Captain, guess what, the guy we came out... the guy that we're looking for... solved the case. I just loved to call him up and tell him that. And why is

just because that was a relationship. I tried to please him. I tried to please him. I had a case one time... I was working a murder case and when the murder was solved... I mean during the murder case there was another murder... a policeman, a sheriff's deputy was killed in Atascosa County. His name was Sammy Childress. He was killed by, at that time nobody knew who did but he was a uniformed officer. He was taken, abducted, killed and they did a bank robbery and killed him. They abducted him, took his car, did a bank robbery in the patrol car... then killed him in the trunk of his car. Well I was working another murder case when that happened. I broke off about half a day to try to look for them and then I had that obligation to finish that murder case. And when I did, I came back and about three days... about a week after that I came back. Captain said when are you gonna get on that Sammy Childress murder case... the one in Wilson County. Well he asked me if I'd finished the one in Winkler and I said I had. He said when are you gonna get on that one? I said well Captain, I'm not too anxious. He said why? I said because there's... there were 19 people assigned to it from the FBI. I later found out the FBI had a bank robbery, murder case, bank robbery... FBI, they just flood them with men. Anyway, I'd heard there were 19 officers assigned to that case and they'd been working it like a week and a half or so and hadn't done any good with it. And he said well you need to get on it. That's all he had to say, right? You need to get on it. Well I got on it and about a week later I was able to find out who he was through a fingerprint. What happened, these fellows went and got some bags from HEB and they drove around in their car and they touched these bags. Well when they went into the bank, they threw the HEB bags in and said fill them up. They put money in one of them and they gave it back to the bad guys but they didn't fill up that second one and that was left as evidence and there were fingerprints on that. But fingerprints back then was not like they are

now. Now you can run them through a computer and they'll tell you who they are. Back then, if you had a fingerprint you had to get the suspect and then check his prints to the latent prints that were left at the scene. So the day that... I say the day that it came about, you know, I found out... I thought I found out who the suspect was. I go to the police department who had the prints and I said would you mind checking this guy's prints against the fingerprint you have on that HEB sack. So the detective down there... the detective went over there and he went through all the files and he picked up the guy's fingerprint and he started walking back to his desk and he looked at them and he said this is the guy. I said how do you know? He said because I've been comparing all these fingerprints to it and I've seen his fingerprints a million... I've been seeing it for hours now so I know which one it is. So he sat down and boom, it was him. So I called the Captain... first thing I do. Captain, guess what, I said I got a match on that fingerprint. And he said well that's good. He says ... when did you figure it out? Just now... and I said you're the first to know. He said does the FBI know and I said no, you're the first to know. And he said OK. And you know I'd call him up and it was such a pleasure to call him up. DEA came in there... no U.S. Marshalls came in there one time looking for a fellow. I was in my office and I saw them come in. They were in the next office talking to the Captain and after it was over, Captain comes in my office and hands me a flyer... Wanted by the U.S. Marshalls... I'll think of his name in a minute. Anyway, he gave me the flyer and he said handle it. You know that's all he said, handle it. What's there to say? The guy is wanted, right? He's got his name out there. So I went through it and about a week later, I arrested him at his house. And it was kind of funny on that because when I pulled into his house, I saw a side door opening and I could see when that door opened I saw a footstep coming down... I saw a footstep coming down. By the time it

closed, he was out of sight so I went around the house and the guy was kind of looking back and I was on his back side. And I said hold it right there, Jesse. And he said I'm not Jesse. And I said... he had a tattoo that had Jesse on his arm. Well it says Jesse on your arm right there. He said , I guess you got me. So I handcuffed him and I called the captain and I said you know that guy that the U.S. Marshall is looking for, I said I got him and I'm heading to the office. I got him. He said OK, he said bring him to the office. So then the captain would call and he'd say my men got him (*laughter*). I'm sure something like that happened. But you know, he liked to that and that was his... They came to him for help to assign a man to it and it was my job... and he gave me the assignment and I got him. So you he looks good that his men are doing good and I looked good in the Captain's eyes. That's the only one I needed to impress is the captain, right? So anyway, but... you know I just... I always tried to impress him. And as long as I'm doing my job and he's impressed, nobody else has to know anything because I feel good about doing my job.

NANCY RAY: Did you get your cases through your captain or how else did you get them?

AL CUELLAR: Well, in San Antonio, it's... you get it two... many ways really but you know at the company headquarters... San Antonio is the company headquarters. So a lot of people would call and if it's in this area, I mean they would call the captain... his office and my office were next to each other so it was pretty easy for him to just walk out of his office and hand me a little yellow piece of paper with a name and a phone number and say handle it. And that's what I'd do. But the way we get our cases is that you try to work with these other agencies. And if you have a good relationship with them and if you're successful, they'll call you. the more successful you are, the more they'll call you because it... and you try not to steal any credit from anybody.

If a police department calls you, you go over there and whoever is the detective is that called you... it's not usually the chief who says assign a man over here. It's on a one-to-one... you know the detectives and they say we got a murder case here last night, would you mind coming over and helping us? OK, I'll be right over.

NANCY RAY: Were murders... or those... did you work a majority of cases being murder cases or what did you have?

AL CUELLAR: San Antonio had a big variety. I worked a lot of forgery cases at some time. I had a good friend at the police department that was a forgery detective. I worked a lot of forgery cases with him. then I had a good relationship with... with the District Attorney's office and they would call on anything that was a little bit out of the ordinary. And then I had a relationship with all the municipalities out here. There's like 21 municipalities in Bexar County. And then Bandera and all the surrounding counties so anything that happened in the surrounding counties had some bearing to San Antonio. No matter what happens in Bandera, the stolen property winds up in a pawn shop over here or they come over here and there's always... whatever happens in surrounding counties usually has something to do in San Antonio. And I took a lot of pride in saying if somebody calls San Antonio looking for help for a fugitive, that I would drop what I was doing and I'd help them. And I mean... you'd be there in the office, anytime of the day, 4 or 5 o'clock sometimes, and a detective or a sheriff's deputy from a surrounding county would walk in, just walk in. How's it going? Fine. What are you doing? Well, I'm looking for this fellow, can you help me? Yeah. I knew San Antonio pretty well. There wasn't anybody in San Antonio that could hide very long from me. I knew a lot of the policeman. I could get help from the policemen. If it's somebody on the south side, I'd go see a fellow named Harwell, a policeman

named Harwell. Harwell, do you know where this guy is? Yeah, his daddy's so-and-so and his mother... he runs around over here and he's got a little blue Jeep. Well let's go get him, there's a warrant for him. You know when you'd go the west side there were officers that worked the west side... knew everybody on the west side. There were guys on the east side. And then there were some substations on the north side that you'd go in there and these guys knew everything. Even though San Antonio is a big town, it's kind of divided up and you know people in different parts of town. A city this big, you come up with a name and you could walk into let's say the police department at the Prue Road Substation. Say I've got a warrant for... you mention a name... does anybody know where he's at? Saw him last night... I know where he's at. He's running with so-and-so. Even though it's a big town, the crooks are all the same. The crooks are the same. You know it's 20 percent of the population that are crooks doing 100 percent of the crime... a few people doing a lot of the crime. And some people just you know repeat over and over again.

NANCY RAY: Did you ever have any hostage situations? Or do negotiations or...

AL CUELLAR: I never did any of that. In fact that wasn't even thought of back then. Well, yes they did but SWAT teams were just getting formed around San Antonio. Most of the... if you had to serve a warrant, just an officer and a policeman went out there. Towards the end, if there was a serious warrant and if you asked for the police to help, they'd want to send a SWAT team over there. Or they had... they had a name for it for those that break in a house to get people. There's more of that being done but ... and officers from all over the state... people from San Antonio go everywhere to commit their crimes and come back. And then you get calls from all over the state looking for somebody in San Antonio and they call the Ranger office. And I have a

very good batting average. I don't think anybody ever came here and I didn't catch them at all, I mean ever got away with it. We had trouble with some of them, maybe a week or two, but we got them all... got them all.

NANCY RAY: Well what case did you work on that you felt really, really good about... you solved it or something and you just really felt good about that? I know you felt that way about all of them but is there one that stands out?

AL CUELLAR: There are two or three that fall into about the same category. Rangers have a... have a particular need for Rangers because there're good people in the state of Texas. And there're people that aren't so good. But you know that like if you check certain parts of town in San Antonio, you'll find people that called the police last year 10, 20, 30 times... always using the service of police. And they're having squabbles and fights and... and the police department is concentrating all their efforts on all these people that are doing the very same thing over and over again. And a small percentage of the people require a big percentage of the service. But every once in a while, you'll find a person that has paid his taxes, that has done everything right, and you know just absolutely a great citizen and then something bad happens to them. For example, their daughter goes to the mall and doesn't come back. And then when they call and you think about... now these are the people that need the Rangers help... need the best and the most and attentive and will stay with them and get that job done. Because these are the people that have never asked of anything of the state and yet... so that when you have a victim like that, you just... you just work day and night because they deserve that help. They're the people that really need the help and they're the people that ask the least of you... but at this time need a lot of help. So there's where I think Rangers always try. I would... I'd bend over backwards to help those

people. Now these people that are squabbling and fighting, you're not gonna resolve anything. Tomorrow there're gonna be doing the same thing. So these poor people that something bad happened in their life, you work real hard for those victims. So I can think of a... offhand I'm thinking of three. This one that I mentioned... the poor little girl. You know to this day I don't know her name. I worked the case up and she wound up calling the Rangers' office by mistake and got a hold of me and I asked the question... could she have run away... because she hadn't come back. And she pursued to I mean... (*laughter*) started to chew me out pretty bad. And I'm thinking I've seen this happen before and I know when people know when a child would run away. And their child didn't run away. Well the poor girl went to the mall, minding her own business, and a guy that had been out of the pen not long found a gun. He was hitchhiking and he told me the story. And so he got a gun and he took this poor girl and took her to Houston. And by the grace of God, she got out, escaped, and called the police over there. And I talked to the police over here and they said... I said I got the story right. She said well... she was at the mall and some guy abducted her and took her to Houston and for some reason he let her out. And I talked to a policeman and I said are you gonna enter the car as stolen or am I? He said well let me do it. So the next morning at 6 o'clock I get up and I check to see if the car is entered stolen and I said it's not. the girl came back safe and so I called my dispatcher at 6 o'clock in the morning and I said enter this car stolen... there's a wanted person inside and we don't know who he is but he's a wanted person. The car was taken in a robbery... kidnap and robbery. And so I get ready and go on to work and I'm on my way to work, like between 6 and 7:15 and the dispatcher calls me and says the car you entered stolen this morning, they have a suspect in custody in Beaumont. And he was a pretty bad character and luckily this girl was not harmed. But you know I thought

to myself, this girl didn't do nothing wrong. You know... I didn't work... that didn't take a whole lot of effort on my part but I would have done anything to help her. Then when she came in and I saw the girl, an innocent little young lady who was just as innocent as could be about everything... and we brought the guy in and he was such a bad guy. He was hitchhiking in California and the police were pulling over a car and right before the car stopped, he said these guys threw a gun out the window. The police didn't see it but he did and then when the police left, he went over there and picked that gun up and that's what he used to rob the poor girl. We got the note that said pull over, I've got a gun. We got the note back and he confessed to it all. But that's the type person that you really want to help. I had another one... this may be a long story, I don't know if it's even worth going into.

NANCY RAY: It's up to you. Tell us what you want.

AL CUELLAR: Well, I think of her every year when they bring out the phone books because she was 17 years old. She graduated from high school, maybe 18, graduated from high school and she was gonna start college. And they start college in September and that's when the books come out. And the guy delivered the phone book to her house... well they have an ad in the newspaper. If you want to deliver phone books you come over here to the warehouse. They load you up and they pay you by the hour. They don't do no checking or nothing. And they're supposed to leave them outside. Well he knocked... I guess, I'm not sure, but he wound up going to her house. The phone book was inside her house, the new phone book was inside her house. And she was missing and was missing for about three days and then they found her body floating in the tank, a pond, in her backyard. And the sheriff's office handled it like a runaway for about three days and then when they found the body... they didn't do any good at all. When they...

everybody started saying the only thing different is the phone books are here. So they found out who the guy had the phone books and he was a character... a bad, bad person. They didn't do anything right then when they had him so the case went unsolved. And then rumors started that the man was the one that killed his daughter. Now how worse can that be? You lose your daughter and then the sheriff's office is saying that... and the rumors are going out that the sheriff's office said that the daddy is the one that killed his daughter. So... and these are great people, these are just you know good people, decent people. And so anyway, I went to work on that case. I didn't solve the murder case but I made so many cases on him that he's doing a murder sentence. He's doing an 80-year sentence, a 60-year sentence, a 40-year sentence, and a 20-year sentence. I stacked them on him and he admitted it to me. He admitted to me that he did it but he was in custody and he wouldn't give a written statement. And so I'm positive about that. And I told the family that too and it was all cleared up you know. But he went through an ordeal. The family went through an ordeal. In fact, they divorced after that and I just know that the ordeal was a part of it. You know if a family loses... a man and woman may be bonded for many, many reasons but when they lose a child, you know that bond is like what are you living for? So maybe they... I don't know. It's none of my business but I know they broke up and I know having this trauma they went through and then all the neighbors and the sheriff's office and they announced it on the radio that he was a suspect and both of them just great people. But I did resolve it and he knows it got resolved right. And I worked with that family a lot. We searched the guy's car. I took the family with me to search his property and trying to find evidence. There was no DNA back then but there was nothing... I'm thinking maybe there's DNA now that could help solve that crime but I was very glad to have helped those people. And

the other case that I think about... there was also... You know there were several incidences but these are the ones that come to mind. And it was not far from where I lived. A lady that was 67 years old and her husband was 73 and he was bedridden and he had the beginning of Alzheimer's but bedridden also. And somebody come in their house and killed that poor lady and sexually assaulted her with the man inside the bedroom but he can't even get out of bed. And it wasn't until three days later, the daughter kept calling and wouldn't answer and finally she goes up there and she finds her mother sprawled on the floor with her throat cut and the dog still there jumping all around it and her daddy in bed and hasn't been changed in three days. And the sheriff's office messed that case up. I hate to say it but it got messed up pretty bad... really bad. And they made accusations that the man did it again and I worked on that case and got a real good suspect on it. The suspect... DNA was coming into play and when I retired, the probability that it was the person that I thought was the suspect that I named and drew blood from and was a million to one. And I said well that's the population of San Antonio... the metropolis of San Antonio and a million to one and it happened to be the neighbor. I said those are pretty good odds but the DA wouldn't take the case. And I retired and I talked to John Martin, the Ranger that replaced me or took my place, and I told him John, you've gotta continue on this thing. See what we can do. And we talked about the suspect and the whole case. Well DNA began improving just right after that and so they did more of the same tests on DNA. And it got to the point that it was twice the world's population to one that it was him so the odds were it was him and the DA accepted the case. And when they arrested him, the wife came in and said that she knew all about it and she admitted and gave a real good statement. Well the guy pled guilty for a life sentence in place of a capital murder... do away with capital murder. It was all right with me.

But the case was resolved and that went on for about five years, this whole story I'm telling you. It took about five years to resolve. Meanwhile, the victim, or both the victim's daughter and son which are fine, fine people, great people... the daughter worked for the phone company. She was a single girl. And the son was an engineer and a professor at the University of Texas... a very smart guy. And I talked with him on a daily basis as we were progressing through the case. He was very grateful to know that somebody had taken the case over that was... that told the truth when they were asked questions and kept them updated and the updates were consistent with his beliefs because he always knew his daddy didn't do it... and the sheriff's office said the daddy is the one that did it. In fact, they had to get a lawyer to represent the daddy because they thought he was gonna be charged. But the man was very grateful for the work I did and... and he was very aware of the poor quality of the work that was done. And so he went to Bruce Casteel, the senior Ranger captain at that time, and said that he was glad that somebody had solved the case, an old cold case at that. And that was me he was talking about. And somehow they come up with the idea that maybe we ought to assign more officers to work cold cases and this victim was very... well he tried to pursue that avenue and I think he even testified before legislature. And because of both Bruce and that fellow and myself, that there was a need to solve these cold cases. And they added more Rangers to the... they added about 15 more and assigned them to the Cold Case Squad. So you know for that reason they have a Cold Case Squad because somebody said there was a need for it based on the work I did. This story I was telling you about, they featured it on A&E and it comes out several times on the "Cold Cases" or "Unsolved Crimes" and stuff like that. But then again, it was one of them deals where you just do your best to help victims. And that's what Rangers are for. A lot of people don't know what Rangers are for. What are

Rangers for? What do Rangers do? Well they pick up a slack from law enforcement all over the country and it's a slack... there's quite a bit of slack out there I'll tell you. There are some places where law enforcement really is not functioning properly. And it's not because they're... it's a little bit of a training, it's a little bit of not much happens in the area that way and they don't have any experience... and a lot of little factors add up to the fact that the quality of their work is not what I think it should be. Yet the victims and the citizens of their counties are just as good as anybody... deserve the same kind of assistance or service from their tax dollars as anyone else. If you pay state taxes in San Antonio or state taxes in Utopia, a little small community out here, and a crime happens over there, they're entitled to the same kind of service as anybody else. And so you know there's where the Rangers come in. And they shine in a lot of instances. We have some of the hardest working officers, devoted to their jobs like you can't imagine. And that's what I like about the Rangers. They're... they're very devoted to the job and they get good. Some of them get good. They like... Glenn Elliott told me something a long time ago. He said you don't solve crimes just by looking in a magic crystal ball. You solve crimes by talking to people. And I took that at heart and I learned how to talk to people and how to get people to confess. It's almost funny when you'll work a case and these people do something horrible like kill people, burn houses, whatever they do and then you go in there and you talk with them and they give it up. And they tell you so you walk out of the interrogation room and you'll see somebody there and they say what happened? You say he gave it up... I mean he's the one who did it. They say he told you? How did you get him to tell? I used to kind of go into details but now I got tired of that question because I just say I'm good. And really...

NANCY RAY: It's a skill you learned.

AL CUELLAR: That's... that's the job that you're supposed to do is to get people to tell you the truth. And if you practice at it and you'll remember the little techniques, you'll go real far. As an example, one of my favorite lines was "things just got out of hand, didn't they?" And when people are just about to tell you, and they want to tell you and they're afraid to open up and tell you that... I did it is so hard to say... yes, I did it. But if the situation calls for it and lots of times it's the truth... things just got out of hand, didn't they? And it's pretty easy to say yeah, they got out of hand because they did get out of hand. And once they tell you they got out of hand, you've got it made. The rest is coming. But there's all little techniques that... when you see somebody and I don't know why... it's human nature... I don't know if it's in their genetics or... when somebody's about to tell you and they're real remorseful about what they've done, they'll look down and they'll start scraping the lint off their pants and when they start to look down and knocking the lint off their pants, rubbing their knees... doing something like that, you know it's coming. Just hang in there a little bit more, a little bit more... they're about to tell you. You just look for that one button and that one button may be "things got out of hand" or something like that. But... and then what's strange is, officers that have been around a long time say well what a dummy, he told you about it. (*laughter*)... I can't believe he told you about it... he admitted that? And I said yeah. I can't believe it. Well, you just gotta know how to do it. And for somebody to ask that really puts them in another category as an investigator because it's something that they're way behind the eight ball as far as being good policemen as far as interrogation. Because if you talk to another guy that's a good interrogator, he'll say something... finally broke, good, glad you did it, finally broke, didn't he? Yeah. He was there, I could tell, I was watching... he was coming there... well I didn't think he was going to the way

he started out... yeah... There are some many techniques and that's what I loved the most is breaking people. This friend of mine, he... I've known him since he was a young police officer here. And I guided him a lot when he was growing up and working cases. And now I come to him. He's a Highway Patrolman but he's a very smart man. His name is James Scoggins... I hope he's a Ranger someday. But he's... I worked with him a lot. He laughs at how things transpire. He says I'll be with Al one day and we'll knock on a door and we'll be asking... somebody will come to the door and they'll open it about that far (*he made a motion*) and I'll ask may I speak to your son, is he here? No, he's not here. And he says fast forward a few minutes and he says Al's in there... (*laughter*) Al's on the kitchen table eating Mexican bread, drinking coffee, and she's telling us all about her son and where he's gonna be and everything is OK. But there's techniques. You know that if you tip your hat to the ladies, especially the old ladies, you disarm them. Some older women from San Antonio and maybe Mexican people, you know Spanish-American people, they... they think they're gonna get a raw deal. I don't know what the deal... They're a little leery when the Ranger comes to them. but I've noticed that if you tip your hat to an older person or somebody your age or older, to a lady, and you introduce yourself with your hat in your hand and you're talking with them, it ain't long when they're gonna say there's something sincere about this man... and I think I can trust him... and I'm gonna tell him what he needs to know. And it's not a con game because I'm never there to take somebody. I've conducted my business above board all the time... cards on the table. I tell people that. I say no matter what we do here today, we're gonna be fair. And if you leave from here, you're gonna find out that Al told you the truth. And if somebody said different, you can tell them it's a lie. If somebody tells that, you can tell them it's a lie because what I tell you today is good tomorrow,

next year, ten years from now what I've told you is still gonna be the same. I'm not gonna go back on my word. And ... it goes a long way in getting crimes solved... just talking to people right, treating them right. Just like you would want to be treated and especially when it's family... golly. It's hard... family sticks together and it's hard for somebody to tell you that yeah, my son is the one that stole that car or did that crime or... So when you talk to people, you have to realize where they're coming from, where they stand on that. Anyway, I thought I had that down pretty good. I felt I was pretty good at it and I still feel proud of it. And I hope someday my son... my son is picking up on a lot of that right now... I can tell you that right now.

NANCY RAY: I can tell you're proud of your son. Let me ask you... some of the other responsibilities of a Ranger would be to drive the governor or the president or somebody if they were here. Did you ever do that?

AL CUELLAR: I did a lot of it. I chauffeured ... the first governor I chauffeured was Briscoe, Dolph Briscoe. I can't remember the order now. I think Mark White, Bill Clements, Ann Richards, and Bush.

NANCY RAY: All right, you had quite a few then.

AL CUELLAR: Yes I did. And I had real pleasant experiences with all of them. I really did... I really enjoyed them all. Mark White was one of my favorites and Bush was one of my favorites. Dolph Briscoe, I didn't have much time with him but he's a nice guy. He was a real gentleman. And Mark White... he was... I almost consider him a friend. And Bill Clements was all business and there was very little socializing. There was no socializing with Bill Clements. And Ann Richards was a very nice lady. She had a lot of people with her all the time and they were all real

friendly. And after her business, they'd say Cuellar, let's go eat somewhere... pick a place for us. And you know I'd call a restaurant and I'd say I'm gonna be down there... can you clear a table I'm gonna be down there with Ann Richards, the governor... You're kidding me! No, I'm serious... you're kidding. *(laughter)* Listen, I'm gonna be there in a few minutes... you know they couldn't believe it. But sometimes I'd make reservations for them you know I did that ahead of time when they didn't know. But lots of times they had their agenda and they knew exactly where they were going but there were a few instances where I'd pick places for them to go. And Mark White liked the La Fagada... one in particular. Bill Clements was business he didn't ... I don't recall him ever going out to eat anywhere when he was through with business. He was very, very professional but we had a good time. I enjoyed it.

NANCY RAY: What did you like least about being a Ranger? Is there anything?

AL CUELLAR: You know, I've never been asked that question. ... sorry, Nancy.

NANCY RAY: That's all right... that's good.

AL CUELLAR: I can't think of anything.

NANCY RAY: Well what did you like most about being a Ranger?

AL CUELLAR: I think the job. The job... I like helping people and I still like to help people. And if you have the right situations you know where everything is working good... you've got good captains, you've got good partners you know... it's just a pleasure to go to work the next day. It was no problem. I never dreaded going to work. It was always a pleasant experience to go to work.

NANCY RAY: When you went to work and you've told us some of the people were the nicest they could be and others were the sorriest. So how did you go to work and deal with the sorry ones and then still come home to your family... how did you separate that?

AL CUELLAR: You just kind of have to... you really have to forget about it. You can't forget about the misery that the victims go through but... you know I guess it's almost a game. I'm gonna beat, I'm gonna win. If you want to be mean and you want to be bad and you want to hurt people, but we're gonna bring it to an end. We're bringing it to an end. That's... you're not gonna do that no more.

NANCY RAY: Well what... think back through your career and think of the thing... what is the thing that made you the proudest? Maybe nobody even knows it today but what thing made you feel really, really good about something you had done or accomplished... your proudest day.

AL CUELLAR: The proudest day... I had a lot of proud days. It even started when I was a Highway Patrolman. When I was a Highway Patrolman and I went home at the end of the night shift and I'd taken somebody off the road that I knew was gonna have a wreck... hurt himself or somebody within the next minute... I mean there were times you would see somebody and he was going from "bar" ditch to "bar" ditch and if you don't stop him right away... I mean it was like you can't let it go another minute... he's gonna hit someone... any minute he's gonna meet somebody head-on. And so when you take somebody like that off the road, although it was a situation where you couldn't say I saved someone's life, but you knew you were being paid for it. You knew that was your job and you took somebody off the road. I used to go to bed, come home at night and think man, I'm sure glad I got him. I saw probably one of the saddest situations and I hope I don't break down. But it was definitely one of the most sad (*emotional*)

moment). I was working Highway Patrol and in Kilgore they have... what they have is Kilgore Rangerettes. And then the Rangerettes on their... Spring, they put on what they call Rangerette Follies or something like that.

NANCY RAY: Rangerette Revels.

AL CUELLAR: That's right. And the girls put on a play and the play goes on like Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. (*emotional moment*). This girl had ... it was Friday and on Friday... the show goes on for like three days... I'm not sure. And on Friday or Saturday, I'm not sure, they have the last one. And then afterwards, they have a little get together and drink punch and they celebrate that... it's like the final act play... it's all over. And so this girl is leaving... has done that... and she's leaving and she's going back to Longview, her and two of these Rangerette girls... 18 years old, 17, 18, 19 years old and they're going back from a big high they'd just finished and they'd celebrated... and they've got a name for it. And a drunk driver on the wrong side of the road hits them head-on. And I get there very early in the accident and I remembered when the ambulance got there... I knew who the drunk driver was and the ambulance drive was looking for him. I said leave him alone. Get these girls out of here. One of them was dead and one of them was about to die... was very bad. She was crumpled in the car and she was actually crumpled in the floorboard underneath the seat. How it happened, I don't know. Well they managed to get her out and she's bad, bad hurt. And they take her down... they don't the EMS like they do now. They took her to Longview and I go along. And after it's all over and gather things up and I go to the hospital and I parked right there at Good Shepherd Hospital in the back... and I go inside and I say how is she doing? She'd passed away. So I knew I've got my car parked in a bad spot so I said I'm gonna go back out and I'm gonna move my car out of the

driveway. And this car comes running in. And as it stops, the door opens, a lady jumps out and takes about three steps and comes out of her shoes... and she says how is my daughter doing? I'd just been informed a minute... I mean... you could see in her eyes. Her eyes are big and her nostrils are almost flaring out because she can't get enough air and she wants to know how her daughter is doing. I didn't have the courage to tell her. I said come on in the hospital, come on in and let's see what we can do and I escorted her in. And I said this is the mother. And there was already a preacher there, what do they call them... a chaplain was there and he took her out of sight. But when she got out of her car and come up to me, I'll never forget that. I can tell you... she opened the door, the car was still moving. She wanted to know. And I'm thinking this poor family... from the top feeling so good about that day ... *clap*... to the end... this. So these are the victims I like to work for.

NANCY RAY: (*short pause to change discs*) There is no way we can capture everything about your career in this short time. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us before we wrap up?

AL CUELLAR: You know I'd say this. I was fortunate enough to work with some of the nicest guys, hardest-working officers I've ever known. I was fortunate to be a part of this organization. You know it's... it changes your life knowing you're a Ranger. It changes life... the way you have to conduct yourself as a Ranger because you don't want to disappoint the Rangers. It's got a stellar reputation and you just have to... it's easy for me. I don't have to watch what I do. It's simple for me. But it's just something that I was real grateful to be a part of it. I had a part of it because people helped me like I said earlier. Somebody helped me and I'm grateful to those people that helped me. And I try to help others get in and I have. I'll always speak highly of the

Rangers. There's not any part of the Rangers that's disappointing. It's a good group. I hope it stays a good group. I hope it continues to work hard and that's their secret. They need to continue working hard... finding people that work... Finding people that look good... Finding people that... You know it all comes down to work. You've gotta knock on doors, talk to people, and never give up. You never know when that... you're gonna unravel this thing one way or the other and you don't know where that little thread is gonna be. So if you continue having those kinds of people and the leaders that they've had, they've had some great leaders that know how to lead men in the right direction and motivate them. So you know I'm just saying I'm grateful I was part of that organization. Actually to have... to say by my name I have a title that says Texas in it, and that's my title. I was a Texas Ranger. And if Texas is in your title and a Ranger, it don't get no better than that for being a citizen of Texas. I'm proud of being a Texan. I'm proud of being... was proud being a Ranger. You know I sure hope my son comes on and does... I know he's a hard worker and he's gonna try hard. I don't know if it will come about but he wants it and I want it for him. And I'm very concerned about his safety right now as a Highway Patrolman. I worry about it a lot but... I've had good support from Mary. Mary raised those kids and she allowed my career to go well. She didn't... she made it easy for me. She made it easy for me to dedicate myself to those long hours that I did work. So you know I'm grateful to her. My family is very proud of me, all my kids. My brothers, my sisters... they're proud of me to reach as far as I'm concerned the pinnacle of law enforcement. It's the top.

NANCY RAY: I show you retired August 31st, 1996, is that right?

AL CUELLAR: That's right, August 31st. That's been almost 13 years now.

NANCY RAY: That's hard to believe, isn't it?

AL CUELLAR: Yes.

NANCY RAY: So what did you do after you retired?

AL CUELLAR: I went to work for Griffin Industries and been with them for 13 years and they've been really good to me. It is a real good company. They have great moral ethics and they do things right legally, morally, and ethically. And I wouldn't work for anybody but like that, unless they're like that. And I try to do them a job... I try to keep things in line and keep the thieves out of their pocketbook... that's what I do for Griffin Industries.

NANCY RAY: I bet you do it well.

AL CUELLAR: Well I try. Thank you.

NANCY RAY: Well I want to thank you for your time today for this interview. And we thank you for your service to the state of Texas too.

AL CUELLAR: well... it's nice to hear that.