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Oral History 483

Cook County Circuit Court Oral History Project
Interview with Judge Ralph Reyna

Abstract

The Interview Process

This interview was conducted as a part of the Cook County Circuit Court Oral History Project. The interview candidate was selected because of his willingness to participate in the project. The team of interviewers was composed of three graduate students from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. The students met prior to the interview and prepared an outline of questions covering a range of topics including the interviewee's educational background, legal and judicial experiences, ethnic background, and lessons learned. These questions were not shared with the interviewee prior to the interview. The interview itself was conducted on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at the Daley Center in Chicago and was audio recorded. It became unnecessary to include several of the prepared questions as the interviewee provided information regarding these in his responses. In addition to discussion on the topics mentioned above, the judge also provided information concerning his unique experience as the third Latino judge to preside over the Cook County Circuit Court.

The Transcription and Editing Process

The audio recording of the interview was divided into three parts. Each of the students on the interview team selected a section. These sections were then transcribed verbatim. After further discussion by the team of interviewers, it was decided that certain minor adjustments be made for clarification of the content. Primarily, this meant that repeated words were omitted. Also, verbal sounds such as 'uh' and 'um' were removed throughout the transcript. It was desired, however, to preserve the interviewee's personal style. This necessitated maintaining certain words or phrases in the transcript. Most notably, this refers to the phrase "you know" which appears repeatedly throughout. This interviewee also had a habit of emphasizing certain points by physically rapping his knuckles on the table top. The knocking is noted in italics surrounded by brackets when it occurred during the interview. Other actions that took place during the interview which the interviewers felt necessary to include appear the same way in the transcript.

Once completed, the audio recording of the interview, the transcript, and all other attendant documentation were turned in to the faculty of Loyola University.

Cook County Circuit Court Oral History Project
Interview with Judge Ralph Reyna
Saturday, October 13, 2007
Daley Center

[Audio Begins 10/13/2007, 10:23 AM]

Jonathan Sebastian: All right it's Saturday October thirteenth. We're at the Daley Center. This is an interview with Judge Ralph Reyna. My name is Jonathan Sebastian there is Sandra Campos and Yolanda Jaramillo in the group from Loyola University conducting this interview. Just to begin with we were wondering are you a native of Chicago?

00:31

Judge Ralph Reyna: Born and raised in Chicago.

[Pause]

Sebastian: And in which neighborhood, I'm sorry.

00:43

Reyna: I grew up in the Pilsen area around 18th and Ashland. I went to grammar school both elementary school and high school in that area then I received an academic scholarship to Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin. After graduating from there, I worked for five years and when I worked, I worked for IBM and then State Farm. At State Farm I was a claims adjuster and for both bodily injury and damage to your automobile so I had to talk to lawyers because people who were in accidents thought they were hurt. They went to an attorney and so I had to deal with the attorney to see if I could settle the case before they filed a lawsuit. Being Mexican-American and coming up from Pilsen which is - I don't know if you know the area of Pilsen it's not the most, the highest level of economics in the city. I always thought that an attorney was something I could never be, but I was a good student. I did well in high school received an academic scholarship. I did well in college and had over a B average. But then I thought well let me get a job now so I worked for IBM then I worked for State Farm. And I started talking to these attorneys and I said if this guy could be an attorney I can be an attorney.

All: [Laughter]

02:48

Reyna: So, I, at that time - this was - I graduated in '61 from high school and in '65 from college. Let's see, I worked five years. And then at this time, the number of Latino students in law school minimal - I mean like I think the average at that time the average enrollment, or the average at the moment or student body in law school was I want say three hundred four hundred in each law school. That wasn't that many and out of that if there was, if there was three or four Latino students that was a lot mostly there was one or

two. So, I applied and I found out for lack of a better word of an activist in the education field and someone told me about him and so he said, "Apply to different schools." But even before that I had a cousin who was at Indiana University. She was kind of an activist at the Latino campus or the Latino group on that campus in Bloomington. And I said, "Well listen I want to go to law school, is there any way you, you're doing all this activity here can any way you can get me a scholarship to Indiana University School of Law" and she's getting me in to school, cause at that time I'm still thinking I can't get into school maybe they won't even admit me. And she said, "Well you know what, I have a good friend at Notre Dame University." And there was this woman from Notre Dame University and what - I forgot her name but she was from Phoenix and she had - she was a big activist in Phoenix and she just had a high school degree but she was really big in Phoenix area and Father [Theodore] Hesburgh, you know Father Hesburgh? He used to be the chancellor of Notre Dame University of the entire, all the schools the law school, the business school, the undergraduate schools, the graduate schools. Anyways, so he told her, "So listen you do a lot of talking you do a lot of good things but you don't have education." He said, "Come to Notre Dame and I'll put you directly into law school without an undergraduate degree." So when I met her, she was in her senior year there at Notre Dame Law School. So she talked to me, interviewed me, said, "Well I'll get back to you" so she got back to me. She got the school to offer me a scholarship, a tuition scholarship for law school. Not only was I accepted, but I got a scholarship so I said, "Well that's, that's good that sounds real good."

Sebastian: Yeah.

05:59

Reyna: So but then I talked to this friend and he said, "Well why don't you try Northwestern, you know, they got a program there where they want a number of minority students." So I said, "That's fine - I'll - you know Northwestern's one of the top schools-law schools in the nation so no harm in trying as they say." So I applied and they accepted eleven students, ten of them were African-American and one Hispanic was me so I said, "I'm gonna go to Northwestern." It was a better law school, it was in Chicago so [*raps knuckles on table*] I went to Northwestern School of Law, graduated, and became a lawyer. So at that time- at Northwestern Law School there was a professor there when we were seniors that who became the first assistant state's attorney in the State's Attorneys Office of Cook County under the State's Attorney at that time was a Republican named Bernard Kerry and he said, "Do you want to be an Assistant State's attorney at you know for Cook County" and I said, "Sure I'll - you know it doesn't sound bad."

All: [Laughter]

07:23

Reyna: You know you're dealing with police officers and detectives and stuff like that which I was, I wasn't into the civil law firms so I went there and I was an Assistant State's Attorney for ten years. And then I was deciding whether to go into private practice, but then opportunity came available - because I was a little older I had five years

between undergrad and starting law school and then- but then the opportunity came available to become a judge. And so those opportunities don't come every day so I said, "Do I do that or do I go on private practice in the criminal law, you know and defend, be a defense attorney in the criminal area." So I said, "Well" - because I always wanted to be a judge you know I always- because going back to when I was a claims adjustor for State Farm I came to this building- and so when you're a judge- when somebody comes in your courtroom and you- and their not, and their not a party to the case or you wonder what is this person doing in here. I mean judges get very leery. What are they, are they checking up on me? Or you know, am I doing something wrong or what? So I just, "what's your name," you know? And I told 'em my name and she said, "What are you doing here?" "Well I'm a claims adjustor and I been talking to attorneys and I just want to see what the, you know, see what it's like in a court room." "So come up here," so she met me she had me sit down in the witness chair and just sit there and watch you know.

All: [Laughter]

09:05

Reyna: "You know if you got a question just stop, I don't care you know if you interrupt just let me know." She was, she was an Africa-American female judge, I forgot her name but a real nice lady, you know.

All: [Laughter]

Sebastian: Yeah.

Reyna: So I say, "Okay," I went up there and I sat there and I saw the lawyers do the work and then I said, "For sure I could do this."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: But anyway, I lost my train of thought.

Sandra Campos: You were, you were Assistant State's Attorney and then an opportunity for you to...

Reyna: Oh to become a judge. So then I said, "You know what, this is a nice lady, she knows, is this way you run a courtroom, is this the way you become a judge. You know I would like to do it if I could, you know?" But now I was, really thought I was really dreaming you know-

All: [Laughter]

09:56

Reyna: -because I wasn't even in law school yet. You have to dream, set your goals high what the heck, you know. So like I said, I was Assistant State's Attorney and I worked for some some real good judges as Assistants State's Attorney. The three of them mainly

were Judge Richard Fitzgerald - I don't know if you ever heard of him- he was he was a trial judge and then he became the Chief Judge. And there was a judge named Louis Girrippo and he was the one who tried the John Wayne Gacy case.

Yolanda Jaramillo: Oh wow.

10:33

Reyna: Yeah. And then there was a judge named Frank Barbella who was from the Bridgeport area. And they were real commonsense type guys, you know just like Judge Henry, you know - just you know, can talk to anybody, don't hold yourself above anybody. So again there was only one Hispanic judge, okay? So they would want another Hispanic judge so they wanted - as you would want qualified people so I said, "Well I think I'm qualified," you know? So I told the judge you know I says, "You think any chance I could be a judge." He said, "I've heard you say that before but I think you could be a good judge, you know, but I thought you were going out into private practice where you could make a lot of money." I said, "Yeah, but I always wanted to be a judge." So he said, "Well I think they're looking for some but let me see, you know - let me." You ask a judge something- they know more than you- like I said judges tend to be quiet- don't want to- you know don't want everything to be known to others.

All: [Laughter]

11:45

Reyna: But because the legal community- it's a small- it's real small- you don't think it's going to be- how many lawyers are there in this city. But something happens word spreads like wildfire- I mean you just- it's just -it's a real small community so to speak. But anyway, he got back to me and... Let's see they're going to be looking for associate judges and well how they do that is that they put a notice in the law bulletin which is the the lawyers newspapers and they said there's going to be opening for ten associate judges so if you think your qualified fill out an application and so I did. And me and about, what, two hundred and seventy-five others filled out the application. So what they do then is they - you have to be screened by the Chicago Bar Association. At that time that was the only screening body. Now they have what they call the Alliance which is made up of eleven other bar associations, different ethnic bar associations there's the Mexican-American Bar Association, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, the Greek Bar Association, the Women's Association, the Black Women's Bar Association, there's about eleven, but at that time there was only the Chicago Bar Association. So you go up in front of them and you get qualified or not qualified. So out of those - I don't know about two hundred and seventy-five there's, they just knocked out about ten, fifteen and so your still left with over two hundred fifty.

13:27

Reyna: And then you get screened by ten judges which were supervisors of the different departments - head of the criminal division, head of the civil division, head of the divorce division, there was ten. And so you get screened by them and what they do is of the number of judgeships available, in this case it was ten, they find the twenty most

qualified candidates according to them. And I was one of the twenty and so what they do then is they put these twenty names on the ballot and the full circuit court judges like Judge Henry, that's way it says circuit court judge [*pointing to the dais*] if he was associate judge it would say associate judge, ok. So the full circuit judges vote on the- they pick the ten they want or less, ok- some pick five or six.

Sebastian: Right.

14:24

Reyna: Well what you do then as a candidate is you go see every full circuit court judge and you hope he gives you two or three minuets of his time so you could tell him where you are- what you did. And he can look at you and say well this guy or this person- because it could be a female or a male- might be a good judge so [*raps knuckles on table*] I was one of the ten picked. Again, I was- I think I was the only Hispanic in the group.

All: [Laughter]

14:52

Reyna: And, but then you know attempts you know- I won't say there was ...any discrimination or anything but you know you tend to think- I don't know if you know Chicago or if you're from Chicago, but you look, you're looking at a roster of judges and you're going to find eighty percent of them are Irish, okay? And so you're going to live with it and you got to - so I said, "Maybe I can break that barrier," you know?!

All: [Laughter]

15:23

Reyna: So I did- you know I said I was one of the ten and then like I said I went to. Most judges- not all judges- ninety nine percent of judges, they send you to traffic court- and it was funny because I went- we- right at this time if you become a judge they send you to judges' school for a week, ok, to learn different things. At that time- this was now- this was- I became a judge January 9, '84, 1984. And so we went to- we were supposed to be at traffic court - be in your supervisor's office- it was- at that time it was Judge White, Judge Dan White, a real good guy too- and be in his office at eight forty-five. So ok, I was there at like eight thirty okay- me and the other ten judges got there and we heard some rumor about traffic school or judges' school starting up or something. So we go there and so he says, "Ok," and he read your name off. "Here's a manual or whatever of laws traffic laws." So he says, "Ok, you go to Room 101 you go to Room 102" - so, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a second, wait a minute. "What about judges' school or traffic school?" He says "Wait a minute, didn't you put on the application that you could be a judge?" "Yeah." "Well go out and judge."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: Ok.

All: [Laughter]

17:01

Reyna: So I went to my room, you know and... So then if you become a judge - I don't care where you a judge at- your clerk and sheriff those are your prize possessions - don't get them angry with you-

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: -because they can make your day long and hard, okay, and they are your friends they can make it nice and easy. So now I'm going- I went there and I had this clerk her name was Angie Patron who later on- well while she was a clerk, she was like me she saw these guys, you know, these lawyers and she was a clerk but she was in law school. She said, "You know, Judge some of these guys here- I could be a lawyer, too. I'm in law school." Well she was working during the day and going to school at night, okay. And so she became an Assistant State's Attorney, now she's also a judge. And so but anyway I said, "Angie now what? Now what do I do, you got to tell me what to do. So okay, you know just show me the form over substance what's the form? I'll do the judging, I'll decide guilty or not guilty but what paper or how do I?" She says, "Don't worry about it judge here" boom, boom, boom "here's how we do it," you know? So I said, "Ok" so with her, you know- we- I sat there for three months in traffic court. But at that time too what was really interesting was that was the Greylord era. Remember Greylord, you know and... Judge White's supervisor was a guy named Judge LeFevour, you know, and as we say in different areas, "He had to go away to college."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: He got convicted, he had to do some time.

All: [Laughter]

18:42

Reyna: So, but then there was lawyers doing funny things with judges, you know, and so it was great for new judges like me because everybody didn't know me - said, "Who is this guy? Is he is he going to, is he watching everything, too? Does he have a wire on, too? Is he going to report us or," you know? So nobody approached with any funny stuff on me - so it was great - all I had to was just judge and don't worry about, you know, people coming up to you - clerks coming to you, "Hey maybe you can help this guy or something like that" and I said, "I don't need none of that." So in a way that was good because you could just get up there and nobody would bother you- you just do you your job but that was it, you know, which was in a sense was good.

19:27

Reyna: Anyways, so I was there for three months almost three- judge also- and then because I had- I was a prosecutor and did felony cases- murders, armed robberies, rapes, all that- even as an associate they gave us felony jurisdiction- what they call- so you can

hear felony cases- so we went to the municipal courtroom. There's, which is the courtrooms in the - there's courtrooms in the police stations, ok? Where they hear the preliminary hearings on different felony charges and if you got felony jurisdiction you could hear those - but other judges who did civil work they stayed in this building and it went to their civil type courtroom. But I went out there- and you would go to- there's a courtroom at Harrison and Kedzie, 51st and Wentworth, Belmont and Western, Grand and Central- the different preliminary courtrooms- so you go out there and you would get assigned there for a week, two weeks and then- because then they were switching judges, too, because Greylord they want to make sure nobody gets comfortable, you know what I mean? And they would change the clerks again- so again for the same reason. So that was fine- you just carry your plaque and your- I mean your name plate and your law books and just go- and your robe- and just go from place to place that they assign you.

20:59

Reyna: And then, I at that time, I lived in Skokie- not Skokie- Evanston, excuse me, and I got assigned to Skokie courthouse which is- there on- near Old Orchard, which is near the expressway and Skokie Boulevard out in that area- so I was there and then... I was there- I don't know, maybe a year, year and a half and then the spot became available at 26th Street. And now Judge Richard Fitzgerald who I clerked for when I was a law student- I clerked for the Assistant State's Attorney who were assigned to his courtroom and now he was the head of the criminal courts division, he was the chief judge there. So again they needed a Hispanic- but now more at that time- when I was a law clerk there - now each courtroom has about four hundred cases, ok? And when I was a law clerk there- out of those four hundred cases only five were Hispanic defendants, okay, but now you see- now the population of the Chicago area is going to be- it's almost half and its going to be the majority pretty soon-

Sebastian: Right.

22:24

Reyna: -Ok? So of course with that you're going to have more criminal defendants who are Hispanic- they started getting in more and more and more and they said, "Well we need a Hispanic judge out here." They wanted Hispanic judges in all of in all divisions, but especially out there. So they said, "Do you want to come out here" you know? Because lot a people don't want to go- don't want to be at 26th Street. I don't know if you ever been there as- you probably would be there as a juror- if you were a juror that's how you would probably get there, you know, because hopefully nothing happens to your family or you start robbing somebody.

All: [Laughter]

22:59

Reyna: Because you going to be there as a juror and people don't- I mean it's a criminal court there's criminals there, ok? So and they don't want to go there for any reason including judges I mean- judges -let me stay here downtown so I can go to Marshal Field's or whatever, you know.

All: [Laughter]

23:19

Reyna: What am I going to do over there, you know? And so I said, "No, no I would love to be there, I want to go there." So he said, "Ok, trapped you here I talked to the Chief Judge." Here at that time the Chief Judge was...Comerford, Judge [Harry] Comerford was - like Judge Evans is the head of all the judges of Cook County, at that time was Judge Comerford. So they- you know- do the paper work you know and I was assigned to 26th Street and then so I started there for the next seventeen years. And then from there I said, "Well," you know, I was thinking about retirement I said, "What about if I practice law when I retire I want to see what, you know, what if I get a civil case, I want to- what am I going to do? I want to know what to do at least."

Sebastian: Right.

24:12

Reyna: Just know something about the civil area and maybe I won't retire, maybe I just stay there, maybe I just like civil law and want to judge and not retire, you know? And so I asked them to be transferred down here and they did. So I did the last three years, three and a half years of my judgeship on the twenty-first floor so it was a long- hearing civil cases. And I get 26th Street- what you hear there was a judge there- you have a call- there's four hundred cases anywhere between three fifty and four hundred cases and you have to manage those cases, ok?

24:52

Sebastian: Over what period of? I'm sorry.

24:54

Reyna: Well usually you...you tend to hear...all those cases within a two moth period.

Sebastian: Ok.

25:07

Reyna: Some is just for discovery, ok, you make sure all the paperwork is - lawyers exchanged their paper work, ok?

Sebastian: Ok, alright.

25:13

Reyna: Then you hear- so then you make sure that you give contingencies, so on a daily basis you hear about thirty cases, ok?

25:23

Sebastian: Ok.

Reyna: Let's between twenty or twenty-five of those are just for continuance, and make sure the discovery is done. Then you hear motions: motions to suppress a statement or motions to suppress the evidence. Then you have bench trials, okay. Then you have probation matters, okay. And then...the ultimate thing is the jury trial; someone wants a jury. So all this stuff you do in the morning, hopefully if you have a jury trial you can get to it, let's say by 11:30, right. And then do it for an hour, from about 11:30 to 12:30, then take a lunch recess from 12:30 to 1:30, then continue the bench trial- excuse me- continue the jury trial till the afternoon, right? So you're doing a lot of different things, okay.

When you come over here to law jury, you get one case. All the preliminary matters are done in what they call a "motion call" where they hear the motions, so when they- when they send you the case, it's set for trial. And 99% of the cases you get in law jury are jury trials. That's why they call it law jury because no one takes a bench trial. In the criminal court, the prosecutor can't ask for a jury trial. The only one that can ask for a jury trial is the defendant. He keeps- "I want a jury trial or I want a bench trial where the judge makes the decisions", okay. In a civil court they both- either one can ask for it. And that's why they both- they want to express their case to the twelve jurors, because now they're asking for damages I.e. money, okay. And they hope they get someone who's had that type of injury or close to it, or a relative or someone, who can you know, think how they're thinking.

But anyway, you get to, to the civil court here in law jury, you get the one case, you pick the jury, you hear the case and then when your done, you call down to the head judge or to his clerical staff, and say "Okay Don, I finished this jury, send me another one." "Okay Judge, we don't have anything right now, but we'll probably give you one tomorrow." So you- all you're doing is juries, you know. That's good and bad in a way for me because when you have a jury, you have to take care of that jury; you always make sure they're attended to, you know, they have their lunch breaks, they have their little breakfast in the morning, the lawyers are here on time, you get-

Sebastian: Yeah

28:06

Reyna: -don't waste any time! But without a jury like at 26th street, when you're just dealing with attorneys it's a little more relaxed in terms of - you're not do- you're not taking care of anyone per say; you're dealing with the cases, you're dealing with the criminals, you're dealing with the victims, you're dealing with the states attorneys and public defenders; a lot more people you're dealing with but they're used to the system, okay. So that was the big difference for me, okay. And so- but anyway it's something you as a judge - you just learn to live with. So anyway, that's in a few minutes my judicial history.

[Laughter]

28:49

Reyna: And then I- like I said I retired at the end of December last year in '06, and I been

retired for what, now 10 months, little over and what I do now is I do a little *guardian ad litem* work for the probate division. What happens there is that if there's a person who- someone petitions the court, for example let's say you're my father and your dementia is setting in, okay, you can't make personal connections- decisions. So, I'm you're son and I say "I want to be my dad's guardian, okay, because he starting - he can't do this anymore."

Sebastian: Right, right

29:29

Reyna: You petition the court and the court appoints a *guardian ad litem*, so the court appoints me and I talk to the son - I'll make you the petitioner for your father [*points to John*], I say "You want to take care of your father, I'll speak to you. Where's your father now?" "Well, I had to put him in a nursing home; he's being taken care of, he needs 24 hour, seven day assistance." Then I talk to the doctor, or more- you know, report to the doctor and he says "He has dementia and it's accelerating, and he can't make any personal, financial decisions and I think his son has cared for him in the past before he had to bring him to the nursing home and his son would be a good guardian. He takes of his father, he's not..." - because a lot of people sometimes - if you think the person has a great deal of money, they don't want to take care of them, they just want to take care of the money, so you need to think that way but money does a lot of different things to people. Well, anyways that's what I do now, and I do that and then I - they have a court date and you write a report to the court, judge that says what I did, I talked to this person and that person and that person and the nurse in the nursing home and so forth and so on. My report would be that that person does need a guardian and that his son would be a proper person to be guardian."

So then I do a little work for the Secretary of State as a prosecutor. What they do is they have these restrictive driving permits so if you get two or more DUIs, your driver's license is revoked. So, you think about what would you do if you didn't have a driver's license? How would you get - maybe if you live in downtown or you went to school at Loyola, you don't need one, but a lot of people, you know, need a car to get to work. Or if they're real bad, they're in AA, or if they're sick they need to get to the doctor, they need to get to the AA meetings or need to get to work. So then you - they request a consent to see if they can get a restricted driving permit, you know, and there's a judge that does that and there's a prosecutor like me that just asked certain questions about, you know, their background. So, I do that twice a month, two days out of the month, so - and I do that just to stay busy. I was just- you can't just- it was different like- my father was a steel worker, okay. He worked hard everyday, so when he retired I could see him just staying home - "I just want to stay home", you know-

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: -when I did nothing but sit down! Maybe I used my brain a lot, but you can't just sit home and just watch TV, and you know there's so much golf you can play too, so I said "I gotta do something!" So I made these inquires and was able to get these - be able

to do this stuff, so anyways I'm kind of busy doing that. So, that's where I'm at now. Your turn! [*Points at Jaramillo, everyone laughs*]

32:26

Sebastian: Well, if I could just back up for a minute, when you were growing up, uh, you said you didn't think you could become an attorney or that was something that was kind of out there or...?

32:37

Reyna: Because when I was- I went to high school at Harrison High School. Harrison High School was two blocks from 26th and California. Harrison High School is on 24th and California, okay, and the students from there, I would say maybe...20 percent if not - if less went on to college, okay. So I was - I said I going to try and go on to college, you know, and speaking of my father, you know- he was from Mexico and he- I think went up to the 6th grade, you know, and- but he knew the value of an education, so I was at that time - I don't know, you can't look at me now but I was an athlete of sorts.

All: [*Laughter*]

Reyna: But I played on the high school baseball team and basketball team, okay, and he said "well, if you want to play on those teams, you got to do good in school, you got to get good grades, because if you don't have good grades, that means you're spending too much time playing and not studying." So, I said "Okay, here it goes..", you know. So, you had to keep good- I had to keep excellent grades, you know and so I did you know, because I knew if I didn't do that I wouldn't be able to play in sports. But, you know I - but for some reason you know I liked studying too, you know, because - well, anyway like I was saying, I went to college, graduated from college, and I have a lot of cousins because my mother has a total of ten brothers and sisters and a lot of them are younger than me, so I said "You know what? If I can make it through college, all my cousins are going to be able to make it" you know, and when - I think it was one other cousin who graduated from college. I must have had, like, at least fifty cousins, you know.

Sebastian: Wow

Reyna: And the only other one was the one I told you about in Indiana at Indiana University, who went on to become a lawyer and a judge too! So, she just retired as a judge in Indiana, you know. So my aunt says "What happened? Why..." - but you look and you see that you got to want it, you've got to want the education, you got to want to study, you've got to want to be something. Because if you just - I mean, you and probably see that because you've not just here because you got nothing else to do but sit down here and read and go to Loyola and pay them tuition.

All: [*Laughter*]

Reyna: No, you want it, okay. You got to want it, you've got to want it inside, and so I see a lot of these people don't want it but then I say I want it, because I didn't want to get

a bad grade, you know, I want to get a good grade, okay. So, it's something funny because in high school, there were all these - my buddies, you know. And I remember we were on the softball - the freshman and the sophomore softball team and the varsity team - we only had one coach that coached the freshman team, freshman sophomore and varsity. So he would send us to the girls gym, he says "you guys go over there before practice and warm up. You guys know what drills to do and do them, okay". We said "Okay, that's fine, we'll go over there and do the drills." And we would go over there and these guys would just screw around, just fooling around and screwing - I said "forget it," you know, I'm not going - this is nothing so I went to my locker and got my books and just started studying, you know. And then I figured out we got an hour to warm up so I'll study for 45 minutes and the other 15 minutes I'll go back up and warm up so I won't be cold when I get down to the- with the varsity coach or our coach. And so then when I became a judge, my buddies - my two buddies that were on the team with me said "We knew you were going to be something because you were always studying; we were goofing off and you were studying." So I said, "Well, that's why! You guys were goofing off! If you guys would have done what the coach said, I would have participated- you guys were just screwing around, you know, monkeying around, so I said "I gotta put my time- because I don't want to go home now..." Now, you go to practice, you go home, you eat and you're tired and if I -I wasn't that tired yet so that's why I could study a little bit. But that- when you go home and you're really tired and you say you're too tired to really study that hard. And but anyway, I remember that for whatever reason, my buddies told me when I became a judge we had a little party and they said "we knew you going to be something." I said "well, what are you going to do?" Anyway, next question.

All: [Laughter]

37:46

Sebastian: No, that's fine-

37:51

Reyna: Why did you say I answered the question?

Sebastian: Huh?

37:54

Reyna: Well- I didn't think- cause when I said that less than twenty percent went on to college, so I said "Let me see if I can get to college, I want to get to college," you know. And then, like I said I wanted it. I really wanted it and so...you know, like I said, if you want it, you just got to keep working, working, working- something good is going to happen if you keep working. And luckily, it just- I just kept doing that my whole life.

38:20

Sebastian: Did you think specifically in those terms though, of that field of law and being a judge or were there- did you have other...?

38:27

Reyna: No, it's just that- like I said the first- I've got to get through college. Step- I had to take it step by step.

Sebastian: Yeah.

38:37

Reyna: Because I remember when I was first in college- that's another thing- I was always was thinking about that course, and that semester. And then- because like, we were freshmen and some guys I met- because the school is in Waukesha, Wisconsin, which is about 50 miles west of Milwaukee, and most of the students there were from Wisconsin, so- and only a few of us were from Chicago; and the ones from Chicago were from the Chicago suburbs, you know, like from the north- from Northbrook and...Evanston, and Skokie and they also had to me a different mentality, from being from an inner city kid, you know. And- but they used to tell me "Yeah, I'm going to go to graduate school and I going to get a PhD, and I'm thinking, "Man, I'm just trying to get through this semester! How could this kid be thinking about all that?" What if he failed this course? Then where is he going to go?", you know. So I said, "Let him think that way. I just want to be- let me get through this semester," okay. And then- so anyway, I got through that, so now I became a second semester senior. Now I think I'm going to graduate, okay. Now, I'm going to graduate from here on, okay.

39:59

So, I said "now what do to do?" So I'm like "let me get a job, let me get a job." And you know IBM was a big company, and so I said "let me do that." I got a job with them so that's okay, that's good, but I didn't- it was more clerical, you know, than anything. So, I went to State Farm and our boss there- I shouldn't say boss, our supervisor- he was a supervisor of about over 10 of us, you know, and he was a lawyer, okay. And so I used to talk to him about, you know, about the law and law school, and stuff like that, so I guess it was back there a little bit, but when I started talking with these lawyers, you know, I said "Man, I could be a lawyer", you know. There's no doubt I could be a lawyer, you know. So, that was the next goal, okay. So, I said "Let me try to get into law school," so I got into law school and I got into a good law school. So, I said "okay, that'll work", and then each phase, you know, I set my sights but just- but like I said, I kept thinking about this guy telling me as a freshman in college, talking about getting a PhD already! So, I might've had some goals, but I didn't say nothing to anybody. I didn't want to sound like- because this guy didn't sound- I didn't like what he was saying.

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: But you keep those goals and hopefully you can attain them.

41:34

Sebastian: Do you attribute, you know thatwhat's the word I'm looking for... about your mentality to do that, to stick with it, you have these goals, and to build it up, do you

attribute that to any, you know, people like your parents, positive-[*Sebastian and Reyna talking at the same time*] -background that gave you that ...

41:53

Reyna: Yeah, yeah. I attribute that to my culture, to the Hispanic people because- I mean like right now, there's a lot of controversy about immigration, okay. And...maybe because I'm Hispanic, these people I knew didn't do anything wrong, they just want to work, okay, because you- they do not want to go on legal- on welfare, okay. They'd rather work, you know, and...like I was reading one story in the summer where they're building this wall on the border, and there was this one lady in San Diego; who- she was an illegal at one time or- but now she became legal and now she's a citizen. And she says- and someone asked her, "Aren't you going to feel safer after they build this wall?" "Safer? All these people want to do is work! They're not coming through my, you know- crossing, on my street or walking on my sidewalk to harm me. All they want to do is to get to work!" You know, and that's with- but I guess the concept is being in the legal arena is that "But they did it wrong. They're doing it wrong. They're breaking the law." So you can't, you can't just, you know, forget that, okay. So- but to get back to what you said, you know, so the thing is like my dad, he would always say "you got to work", you know, and even if, you know, all of us I'm sure you do, have sometimes had a bit too much to drink right, you know, and then you sit, and then he would say "if you're going to be drinking, you better- if you can drink, you can go to work."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: No matter what you drink, I had to go to work, and there's, you know, you- I mean there's a certain culture, there's a certain thing that work- you've got to work. You've got to work and you never give up.

43:57

Sebastian: Alright...

43:58

Reyna: And that's so you just- you just keep going. You just keep going. So I- like I said, I attribute it to my dad but- and I think he got it, and I get it and you see some Hispanic people that don't want to take- don't want to be on welfare, they want to work. And like right now, like I had to go out this morning to the Pilsen area, and there's a little area they built on Blue Island and 18th street where they built the statues, but anyway, there's all these men hanging around there in the morning looking for jobs and people come by and say "I need somebody to paint, I need somebody to do whatever menial task, whatever." And they're there, you know, uh looking for work, so- and if you go to a uh, Home Depot, like the one over there on 47th and Western there's a Home Depot and there's a bunch of Hispanic men there too. People will go there to buy lumber or whatever, paint or whatever they're going to buy to do whatever they have to do to their home, and hopefully someone will need help and these gentlemen are there and hopefully they get something to do.

45:13

Campos: I had a question. You spoke of your cousin was part of some organization, that she was very active in Latino organizations at school. Were you as well? What other organizations were you a part of or...?

45:24

Reyna: Well, in college, like I said, at Carroll College I was the only one...

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: I was the only Hispanic there, so-

45:36

Campos: So, you were your own organization.

All: [Laughter]

45:39

Reyna: -I was the organization!

45:42

Sebastian: Nice! Nice!

45:43

Reyna: Same thing in law school. There was only on other- there was, a guy from Texas, you know, and me and him were the only- [chuckles] -this is funny too- we were the only law students until our third year- then another- a freshman came in from Texas too. But he only lasted a semester because he missed his girlfriend, so he went back to Texas.

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: You know, that was funny. I looked at him and I said "Who are we going to leave the legacy to? Who are we going to leave the organization to?" He left, but I guess in Indiana, it's a big state school, there was twenty thousand, thirty thousand- so she had a bunch of other Latinos to be a part of.

Campos: Right.

46:44

Reyna: But then I became- when I became a lawyer we had a- there were a few more Hispanic attorneys and so we formed the- well, there was one other judge- I don't know if you know a Judge David Cerda was his name. He became a judge in the 60's, a judge - Mayor Richard J. Daley, the present mayor's father, was the mayor then and he made him a judge. He was the only Hispanic judge, I want to say for.... I think there was only one

other judge, Jose Vasquez, a Puerto Rican gentleman, and he was the second and I was the third. So, from the 60's to '84, there were only two Hispanic judges and I was the third. But anyway, so we- he had formed- Judge Cerda- the Mexican-American Lawyers Association, okay, and so there's a few more now in law school and or had graduated from law school and were lawyers, and a few more- I think we had about...I want to say about 7 or 8 attorneys, so we formed that organization, so we created it trying to do something in terms of...obtaining scholarships for Hispanic students who were in law school. We would have a little banquet; try to get people to go the banquet, sell tickets and hopefully have a few thousand dollars to give away to one or two or three Hispanic law students because at that time the tuition isn't was it is today, you know, so you need a lot of money. So anyway, that's as far as organizations I did but...then there are other fraternal organizations I belong to like, there's an organization called The Wildcats, which aren't- these aren't legal organizations; these are just Hispanic organizations, you know, and the- I was a counsel when I was with the State's Attorney, counsel attorney to the Mexican-American police organization, you know. Things like that I did, but as far as organizations go, but as the years on and the younger guys- more and more Hispanic lawyers, they took over, so I kind of like faded out of that situation.

49:39

Jaramillo: I have a question.

Reyna: Yeah.

Jaramillo: Well since they- you said there were so few Hispanic judges, you know, from when—by the time you were going through law school and became a judge—do you feel that you had a unique experience, a particularly different experience that any, like I guess, that an average judge being, you know, unique to being Hispanic in a field that's dominated by, you know, whites?

50:09

Reyna: Yeah, I did feel unique because... I think that if you're a defendant, you know, and you're looking up at the judge and you look at this judge and his name is Fitzgerald, and you say "This guy doesn't know nothing about where I come from, or what I'm about, or anything" I mean, you know, which not to say its bad to have a different cultural view point, you know, and it- but if what I did maybe had something to do with my culture, or at least he can understand a little bit about me, you know, not that I want a free pass or anything but—

Jaramillo: Mhm.

50:46

Reyna: —you know give me some- you know, well you want to be judged by your peers, ok? So that, you know, put it in that... view point. And so, I mean there was a few defendants, Hispanic defendants, who were young kids, you know, and they would be there with their with their father or mother, you know, and what's bad about it now [*raps knuckle on table*] is that before, you could... the father could work and the mother could

stay home with the child, you know, and make sure he does his homework, make sure he's been home, but now with the economy it is that both parents have to work. So nobody's there watching you, ok? And you think "Well who-you know- is that an excuse?" or what? I don't know what. But you would see that the parents were there, would know where their sons, you know, and you could see that they were trying but they both had to work, ok? So- and luckily this would be like their first offense where they could get probation, ok. And like, well everybody, you know, watches everybody, but some- some people you see, like when I was a- I tell this one story when I was a prosecutor. And when I was at one of the preliminary hearing court, and you see all these young defendants coming up, you know, and you could see they were nothing and they just- they B.S. or just bluff.

Jaramillo: [Chuckles]

52:14

Reyna: But there are some guys you see, I said, "You wouldn't want to mess with him on State and Madison at noon because this is a bad guy."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: This is a real- you know what I mean? This is a-

All: [Laughter]

52:26

Reyna: So you could- as a prosecutor [*mumbles*]- because other prosecutors- sometimes as a prosecutor you would look at the guy and you would say something, you know, "you think you're a bad guy, you think you're a that." But other guys you just don't even look at him, because-

Campos: You know they're a bad guy. [Laughter]

52:37

Reyna: This guy, *this* guy, this guy is evil, I mean, I don't know what it- so but then with the- as a judge when you're up there looking down- hopefully you can you- because a big part of a judge [*raps knuckles on table*] I think is reading people. You gotta be able to read them, ok? Now hopefully you do it right. And you see some kid who thinks he's bad, you know. But then you read them the riot act, you know. You give them probation. You know, "If I see you back here again, I'm going to throw away the key," you know, "and you're never going to see daylight again." Or something like that, you know.

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: And some you get to, you know. And then they'll come back or write you a letter and say "Judge, thanks for everything, you saved my life" and this and that. And they're so [*chuckles*] there's a funny—I was in the- I was at a Hispanic banquet, you know. And

I was in the restroom of all places, and this gentleman came in there, too. Big- he was a big guy, too. And he says, "Remember me?" I say "Ooooooh noooooooo" [*rolls eyes*].

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: I sent this guy away!

All: [Laughter]

53:52

Reyna: So ah, [*chuckles*], he says- I says "Ah no. Ah, you want to refresh my memory?"

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: And he said "No, I was there with my son and you read him the riot act, and now he's totally different." "Oh, good! Thank you, thank you!"

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: But you get things like that. But the- but I'm saying is that you have to read the person. And hopefully you can save them. And that's where the culture thing comes in.

Jaramillo: Yeah

Reyna: Now, hopefully with a Hispanic kid he'll say- he'll look around—especially when I was a young judge, you know, at first—he'll look around, you know. The prosecutors are all non-Hispanic, the public defender is non-Hispanic. Everybody's non-Hispanic except me! You know? "Here's, holy cow, *con papi*" you know I- you know? "And he's in the best spot!"

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: You know, "He can- maybe he can do- they can- maybe he'll understand something." And that's hopefully, maybe that's what they want, somebody to, you know, listen to them for once, you know. But that part it's, you know, it's- hopefully they didn't do anything where prison time is mandatory. There's some case- there's some crimes where you can't give probation, even if it's the first offense, you know. So you know you do what you can. But those who you can hopefully, you know, quote unquote "save," you know, you try, you know, but it's, you know, it- I would assume most of the time it doesn't work [*its very sad*], but if you save one or two, I mean that's, you know, that's better than nothing. So...

55:30

Campos: I have one. Like why criminal division? Because you said that you did that as an attorney and then also to the judge. Like, why that interest, or how did that- did that just come about or...?

55:41

Reyna: Well, you know, I just- it's just- I figured that, that's where I could do... best. Because I knew that, I knew the criminal law, because then I was a prosecutor.

Campos: Right

Reyna: And I knew, you know- because some- because I had ideas as to, you know, what I think I could do in, you know, as a judge in the criminal- I could handle cases because, you know, like I said again I say it's reading people. A lot of judges just, you know, just follow the law and just- tunnel vision. And you can't do that, I don't think you can do that, you know. [*chuckles*] Because I said—at 26th street you have a judge's lunch room, ok?

Jaramillo: Mhm.

56:20

Reyna: And all the judges go there. You know, when you can have-you have your break you go there and ah you would meet different judges, sometimes, you know, you go different times. But it would- it was good because you could bounce things off other judges. "Hey judge I got"- you would say, "Hey Joe, I got this thing, and this problem and the law says this and I'm thinking this and I'm- I want to do this, what do you think?" You know, and they say, "Well that sounds good but may- what about this? Or what about that?" So you bounce ideas or you bounce theories off of them, you know. And then [*chuckles*] but you would talk to another judge- because I would have- now I know the defense attorneys, you know, being there a while, and you tend to get the same defense attorneys in there, there's a few Hispanic guys in there that, when I see that, we get done with cases or take a recess, "Come on back in my chambers," you know, so you would bring them and the prosecutors, you want to, you know- you can't have- talk to them by themselves, because then you'd think, you know, hanky panky is going on, so-

Campos: [Laughs]

Reyna: So you bring everybody back there, "C'mon back and we'll talk." And they would talk about, "Hey Judge, we got this other judge," you know, "He's- I think he's kind of picking on these Hispanic defendants." He's not doing that, you know, he should be fair. But you would think that the guy- but he's not picking, it's just that he's- everything goes by the book.

Campos: Right

57:41

Reyna: There's no give or take.

Campos: Right

57:44

Reyna: So I would go back, I would go to the lunch room and I'd see him there. I'd say, "I heard that you're picking on my people."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: "Ooooooh no! Who told you that?!"

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: So I said, well, you know, "Just give them a fair result." That's all. I- just give them, you know-

Jaramillo: [Laughs]

Campos: Mhm

Reyna: Just, you know, just let everything be even, don't... so. But, you know, stuff like that, which is- you just do and... and that's what about- the judge's lunch room. There's a story about this place [*points to ground*]. Because in criminal court there's about, I want to say thirty judges, about thirty-five judges. In here, there's about three hundred judges.

Campos: Oh wow.

58:27

Reyna: You know. And when they built this place, Mayor Daley... Richard J. Daley.

Campos: Uh huh

Reyna: You know. They asked him, "You want to build a judge's lunch room in here, too?" And he said "No, no."

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: "I'm going to have- I'm going to have three hundred of them guys get together?"

Campos: Yeah!

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: I asked that story to see if that's true and some- and nobody says yes, but I wouldn't doubt it.

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: Because you know how them guys are about power. I mean they... they... but, anyway...

[Pause]

59:03

Jaramillo: Well, I have a question. I guess from, you know, from your experiences as a Hispanic and just being in the judicial system for so long, and you see the changes-

Reyna: [Coughs]

Jaramillo: -going on just in society at large. Do you have any advice to, you know, to I guess up-and-coming individuals in law, or the jury, or like judges? Any insights that you think that you would like to see changed or things that need to be worked on, or...?

59:38

Reyna: Well, like I said, I would like them to be a little more... what's the word? [Pause] I guess for lack of a better word, compassionate, ok? You know, try to put yourself in that culture, which is hard, it's just hard, I mean, I mean how are you going to do that? I mean- I can't be an African-American, I can't be an Irish. But take from what- from your culture that you do have, ok. Take that and try to, you know, what you do, how you feel about your culture, you also-that they- they also have a culture. And that's why- like when, like I said the judge's lunch room- I try to talk to different judges when I was at 26th Street to see about their background, what they did, you know, to hopefully you can learn something, so when you have a defendant like that, of that culture, of that heritage, you might be able to read them a little better, you know. Because like I said anybody can learn the law, why don't you, can just read it, I mean, you know how to read, just read it and apply it. But is there things that you can do, you know, can you be a little more creative? A little more, you know, reasonable? A little more compassionate? You know, you don't have to step on your nose either, you know, you don't want to hurt yourself, you don't want them to take away your robes, you know. But try to feel what, you know, what they're, you know, what they're feeling if you can, but, you know, that's what I would like, you know, but that's hard to do, that's a real personal type thing. And that's... hard, it's hard to do.

[Pause]

Campos: I actually can't think of anymore-

All: [Laughter]

Jaramillo: I know

Reyna: We can have a break!

All: [Laughter]

Jaramillo: Would you like to take a break? We can- to a-

Reyna: Well-

Jaramillo: Or-

Reyna: It don't make a difference to me-

Jaramillo: Ok.

Campos: Ok.

Reyna: Take a break, maybe you'll have more questions after a break.

Campos: [chuckles]

Reyna: If not, then...

Campos: Yeah.

Jaramillo: Yeah, well let's take a little break and then we'll, we'll put our heads together and, yeah-

[Audio Ends 10/13/2007, 11:25 AM; 1:01:51]

[Audio Begins 10/13/2007, 11:50 AM]

Sebastian: Alright, this is the second session of the- the second part of the session of the interview with Judge Reyna. Just wanted to ask if there was anything specific that you remember from- did any of your mentors along the way- any piece of advice that that stuck out to you, that kind of guided you? Or were there any?

00:37

Reyna: Like I said my- the three judges that I tried to emulate was Judge Richard Fitzgerald and he was always a class type of judge, a real... reasonable type person. He... well, he showed me... was that- he was a civil attorney in- I want to say Thornton township and he- most of his work was with the- as an attorney for the Board of Education out there. That and with banks, but they- he went- became a judge- and he went to 26th Street and became the best judge in that building before I got there. And that's where I had the pleasure of clerking the Assistant State's Attorney who were sent to his courtroom. And he did everything in a dignified and reasonable manner, and was very... his judicial temperament was such that he treated all the attorneys with respect, and which he- which was returned to him two-fold. And that's where I learned about him, that you don't have to be- you have all the power anyways, so there's no need to

demonstrate it because you already have it, and every- everybody knows that you have it. But just, you know, just use it wisely, and that's what I learned from him.

Reyna: The other judge was [*clears throat*], Louis Garripo. And I said he- I was his Assistant State's Attorney and- but I had just gotten in there with him in a few weeks, and he was to begin the John Wayne Gacy trial, which was tried by- because of the enormity of the case, the importance of the case- was tried by the supervisors, but... I thought that he showed- he was very- again, I... another judge who- another judge who was very... I guess reasonable, but he- but again he was very bright, but he used that brightness in terms of not letting the lawyers know that he was smarter than they were, but just to let them know that he knew, you know, the law, he knew the courtroom, he knew the attorneys- I mean he just knew his entire surroundings from, you know, from... non-human to human things, he was very different in there because you know he knew everything. But was very reasonable, was very down to earth, and at times he would stutter, you know, which made him look like he was, you know, not so bright.

All: [Laughter]

04:12

Reyna: But if you got to know him, you knew he was the real thing. And the third judge was a judge, Frank Barbaro, who I called- you know, and he came from a neighborhood and he was- he like- he was from Bridgeport, the 11th Ward and though he knew being from 11th ward- I don't know if you know what the 11th ward is, but the ward is the Daley ward, where the Daley's come from. And he knew the Daley's, which is not to say that's why he got on the bench, but it didn't hurt him at all.

Sebastian: [Chuckles]

Reyna: But, I mean he knew the law, and he knew the streets, you know, and me being from Pilsen- and I thought myself- I thought I was a street person more than a law person- but he showed me that you can do both, you know, and knowing the streets, and knowing the law, I mean you had a lot more knowledge than a lot of people. Because you know how to treat the people, you know where they were from, and you know maybe beca- for- you know, because he said- prob- you know, maybe... [inaudible]. I would be on this side of the bench instead of that side. And I think about myself, because I remember there were some times when- which we won't get into.

Campos: [Laughs]

Reyna: But, if I had not said, "Wait a minute, I'm not there, I'm not going down that road," you know what I mean, because I made a, you know, I've been on this side of the bench, also. So from those three judges, I learned, you know, what it is I think to be a good and fair judge, and the buzzword being fair, you know. That's what you have- you have to be fair, you have to- you know, you because- like I said you got the power, you just have to know how to use it. You know, you don't have to be abusive; you don't have

to be mean. But, you have the last word and hopefully, with everything you learned, everything that you- was taught to you, you can be a wise judge.

[Pause]

06:17

Sebastian: Alight. Maybe this is a little broad, but how... well, I don't know, maybe this is really too broad. [*chuckles*] I was just thinking that how well do you think that from being a part of the judicial system over a period of time, how well do you think it operates in terms of, I don't know, how well do you think it's operating? I mean, I guess there's always room for improvement in everything, but just-

06:50

Reyna: Yeah. Well, I think being a judge, I think it's like they say there's, you know, there's... this may not be the best system, but, you know, or could be a more perfect system, but this is the best system I think in the in the world because- you know, like I said I've been to Mexico, and I've been to Europe, and like Spain and France and England and when I go to these countries, I try to get into the courtroom. Just to see what- how they're doing. And... again, my thing is, is fair, you gotta be fair, and a lot of these places, I mean, its, I don't see it [*chuckles*] I don't see fairness being applied. Maybe that's the way they operate and, you know, but what... like I even went to- last place I went to Colombia. And they don't even have trials. Everything is written. You write it and you give it to the judge. You know, I say well, "Doesn't he get to see the defendant? Isn't there cross examination, or confrontation?" And they said, "No. We're getting to that, though." So, ok.

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: But-~~so-I-~~ we get back to here and I again I think about this system, you know, I said, its- it probably could be improved more and more, but I think it is the best system. I mean, the jury trial the- hopefully you get a chance to pick your peers, but then again, I mean, it all depends who's in the in the pool of jurors. But... again, it all depends on who the judge is. I mean, that's why you hear this thing about the quality of the judges, and who are the candidates, and who picks these candidates, and should there be merit selection as versus the selection now, I mean, but in general I think there's a good, it's a good system, there a l- there're a great number of good judges, if not great judges, and but like anything else, it can be improved.

09:28

Campos: I know you're saying this, like, you know, I mean especially with Cook County, like you said that you started during the Greylord period-

Reyna: Yeah.

Campos: -was kind of going on.

Reyna: Yeah.

Campos: Like, how did that- did- was that any- like you said you weren't really bothered by it, but was that influential in how you decided to be very fair, or coming in? *[Laughs]*

09:44

Reyna: No- Well, no, because I thought I was a fair person anyways-

Campos: Right.

Reyna: I mean, you chose- as you grow up, I mean your culture and the people you deal with, and are they fair, and the people you go to school with, and the teachers you learn from, and there's certain teachers you tend to like more than others, you learn from them and professors or likewise, you know. And friends like- whether its some people you like, and you know, like- a lot of times I measure's a persons- by, like, "Can I have a beer with this person? If I can't, then I don't want to have to deal with them." I don't know.

Campos: *[Laughs]*

Reyna: You know, somebody you can talk to, have a beer with and, you know, and enjoy yourself. I don't know if you going to- you know, apply that analogy to the courtroom, but in a way, in a sense you can, because you want to deal with people- you want to deal with lawyers who also aren't rude, you know, because they- then- *[coughs]* if they're rude then as a judge you have to put them in your place real quick, too. Because you're not- you're not going to let them take over your courtroom. I mean this is my courtroom, ok. Like I said, we all treat each other with respect here, but if you want- you want to go another route then, you know, then I'll confront you, too, and we'll see who wins. You know, it's me because I'm the judge, alright?

All: *[Laughter]*

Reyna: But... I mean that's how I view things, in that matter.

[Indistinct mumbling]

Campos: Do you have any other... Well, do you have any questions for us, I guess?

Sebastian: Yeah?

Reyna: *[Laughs]*

Campos: Is there anything you just want to say? I mean, because this is-

Sebastian: Yeah, any other-

Campos: We will be handing you a transcript, if you just wanted to say- you know what I mean? Like, your Oscar speech [*laughs*].

11:29

Reyna: No, I think the- again I think the questions were fair. I was really leery about- when I talked to Judge Henry, I said "what are they going to ask me, what's this all about?" I mean, you know, I never-

Campos: [*Laughs*]

Reyna: And because I know him, you know, I... consented to- but if there was some other judge I didn't know, I mean I would- because like I said, judges don't want to, you know, divulge too much, you know, because, I guess we're just going "Who's going to read this?" I don't know-

Campos: You're right

Reyna: But knowing about me, you know what I mean? [*chuckles*] But, because that's one of the bad part about them, once I start talking, I tend I tend to talk too much, I think, I don't know, but-

All: [*Chuckles*]

Reyna: I tend to leave too much out. But, Judge Henry, we are... were opponents for judgeship. How- I want to say in what, about maybe thirteen years ago. Because we came out of the same- now they have sub-circuits, and I don't know if anyone sub-circuits, you know, where the judges come from a certain area in Chicago

Campos: Right

12:32

Reyna: And we're come from the same area. So we were both associate judges, ok? And so we wanted to get to the next level, which is the full circuit court judge, you know. And so again the position became available, so we both went for it, you know, and- it was funny because in this sub-circuit they made it for Hispanic judges, they wanted Hispanic judges- we'll make this- a lot of Hispanics live around here, so I said "Well, what are you doing in this sub-circuit? You're not Hispanic, you know. Why you trying to take my judgeship for?"

All: [*Laughter*]

Reyna: So from there we got to know each other and we became rather good friends. So, like I said he's not going to leave the bench pretty soon, and so he asked me "Well, you want to do it?" I says, "Well, what are they going ask me? What's this all about?" He told

me it's a history project. So I'm off the bench and thought maybe what- how can it harm me?

Campos: Mhm

Reyna: So if you guys harm me! I don't know-

All: [Laughter]

Reyna: But other than that that's- I thought everything was fine, everything was fair, everything was- I hope it was helpful. Hope my information was of some benefit.

Campos, Sebastian, Jaramillo: Yeah, yeah, very much so, yeah. Mhm.

Campos: Well, I have no other questions [*Interviewers mumble inaudibly*]. Ok.

Reyna: Ok, well thank you very much.

Campos: Alright.

Sebastian: Thank you.

Jaramillo: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with us, you know, but I'll just press-

[Audio ends 10/13/2007,12:04 PM; 14:08]