

Mr. Corky Gallegos

Interviewed by Mr. Michael Franco

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Interview conducted in Corpus Christi, Texas, in the Gallegos household

Transcribed by Michael Franco

[Mr. Michael Franco]: I'm here with Coach Corky Gallegos. Do you give permission for the interview?

[Mr. Corky Gallegos]: Yes, I do.

[Mr. Michael Franco]: All right Coach Gallegos, just a little bit of your life your history about yourself.

[Mr. Corky Gallegos]: Okay, I was born and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas. I was born August 6, 1970 during the Hurricane Celia damage was done, I want to say I was born two days after so I heard a lot of accounts in my lifetime about how my father was in the military and at the time he was here in corpus doing active military service. What he was doing was here local and the roofs of houses were blown completely off. The home found three blocks down. It was a really terrible hurricane but you can imagine the lifetime of hearing from your parents that I should've known that when you were born during this time that you were going come and be a handful. That was a big highlight of my birth right there. I was born at Spohn Hospital and I am the second child of our family. I have a sister that is two years older than me, Sabrina Gallegos, who is a big influence to me. I ended up in a household with three siblings. I was the only boy I had two sisters, an older sister and a younger sister so that really had a big impact on me. I found out I grew up around women, my mom and my sisters. My dad worked a lot, always two jobs. He was a CPA, he has his own business and he was also a professor in college. He did those two things so he spent a lot of hours working. My mom was a stay at home mom and raised us and pretty much raised the neighborhood. That's the way it used to be. Times have changed quite a bit but during that time as I was saying being raised around a lot of women, my sisters, my mom I really realized something that I'm going to say that maybe people don't agree but it's the straight truth being that I was raised in this environment is that women are special. They are head and shoulders above us. The way their instincts and the way they operate, their motherly instinct to raise children and care for children cause I saw my mom do it with us but not only for us she my friends like I said she raised the neighborhood and a lot of my friend growing up always remember they always had a ride, you know. If they ever needed a meal or a place to go they would come to our house. I saw my mom doing that, those motherly instinct things but just being around my sisters my older sister is a doctor today and she's just very methodical type A personality type of person. She's very competitive real strong will power just very successful in everything she ever did. My younger sister is a coach also, Marina Gallegos. I spent a lot of time with her and I didn't have a brother so she's like my sister/brother type sibling. Baseball softball was the thing that we really like to do a lot. I grew up in a home like I

said with my sisters my mom my dad worked a lot, but my dad did spend a lot of quality time with us and he raised us around baseball. My grandfather, who just passed away last year around this time, he died at 100 years old but he played baseball till he was 56, around 56–57 around 60 years old baseball and so they would play in a Collegiate league out of San Antonio and so he played up until he was 56 then he played softball until he was like 80 something so when I was a kid growing up I grew up every weekend it was ball. We were play double headers and the thing over there was that they did a lot of betting. It was crazy to hear the stories that they bet. It was they did I mean back then you know one town Charlette, Texas, Kennedy out in that area over there tis called a blue bonnet league they all had their teams and so the fans that were supporting them came to bet against the team they were going to play against and so it was a league and so I got to see a lot of baseball learned a lot of baseball from back when I was you know in pampers to an age where I started realizing what was really going on. there was a lot of drama in the setting because the betting going on and the drinking. And that type of stuff I saw a lot of melees, fights where they had to escort umpires out where players were getting bride. If you strike out right now on this situation the game is on the line we will pay you this, what are they paying you know. This is crazy it almost seems unreal, but truth be it that the competitiveness in the game was money driven. Like it is today it's a different setting but I got to see a lot of baseball and a lot of drama that came with the betting that comes on baseball. I was kind of cut from a different wool in that manner because most people know the game as it's a game, it's fun. I agree 100% only when you grow up and your seeing those types of things unfold you know the violence and who knows what all that I didn't pick up on. it changes things to more of a serious setting and why I really took to it, the game and love it today as much as I do it had to be because the way my grandfather and my dad raised us around the game. They kept it fun they weren't overly criticizing our performance. They taught us to be humble when we succeeded. And when we had bad games he really would like hey this is part of the game. You're going to learn from your mistakes. I had a good upbringing in the game other than the side I was telling you about so I feel very privileged to have been raised that way. I remember when I got to high school being my biggest critic because when I played and I had a bad game y dad would be like what are you upset about and id be like well I grounded out to 2nd base 3 times and it look like I was just playing pepper you know just popping/ tapping the ball over there and he was like what I thought you hit that ball real well. I thought you hit those 3 hard and it kind of made me realize I was overanalyzing my performance and stuff like that. But once again I feel gifted to have been raised in the game by two very knowledgeable players my dad and my grandfather were the coaches of those teams that I was telling you about. They were both players and ended up managing those teams in a semi-pro league. And as you can tell I went straight from my childhood its all baseball. I was put into baseball which was very different from today at the age of seven. They changed my birth certificate because the legal age to play was eight. So my dad went to go register me at American Little League, it's considered on the southside of town and when they went over there to find out that I was too young to be registered and to the league to play ball my sister who is two years older than me was like well I'm sold enough and back then you didn't see girls playing baseball amongst the guys or whatever and so they ended up registering her and my parents always end up telling me about how I was so upset crying and that I thought I was going to go get put onto a team and registered and my sister ended up so I was so upset that they had to change my birth

certificate for the league registration so I started at seven and needless to say my sister was a star. She was the all-star shortstop at every level so if we were at prep you 8–9 years old she was the starting shortstop for the all-star team and then went up to minor leagues she was the starting shortstop and then when she's 11–12 in major league, what they call major league age group she was the starting shortstop. So now I realize girls they mature faster physically. They are full grown at a certain age and the guys are kind of later bloomers and so I caught hell all of the time when people would be like oh you know your sister Sabrina right she better than you. It was not hard for me because I would be like she's better than you too. What position did you play? And they would be like I played shortstop for whatever team. She was the all-star shortstop, she would beat you out. She would hit homeruns and I saw guys drop down on the mound crying. I lived with this girl. She was a super athlete. And everything she did she was always just you know very methodical the way she thinks well thought out and everything she planned. She always competed in very high level. Today she is a pro body builder and she's 54 year old and she competes in the open class, means that she competes against 20 year olds. Not in like a class for older so she's a professional and she's you know very competitive, she wins some you know but the thing with her I'm trying to draw that picture that this is what I grew up with and my sister was just very tough, you know competitive. My dad though and my mom really raised that type of environment in the house. We had every board game that you could think of you know, Monopoly, Sorry, chess, checkers. We had all those games in our house and my dad like I said he worked a lot. He spent a lot of quality time with us, he found a way. How he did it I really looked back today and go wow he's amazing because you know amongst you know all the work and time that he had to put into to supporting the family and putting us all through college. He found time and a way, also to sit down with us and play board games. That's very rare you know that you find that because both parents work nowadays with technology board games you know maybe not obsolete but they just don't people don't really turn there. It was a good way for us to sit down but it was always in this competitive you know environment and my sister was so competitive. I remember you know things didn't go her way and she would start crying my dad would be like you know what we are not going to play. She'd be all upset because she didn't get this one you know particular play of the game that she didn't get. We dealt with that was like a daily thing every time we play my sister was going to get upset when things didn't go her way and she's super competitive. And later when I was growing up, so my younger sister was born five years after I was and you know kind of brought another dimension to the family now. And so it was two girls, myself, I was the middle child, and my sister needed a surgery, it was pretty urgent back when I was a kid so that really had an impact on my life knowing that my sister, her health and her future you know was in jeopardy because of the surgery that she needed. So I was really impacted by that and so I always kind of took my sister under my wing. I valued her so much. It's sad that it takes something like that to make a sibling appreciate the sibling that they have and but it's funny how something like that can really change the way you think even at a young age because I want to say that she's born out, I had to have been about 5–6 years old when she needed the surgery so she was always just so very special to me. She's special period. [15:58]

Particularly in my mind that I could speak for that because of that the fear of losing her to whatever you know health problem that she had that she ended up having to have surgery with

it was on her skull. I remember them letting us know young that you know something that she may make it or not like they're preparing us. And to be able, you know, you can imagine what that's like to have to have gone through that and being told that your sister you know may not make it a family member. That's a young age to you know kind of take in and internalize the reality of it. So, I always had her with me. I mean through so many years I'd go hang out with my friends, you know, up through high school and my sister would come with me. I took her everywhere and my friends would always be like man don't bring your little sister with you, but we did everything together. She's like my little brother too. I mean we played baseball, we practiced baseball, we collected cards, we did everything yeah you know together. And so, I mean for me, it was nothing out of the ordinary you know, I'm bringing my sister with me yeah we're going to go you know. So she grew up around me my friends and why my mom let her you know go with us and a lot of times I she must have really trusted me. But, I bring that up because it's significant in my life that you know I became, I was already thinking like a coach and I didn't know it because the influence I was having on her as a big brother. I was giving a lot of advice and you know, real meaningful stuff that we had to go through that I wanted to teach her. That she was younger don't fall into this with peer pressure and I can go on and on about it but, we learned a lot together. But here's the thing, where I really feel like, you know, the influence to become a coach came because she really loved the game. I mean it was in our family first of all like I told you then she saw me go through high school playing ball so she ended up wanting to go and play in college because I was going to college so she at some point she told me young, and I want to say she's like 6th grade, she said like I want to play college ball like you, you know. And I didn't know how to tell her, that this is impossible. They didn't even have softball in high school when she was in high school. So I just decided like I'm not going to say that to her. I just remember saying like we got to work what do you want to do every day what are we going to do every day to make that, you know, possible. At that time Olympic softball was starting to rise and Lisa Fernandez and Dock Richardson and so many players back then that a lot of people don't know now. We're playing an interplane like competing Olympics so she had this vision she could play in high school. So I found myself even when I was in college, calling her on a daily basis checking how things went. Did you work out? Where are you at with this? Sending her like mental training type positive, you know, attitudes and stuff like that. Teaching her how to think properly as an athlete and all that. And then I would even in college at times, I would come down and practice with her, help coach her teams and all that. Nonetheless, fast forward, you know, we made her a video VHS and sent it out to some colleges and she got a full scholarship and I mean that's like talking about something that's impossible, you know. We started finding out that there's very few things that are impossible and truly are, were a miracle. This was something that was a product of everyday dedication to a passion that we shared, which is, you know, the game of baseball/softball. And, you know, she ended up doing that and being an all-conference player. She did better than I did in college, you know. Overall, I'm very proud to say that but, you know, kind of going I went forward with that because of my sibling my family stuff so you know. I grew up right, it's on the south side of Corpus Christi, right across the street from Carroll High School. And so we had the fields and the you know the playground and all that. I mean literally right across the street. Our elementary was across the street. The same Sandlot that I grew up playing makeshift games that we played with three on three. Found ways to play the game and with three people and it did us well in

the future. Like it really paid off for us because I learned to hit the ball on the opposite field because the way the polls were aligned in that park, like you had to hit it to a certain part otherwise it would be an out if you hit it over here. The home run was the fence, was this way. Three on three you had all the run plays kind of, you only have one base where the pitcher was. You know, today they call that a ,you know, in Latin America, they call it *flaquita*, skinny. Meaning the skinnier field, it's more narrow. There's the word, narrow, and it's three on three you know or they played a stickball or whatever. So this is right across the street from where we went to school and so, you know. Just that environment alone being raised right outside right across street from your school is really big because you saw directly the importance of education and also, you know, the way kids at that age. There was a lot of bullying. You saw a lot of schoolyard fights and I would live literally right across the street. So, I think that had a big impact on my life because Carroll high school is right there too so you got the elementary and the high school. So, we saw this big age group difference right in one you know land area so that was also crazy because we were learning things from high school people that you know at a very young age that that would probably shouldn't have been, you know, exposed to. Also, because of that but, again, I went to Kostoryz Dlementary. And then from Kostoryz Elementary, back then it was kindergarten through 6th grade. Today has changed to like a middle school model so the 6th graders are now in middle school. So we were in elementary in 6th grade. 7th 8th and 9th grade, the freshmen, were in junior high. So I went to South Park Junior High School. which is, our neighborhood, was really a total different neighborhood. I was right outside the district of Tom Brown which was really, most of my friends went to that school. I went over more to the West side of town which is where South Park was and is a totally different setting as far as like culture of the way we were raised. It's a lot different over there and I found that out real quick because South Park was survival of the fittest. It was it was gladiators. It was you know, back then they didn't call it bullying. It was just standing up for yourself and learning to deal with what we deal with today in so many different ways, political ways, in your work setting and other people put pressure on you in different ways and maybe it's not socially acceptable like it was back then to turn into violence and fight. It would come down to a fist fight type thing but, I never felt bullied. And people use that word now and maybe you know they really honed in on the behaviors as this is you know what what's going on but, back then it was just a, it's like a competition. [25:27]

You know, and the more your name got out there, the higher you climbed on that social ladder, the more it put a target on your back. We grew up very competitive, like I said, at that age when I was in junior high was break dancing came. So break dancing was really like a, the first forms of what gangs would be probably. Only the function of gangs is like criminal activity and ours was not, it was competition. We had our crews, our groups, you know, on this side of town we would go and break dance competition against somebody else improving, always trying to measure up, you know, to the to the athletic skills. I refer to athletic skills because the stuff that we used to do break dancing toward the end there was amazing all the spinning you know stuff and windmills, it was crazy, but it was a part of my life that I really I attribute to the growth that that I had as a person because your identity, you know, you're always going to pursue the things that you're good at. That's your passion, you know. And mine, I'm not saying was dancing, it was just simply like competition. This is what was in. This is what was popular. This is

what people were doing and I got into it and we practiced it and we every day, you know, we found a way to, you know. We had our crews our team and today that's just like teamwork, you know, and competition and being dedicated to what you do. So we were young and it was growing stuff but, man I learned a lot through that too because we go to the mall, Sunrise mall was just built right because the Padre Staples Mall now is La Palmera Mall. The other mall was the new mall. It had, you know, all the game rooms and all the people would go over there we would go and walk around with our crew and people you know it's like gangs would look at each other and before you know it, it's like here we go with the music turned on and you know. It turned so they saw that like as a threat you know for safety reasons obviously from all that. They would break that up right away like it was a fight. [27:55]

There's no fighting going on, there's dancing. People gather around and watch that type of, you know, competition and everybody knew who you were and like your crew and start finding out like hey man you don't know. We didn't know all the sides of Corpus. Before you know it we started seeing people from the north side come in and be like who's that. And it's totally different, you know, crew that was from I mean we had never seen these people before. And so I think in the '80s right, because this was in the '80s, early '80s, the mall kind of saw like the people, you know. Then they realized that this could be something that we could really draw people in and use it, you know, as some sort of a big competition, a tournament or whatever you call that, break dancing right. So all crews would go in and the individual deal and they had also for the for the crew. So, that thing didn't last but, maybe an hour. This thing was supposed to go like through Friday, Saturday, and Sunday was going to end the finals. It didn't even make it like two, three hours into it. I got into an individual in that individual thing and me and another guy that was from north side, you wouldn't believe how many people were there, you know. Sunrise mall they're like all the people from up top they were all on the everywhere I mean to the point they had like a car and, I want to say it was like a Cadillac, or something you know they put them in there to promote the car dealership or whatever. But, that car, people got on top of it and caved in the roof to watch this battle. Obviously, it was, you know, we were two of the best around. It was dancing, it was crazy because that translated later into a lot of other things for me. But, I found out real quick that, you know, when you start climbing that ladder you put a target on your back and now your envied, your somebody, you know, king of the hill. The king of the hill like, you remember that? The mountain, like you find a dirt little pile and then somebody would get on top. Kids getting out of school right, so someone ran up to the top of that thing and what happened? Everybody would run and come. Somebody trying to knock him down and they want to be. And so it became a game like of that and everything we do so when you reach, you know. I found out young that when you reach, start reaching that, you're working hard to, you better be prepared because there's always going to be people that are just going to try to knock you down and that kind of drove me. It really did. It drove me in some crazy way that I wanted that. I wanted people to, I don't know, envy me or want to come after me. Like it was almost like begging them because I know how prepared I am. Like I had this mentality. Why I had that, like I said my family setting or something that I was raised. My sister like having my sister kick my butt every day like whenever we would have our little sibling throwdowns or whatever. But, that's dealing with it. You know, you're a guy, you have to start learning to have this ego, especially back then, you know, men. It was a lot of male showiness

type thinking, you know. And so I was getting my ass kicked by my sister, you know, by a girl. [31:35] That she was doing that probably to every other guy too I mean you know. She was tough and but again you know I tried to put, wrap my mind around why I love to put myself into competitive atmospheres, environments and really not test someone else's or measure up to someone, but to have a standard of excellence that you operate at every day first step out of bed. This type of thinking that I that I grew up you know. My first step out of bed I'm going to get an advantage on somebody, whatever it was I was doing. No matter if it was dancing playing ping pong, we had recreation back in the day, baseball, I was always practicing. I wanted whatever I got into. I learned to follow that standard of excellence of competition. It's because we had a lot of pride you know. It's a really big part of my life that led me you know later into the things that I pursued as my profession with coaching. You know that was junior high and my break dancing days right, so things turned over really quick from there and got into heavy metal music. Right, from going from one end of R&B hip hop to like I'm wearing boots with a jean jackets with these patches of these heavy metal underground bands like Slayer and eventually Metallica the bands we know today came out. But I bring this up because that I was not a musician in any way form or fashion or anything but I love music but that type of music kind of fed that you know kind of it fed that thinking that I had of competition you know. That aggressiveness you know that you know that type of thing and during that time I really, it's kind of like a little dark time for me in my life because I found myself in a lot of trouble. You know fighting a lot. You know got into that type of thing and just remember always in trouble particularly at home you know. My dad didn't want anything like that going on fighting violence but it was just kind of something that came like I told you it was, we didn't call it bullying it was some sort of competition. I remember my dad always saying like you're going to meet somebody better that's always better than you. There's always somebody better, there's somebody badder, you know, and if you keep on and you keep going down this path you're going to end up in the hospital, you're going to end up dead someday. This doesn't lead anywhere good whatever so man it was it was right around that time that you know I was playing baseball in league. We didn't have select ball back then and stuff. And you know my dad grew up with Hector Salinas who is a pioneer of baseball in South Texas. At the time he was in college but he was the one who started the Moody baseball program. And so he was coaching in college at the time at Texas Southwest College and Steve Castillo took over the program at Moody. So I was in this dark time that I'm talking about, you know of growing up that I was experimenting with a lot of things probably I shouldn't have been, but I learned a lot, during those times. And there were there were a lot of lessons that I that I was going to take into you know when I coached and I was raising kids through the program like that so I understood where they were at with these experimental times. Kind of phases of your life you know and but, it was I say that really special time to me because I went from low performing grades fighting and getting trouble, being suspended. I was getting known now for not you know a competitor of you know something good of dancing and like you know balling and playing baseball or anything like that. It was more like the more of the negative, this guy fought you know so kind of developed the reputation that wasn't really going well for me. So Steve Castillo was real good friends with Hector Salinas, my dad grew up with Hector Salinas live right across the street from each other so I was very fortunate that one day they were playing cards at our house and I don't know how I came up in you know came downstairs or something there you

know Steve Castillo and they started you know saying hey he's a baseball player you know and this and that. And my mom was the first one to say yeah but he likes to fight now, he just, I'm thinking about putting him in boxing or doing something else because he's you know he likes that so I was so like embarrassed that at that moment because the people, the company that they were telling that to I was ashamed. Really, I mean shit, that's what I was good at. That's what I wanted you know I was getting into and finding myself in a lot of trouble because I was doing that all the time but that really changed my life. As I remember it changed my life because I was about to go, I was in the 9th grade and I was about to go to high school and when they did that called my mom called me out, my dad you know I'm sure he's probably talking about hey you know like he's going to go play baseball in high school you're going to ruin his reputation real quick. I imagine that's what it was like, but she did it for a reason. There's that motherly instinct like here there's some mentors or somebody that could tell him that's not right. He likes baseball and this is the path he wants you know so really it happened like that and Steve Castillo said that this is the way I like them. That's how I like I like my players to have that you know aggressiveness. And man I went like this is something positive all of a sudden. It went like from this to this I was embarrassed to, but when he said that I was like I'm going to play for him. You know, I already knew I was going to all the Moody high school games. Moody was really big back then. Started probably from the mid-70s yeah mid to late 70s the 80s and now I lived I told you I live right across the street you know going to Carol high school that was going to be my thing there and that would always go watch these games and my grandfather my dad would go park in the back of Cabiness Field a truck. In the back of the truck they would have little BBQ you know. Make hot dogs and it was awesome as you watch the game at Cabiness from the outfield because they had a chain link fence and Saratoga was a lot smaller. It was maybe like what do you call it like two you know two lanes you know one going this way. So they had all this grass area, kids would all play you know back in the grass area there and they would have every game Moody Trojans KCC, the radio AM would have Mr. Rodriguez I forgot his first name Rodriguez was doing the games on doing the commentary. So many people at home like a Cowboys game in Corpus cause Moody was the big you know the big show in town is Moody baseball very successful. And it was a product that come to find, a product that people would you know it sounds like a brand. People would pay to buy a ticket to watch this game. Where they are going to take their time and take their kids get in the outfield like we did and and get there early. And this place is packed rocking you know with people and it was it was a really big influence to me because like I said I grew up from baseball, real close knit family. So this is one of the things we got to do. And I always though well I'm going to have to go to Carroll because we lived right across the street. [40:10]

I had a lot of friends that were going to go there, but I went to South Park which is over there by Moody more and so I had a lot of friends that I played little league with that were going to go to Moody. I was always a big fan of Moody. So, man, from that moment and I remember clearly in my mind when he said I like that's the way I like my players to be you know not afraid of anything. You know kind of pointed out some positive things that were the dark side that I was on and took some positive from that and I ended up transferring out of Carroll, never set foot on the campus, and went to Moody to go play baseball world. Before I did that, I was at the end of my 9th grade year and one of the junior high coaches Gil Guillen said, "Where you

going to go to high school?" I said, "I'm going to go to Moody." He knew I was a baseball player. He said, "Have they come and talk to you?" Has anybody, like they know who, they got number of horses over there. They're studs. I'm just thinking like, I'm not a stud? I'm not, that really put a chip on my shoulder. I remember, I despised him for that for so long because he was telling me something I couldn't do. I couldn't, I was making a mistake and going to that school to play baseball because there was nothing but the best was going to go over there and he was basically saying in my mind that I wasn't good enough. I couldn't measure up. Again, put a chip on my shoulder. Later I realized that he really did me a favor. He challenged me. You better be ready to go over there and so all that together really made me put my best foot forward and preparing myself to go compete in baseball at the school you know. And I'm talking about baseball. Education should have been the priority, you know. I'm going to go to this school because I'm going to get a good education, you know. It was I'm going here, so what I'm what I'm emphasizing is that the sport, gotten me to my education. And that's where things really started turn for me because that standard of excellence that I brought up earlier was really define to us, what it is in character. The way you presented yourself. How you performed in the classroom and I learned that excellence is not a sometimes things. It was excellence is a habit. And your work ethic you know is everything. There was a saying that I was taught from Steve Castillo like he said he used to say, "I'd rather be lucky than good", you know. I'd rather be lucky than good. Hard work is what he was referring to. I'll work my tail off and you know have success, but when I have that success and someone asked me about it, I'm going to say, "Oh, I was just lucky." There's a humble way of not drawing attention to what you really do behind the scenes to get you know to where you're within success. So I turn things around, I remember my parents were like "What's going on with you?" And As and Bs I was making all of a sudden. Dressing different, cut my hair different, behaving different there's a lot even more polished you know through that program, so I was blessed to go through that. And in the workouts were just they were unbelievable, by the way, we used to run and I would take things so seriously that he would say, "Every Friday we want time you in the offseason in a mile." So what was I doing every day? I was running a freaking mile. Running them. I mean I was running them all. I got to where I was running more, but I was going it was all tuned up. Friday I got to be my last time. And I wasn't trying to beat everybody else hell I was people. That wasn't the point. The point was I had I learned to compete at my standard of what I was trying to do. I wasn't going to do it to anybody else. I'm just going to barely try to pass or I was trying to get beat my last time. And everything we did is weights, running, sprints, you know our time you know. And that's where another thing that I learned along the way that really inspired me and knowing that anything that you can measure you could improve. So that's why they test you in school on the content that you know that you are learning. It's accountability, but you know if you don't measure how fast you got in a 60 how are you going to how are you going to improve that every time unless you know, I'm going to do these workouts, I'm going to do my squats, I'm going to start reaching into all kinds of different ways to find ways to get faster because you're peeking out now on your gains are starting to be small margin. Like you're just getting a little bit better, but you don't know that when you're young. So you're you go I mean I went on a mission of trying to always be better and improve myself in my performances whether it be baseball or just the skill sets that came with it. So Moody High School was a big time in my life where I grew as a person and started kind of putting some things in my life, the phases that I

went through, and the competition stuff that I was telling kind of came to a conglomeration where, man, I'm actually that even the negative parts of my life became something that were positive in you know in helping me become the person that I was at that time and you know performing at high levels in the classroom, you know. In sports my character was getting a lot better. I was learning to have, you know, practice my manners a lot more. I wanted to be polished up. Your clean cut image part was so important, you know. I came to find that all of that was happening because I had another level that I was going to try to reach and that was going to be college, you know. So I did my four years in high school at Moody and had a lot of success. I was, you know, all district player, all South Texas, all metro. And then something really big happened in my life because after I had a couple of really good years there. I ended up batting like 450 or something right, and I was the leadoff batter so RBIs were hard to get. I had like 30 RBIs as a lead off and I was I was going for a stolen base record that was held by somebody who is an ex-player from Moody who ended up being a pro with the Toronto Blue Jays, my buddy Logan. So I was chasing that and really these type of things really made me rise up, but what would really had an impact on me in the long run but particularly at that moment was after that one good season, you know, my junior year, that my dad said, "Hey man, you know, it's just unheard of to be able to. Those numbers are crazy. So, you know" basically he was telling me don't expect to have another year like that. [48:18]

Because it's really downhill from there getting me hard to do that again, man I took that so personally I remember it hit me just like it hit me when that coach told me he thought I could you know make it as a player at Moody and it really came from your father you know basically he was telling me this is as good as you are and don't expect any better than that. To think wrap your mind around that, that debilitating you know type message coming from your parent that we so parents like you got to be really be careful. What you say because you say it meaningfully forward but it's understood totally backwards and, and wrong maybe from the you your kid, but you say what you need to when you're a parent I know that too but so you know when he told me that I went on this mission again like another level I I remember thinking like you know what I'm, I'm gonna die for this like really I literally used to tell myself that I would run myself into the ground and say if I die at least I die trying to do this isn't that crazy I'm saying when I say die I mean literally I've run myself throw up I'd be it was just unhealthy probably but it was a good lesson. You know in hindsight to me that your passion and the way somebody tries to tell you that you can't do something you're passionate about, man like I went on this different mission I'm telling you and everything that I did I was I was just another level another level but I—I've always been I felt blessed that I would sleep very little, I wake up wake up super early in the morning just the way I it's my algorithm, my mom said when I was a baby she would little toddler should hear noises should go over there I'd be on the ground playing in the dark with cars or just toys or whatever and be like 3-4 in the morning. So I've always been that, so I would use that get up and be like everybody's sleep right now I'm gonna kick their ass in whatever it was that we were doing you know so I I really took that to another level during that time after my dad told me and you know what low and behold like I—I surpassed the numbers by another 50 points in the batting average and whatever right so overall had another great you know end up going being scouted by colleges and that's what I was realizing like I didn't even know why I was being all polished up. I was trying to change my

image clear clean cut and you know doing all these things that that were like totally out of my practice but it was because I like was preparing myself that I that's how subconscious works is where I love watching college ball and pro ball and I had this thing that I wanted to is what I wanted to do and I'll see clean cut guys back in the day they had and then you know they weren't like now a lot of times you see guys with dreadlocks and long hair and stuff and I'm not judging them saying at that time this is what I was trying to accomplish in just a lot through a lot of hard work because I was probably at best a good high school baseball player. You know I really that was that's you know now I look back, and it's like the level is so high because of technology because of the league the league balls. All we used to play we play only this time of year and then baseball was out like now it's all year round the levels through the roof I look back and I'm like wow it's getting so much better than I was when I was that age, but it it was it was amazing that I got to go even go play in college so college is a whole different animal for me that you know I I was going to have to make another big adjustment and a part of your life. Already where you're how do you say you're set in your ways of doing things right so I was going to have to go off to college and think differently. I came from this program where I played and I thought it's the greatest coach and the greatest program and so when I went to this you know college program and I saw how little our coaching knew and how half ass, for lack of word he ran you know the program practices and stuff like that. I had a bad probably a really bad attitude toward what I was doing there and it was affecting me it was affecting me because I thought like I'm better than this, when really I wasn't even good enough really, the truth is I wasn't even good enough I didn't know what I was going to face when we got into playing we were playing San Jac so Roger Clemens went there I faced Andy Pettit in college, so these are this is something that I was already like I didn't even know what I was getting into the game it was you know speeding up and I didn't even know that my attitude is keeping me from getting better so you know I was a steroid era so players are jacked up big you know look like football players. This is what we were trying to do, we were taking supplements and lifting and trying to get you know this image of the player Major League player cosplay that you see at the time uh and I really lost focus of what you know the craft was you know. I was very inspired in high school I didn't mention that when I was going to play in high school my dad got me a week he would always take us to the bookstore on start a toy store was bookstore and he'd say you can add two magazines three comics or a book a record like a little forty-five vinyl. So we go to this used place on Ayers over there right I found a Pete Rose book my dad bought me that book and when I read that book I was Charlie Hustle the man the guy I'm telling you that real aggressive work ethic type you know that's Pete Rose he's a blue collar you know grinder in Major League Baseball and you know I wanted to kind of really I was inspired by that. So you know when I things change so much at this one time, I'm pointing out because it's significant to me because I could have really fell off right there. [55:13]

I could have fell off I had no business in college now I look back playing this you know my skill set whatever but I had something else. I had a great attitude, great work ethic, and I and my IQ being raised around the game, for situational play and stuff like that was very high but my attitude was in the way because I felt like I was at this program that coach didn't know what he was doing much less how he was going to pick a player that was going to be a starter. I could see how he was favoring these players that were sophomores but we were in a junior college.

We were all the same you know freshman was like a sophomore because we're all trying to get to the next level of play, you know, university status. My attitude and I could see you know anyways I was I was really going backward because of my attitude so you know it really this took me to another level of thinking because I had to change my attitude. Before I changed anything and made adjustments to being able to hit his pitching play at this level I had to change my whole attitude about the way I was being coached what you know he knew and didn't know was he had nothing to do with that's out of my control. It was so I learned how you know through an attitude change of attitude carrying myself a certain way to be able to adjust and and think turned out that coach was like my biggest fan and I say that not being like he was worship me or everyone use the biggest fan of mine because, I was probably just probably the smallest guy on the team not probably I was and it didn't matter you know I found a way to will myself to succeed for our team. At the time you know and just I didn't realize how this guy really our coach Arnie uh Alvarez how he grew to respect when we had our differences and a lot of things because I told you my attitude it wasn't getting me anywhere but even after all those things that he and I went through. He's still with raised my scholarship at the end of the year use me as a recruiting backside come to corpus you give me the van give me money send me to corpus come recruit from there's a lot of good baseball you know Ray at the time Miller Joe Curiel and um Mike Cantu all these studs. These programs were very rich in in a CCISD and so he would send me down and I was like one of his favorites turned out but man I've looked back at that and it taught me as a coach never to hold a grudge like Oh my shoulder. Never against these young kids who are learning and they're developing and they're making adjustments in their life so I learned that you know from my own experience. That and it could have I could, it could, have all been over for me if if I wouldn't had this guy this coach or this coach or somebody to see me through, my you know hard times, or whatever it is that I could have fell off like really quick and it would have been all my fault you know because of my attitude but I I learned that when I was, I promised myself that I was never gonna shatter anybody's dreams nobody ever did that to me. They could have they could have done that to me when I was in high school never let me play again. I could of got cut we didn't cut so when I became coach I didn't cut I didn't believe in it and so later you know I'd have players was growing pains we, we're like a family. I've come to find and I I translate that to them too so when they mess up and they get in disagreements with one another even fist fights sometimes that hey, we are family things happen but we're going to be all right the easy way to deal with speed kick someone out. The hard part was to make hold them accountable make them stick there and work through all of that and grow you know so um I was blessed that I had a kind of like a ability to put a spotlight on these things. In my life that could have been over for me right here this was a turning point a tipping point, you know, somewhere that you know a point, where I wouldn't be where I'm at today or had the opportunities had this tip one way, or the other you know so just I just I believe in a higher power and I believe that God puts us and prepares us for the things that we are gonna face in our future. Whether it be fighting you know growing through experimenting with who knows all the stuff that that I I went through my dark times and it was like a I was meant to go through this because I couldn't be a coach, if I didn't understand these things and they've gone through them and know that this is a phase and like coach Castillo said I like my players like that. Like these are the tough type gritty players that are going to get on the field they're going to get the job done because they have a

different gear of willpower and you know that grit that we talked about. So it all turned out and translated into you know after I played two years at Southmost and Hector Salinas got the the job at Texas A&M-Kingsville where I finished my playing days my education graduated.

[1:01:12]

I became a coach there under him learned a lot you know there and then um during I was already in the college you know ranks of coaching didn't even know. It didn't even know it was just living doing what you had to do what was right in front of you know tenfeet in front of me just you know far as my lights could shine that's where my focus was and it was until when I was getting I had to do my student teaching that they just buy some you know chance of fate that they didn't want you to go back to the high school that you were at that you went to they wanted you to have a different experiment experience with you know the cultures kids is whatever that you something different you know that and I could see that you only want you diversity makes you grow. So how I ended up they sent me back to Moody so that was my dream but when I when I was at Moody and I left I wanted to be a coach, at Moody. Win a state championship and so how they I ended up over here when that they were totally against that was amazing because I went right under, you know my head coach the same one that really influenced me to go to Moody through that deal that my house when they were playing cards I was telling you about and so he was much more advanced. Now in his years you know I've experienced so he me coming in he sped my process up all his experiences Steve Castillo's experience took wealth, of knowledge and trial, and error and you know and growing from it and he met he perfect I see perfect he really took that program which I would you say was great, it was better than my college program to this other levels. When I came back I was like amazed wow this is so much more advanced and I even remember it and that I even thought it could be or whatever so here's something that again is going to turn something also for personal growth you know for me especially professionally. So I had my student teaching days there and I when they offered me a job there I was like screw college with I mean you would think that right that would be I'm in the college level. I'm I'm at the echelon of what we do here one more step would be pro you know like I dished it all for the dream. I wanted to play at Moody when I was a kid and you're playing there and I want to come back and I want to coach said I came back and I coach so I was in assistant coach and he gave me a lot of duties and trusted me with a lot of you know big time and a big time program like that you give me give me like some lot of freedom to coach the you know the hitters and through those things. I learned a lot but I just always remember him telling me like you have this brain like you see things this certain way like you have something you know that I had to work real hard for and I really think that I just because he sped up my you know process of learning my IQ went up. I don't know I don't understand but he very always was very influential to me and made me think that I was I was a probably a lot better than I probably actually was you get what I'm saying trying to overachieve or so when he got offered a job to be the Athletic Director there, coordinator they call it there at school. He told me I'm you you're the guy I'm turn this program over to you. So when that when that was happening in the process like I had a couple of people this one particular person tell me again like you know I told you about that coach told me I couldn't my dad I thought was telling me that this guy that I really I worked with and I learned a lot from Steve elementary he's a Superintendent now you know very successful turns

educational programs around. Like he's amazing he's just out of this world with the way he thinks and he's out-of-the-box and he's very creative with you know he's speak he's just a well-rounded you know individual that that fits so perfectly into what he does but he was a big influence. I learned a lot from him but he said I think you wanna do this when they offered me the job at moody like I don't think this is probably good for you like in good that's what friends do they tell you straight you know people get hurt and they are you know you learn to appreciate somebody that's not going to sugarcoat stuff. [1:06:01]

When you need it most it's like your parent so to have a friend like that too, I wasn't how you say like I wasn't offended I really took his view and went like wow he he's really got a point he's like this program is is here at the top like all that program could do is go backward. Now I'm thinking like this is my dream I I don't see it that way I can see why he was saying that, you know giving me this advice, or run you out of town man if you lose 5 or 10 games like this program is a winner and all could hear was like he he's not right and he doesn't know what I can do, I'm not gonna follow that advice because I I think that this program still hasn't done something want to state championship. And I think that I can you know not that I'm better than anybody or anything like that but hell I was groomed to you know the coach that I've learned that there was running this program spend me up to you know how that works. It's prodigy thing well lo and behold you know I took this job and proud as punch that it's my dream to become a coach there and leave the same kids from the same neighborhoods and this is where you know that's where I met you, Michael. You know young kid and I was running the program and you coming in we had kids like you that were able to be our bat boy or coming that like you didn't know where you were 5:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m. in the morning you were on your bike what ten years old nine years old coming in looking at these kids. So like I said being next to a campus right you lived right there there's something different that environment right and yours was Moody baseball like that you lived right there so You know like I was I was right in the middle of all that and trying to always eat it sleep, it let me live it, my mind never turns off you know from this game this is the way I do this I don't know a lot about a lot of things but I know a lot about baseball. I know a lot about young men and athletes you know and how to make them better like the people around you better so I was doing all that living the dream or had a lot of success. One not one state championship but you know two and had in the in the ten years of being a head coach there half the time we were at the state tournament competing for a championship and not only that a national championship. But you know back to what I was saying like God our higher power prepares us for these things through our passage you just follow your path that's your calling you follow your passion and you're going to get led through to and my house competition and I was saying to you in my dark days of learning I had to go through that stuff. So you know can't think the people like Steve Castillo, my dad even the coach told me that I couldn't play at Moody before that Guillen I thank those people because, those were some of the biggest growth times that I had when you know I had to get that chip on my shoulder and say I'm gonna prove him wrong and that's that's mental toughness and grit you know had I not done that or been raised that way or put myself into environments that I grew that way and were wired that way. I could never get to being a leader of the program that I you know envisioned myself doing and then teaching the kids that I coached the same thing. How to reach down deep don't depend on somebody else pat you on the back and give you your ups

like you you gotta know it's here the well is you know it's from within me and reach deep down in there and you be your biggest influencer, you be your biggest like proponent, you know when things are going your way you talk to yourself and tell yourself every success is right around the corner everything's going to be alright. That's because I can't depend on anybody else because if I had done that back in those times through the people that I felt like I could have turn me one way or the other I would of gave up somewhere along the line and my path would of change who knows.[1:10:42]

How that would have turned out but I'm real proud to say that it was these type of things that were adversity that sparked me to grow you know and and to keep plugging along and find a way to do things so you know. I did that and probably like just one of the greatest experience that I had with the coach was you know playing in the state tournament in state championship games crowds unbelievable the stage but man when you're in a fishbowl when you're in there and you're doing it you don't realize you're just on that automatic pilot but you're just so locked in with the purpose and the drive that you're doing like you don't it's not till after that you realize. That what you would actually doing you know and when after afterwards I look back and I go, wow we played you there you played also Michael in these games that that I've experienced in you know if not you were you were there as a bat boy. You were there in the stands but you a big part of this thing all along but you know what it was like that environment it wasn't a stage that was for an amateur we sold out Whataburger Field in any other field that we went to. The lines were people were waiting with their chairs you know hours before the game to get a ticket and to me that's what a product's all about when you when you put a vision to your life for a product a brand and you give it a name you you bring it to life and you're writing this story you're shaping it. Smiling you know you got the pen, you got the paintbrush, you got the you know you chiseled this thing just the way you wanted this perfect like you got this vision right so this is by no means a stage for an amateur. I was so proud I'm most proud of not the games we wanted to win win loss records or even the championships it was in hindsight looking what I did to help these kids lock in on the moment biggest moment then you could imagine as an athlete. I mean I told you about break dancing and being in the in a mall where it was like these crowds were big to me like this was sold out minor League Baseball Whataburger field three games in a series against a giant Calallen, whose prospects we had no business with these people on the field people said right. The people that knew baseball you know the they were saying that that we were going to lose this series and we were gonna you know so and it was quite the opposite but what it was and in hindsight when I said they were you know were so well prepared y'all wanted to be on that stage, y'all understood we want to play we do all of this to be on that stage to win you know like and man in hindsight watching that getting outside myself and watching that front of this you know thousands of people amateur high school players who went on and you know they're still doing special things. That it's amazing so focus intensity and the ability to pull together as a team and say no today they're not going to dismantle us as a unit as a team you know as a pack like they all made a decision these players made a decision to stick together and not give in and look what the outcome was the success and just parades of years it's like a legacy people talk about I remember getting calls from you know Baseball America is you know the college pro prospects you know they cover all that and they were calling me to get the story about the game that

they heard high school game they heard that you know was played in front of you know over 10,000 you know people the Max I don't even know what the number is. [1:15:29]

I just know that there is a fire code that has a Max amount of fans that they will allow into that place and it was cut off, those only one game that gave it a a run in numbers and that was Roger Clemens rehab game that he threw here with the Hooks when he was at the Astros organization so imagine that amateurs could bring a community of people from all over there from coming from San Antonio you know Laredo all over Texas to come see this game. See you know these young amateurs perform on a stage that was a professional stage and do it right and at a level the game is our play was sharp it was nothing like you said that's amateur play. They made this mistake they did this they look sloppy it was sharp all the way around you know on that stage you expect there's some nerves so, you know again like my life the highlights I'm saying in my career being a professional because I got a lot of highlights in my life of being you know a parent becoming a parent and other stuff in my life that I really value. But this is my professional life is amazing so you know I went through all this stuff and, you know, it's what goes up must come down type you know talk here I got I got to a point my life where I really like my my my thinkings becoming different I started struggling with some of the things that were my strength almost like I became my own worst enemy because of they were all saying about my sleep like I something there that was not it was catching up to me in hindsight. I'm saying I found out and so I started drinking more you know I found that I was self-medicating like I was I was trying to turn off this thing that that I couldn't like be in peace or can't explain it still but so I got myself in a in a in a mess as a coach being in this promise that I dreamt of being in leading these kids in this direction and like I got myself into a a mess here legally. In that situation and found myself going listen you grew up through this program, you came back it was your dream, and and I got to the point where I made this decision that my leadership is no longer you know what's best for this program. So I made a unselfish decision team that program that I love I grew up in that I was gonna remove myself you know after I I you know got in trouble with the DWI that just got blown up, and you know publicized so badly that you know my family was affected by and stuff like that I think a lot of people that used to pat me on the back and shake my hand. You know in in the in our work you know areas particularly in the administration all of a sudden they totally changed their there's thinking you know and and now I could I could kind of see the writing on the wall. It was it was a I disappointed a lot of people now myself accountable but in hindsight I removed myself from that went into business learned a lot from doing that I opened up the baseball Academy last blast skills and I learned a lot from that and being a businessperson and what comes with you don't make any business plans and using that same grit and work ethic and stuff to make things work with it all worked out really well for me. I grew a lot during that time had to go through probation and all kinds of stuff to to like, how do you say like, reprove myself redeem myself there's the word to redeem myself as this person and show not just everybody you know that got to witness this thing but myself that this is you know out of my character being irresponsible and not thinking about the kids that I lead. You know but we are human what I found though in like adversity makes us grow sometimes you think it's the worst thing and it's changed my whole life this is my dream and there was more so many more years to come and to win a national championship and the

thing the thing that we hadn't done yet there but what ended up I ended up finding out through this was that I suffered from mental illness. [1:20:53]

At a certain age I started getting you know what I ended up getting got diagnosed for bipolar you know and people hear that word and I think the worst they think somebody they can't control themselves or I mean you know it's just whatever people stereotype that mental illness like that was crazy that person and it's nothing like that at all. The person that suffers most you know from a mental illness is that person themselves they don't even know it and I realized that I was self-medicating the alcohol was slowing my stuff like it was getting me to a point where I could find some really it was a final piece. I was numbing myself from all this all this suffering from this thing that was my it was the thing that made me who I am and how I went about my business to give me the energy to lock in very single mindedly into a vision and you know and achieve at this level that was a it was that same blessing that I thought I was blessed that I sleep you know two, three hours a day and get up in the morning kick everybody's ass while they are still asleep that caught up to me. Ended up finding out you know he's like had a really good doctors that it's saw me you know through the process of these excepting that you have a mental illness. It it took me years it took me three, four years to internalize this thing in in a but today I feel like the adversity I went through from the DWI and that thing where I had to get made me grow. I'm a better coach he said wow you know you were bad example to no like today I understand drinking and the law and the dangers and all that a lot I see it so much more different level that when I speak to a high school player or anybody for that matter and talk about this thing. I can I'm real I'm I keep it real like I'm gonna tell him I'm not ashamed I already went through all that stuff but I found a way to grow from that and redeem myself. Luckily that you know that the law enforcement the District Attorney and all them that gave me the opportunity to do that because they didn't have to and I grew from that the mental part of what I what led me to is if I didn't get that right if this wouldn't have happened to me I would not have ever found out what was going on with me and understanding and be able to have this medication you know and there's you there's people out there and there's help and there's resources. If I didn't find out I'm telling you right now I don't know if I'd be here today because it was that bad is going in a in a in the state of mind. That just not indescribable but proud I'm proud so proud to say that I have family friends you know and resources and people have stood by me people that supported me I needed it. I really did it's tough you want to be and all that stuff that you developed your grit and mental toughness and all this stuff man when it when it it's real and it's it hits you in a way that you know you doubt you almost there's almost a hopelessness to dealing with some of these things that I went through. It's the people the same people that I invested my you know life either coaching developing a relationship with his friends family that these are the people that were there for me that helped me see me through these times and you know in hindsight again God's not done with me. So I feel like he's got me to this point it's all for a reason and what's coming today I'm at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, still doing ball coaching but it's a different animal totally different the challenge that you've taken on I've taken on coaching now women and I feel like I got an advantage of that because I was raised remember back from the beginning when we say I was raised with two sisters you know my mom my dad was going left so. I feel like I have I keep develop relationships and understanding how this side of me that that understands that and I above to the task like of

taking this program to another level and winning championship. Got visions but that said God's not done with me and I trust that process that he he's taking through me through my life and I appreciate you taking the time to get my historical account Michael appreciate it.

[Mr. Michael Franco] no thank you coach Gallegos you know very honored to sit down here and learn a little bit more about you and thank you again for sitting down with me. [1:26:30]