

Summary of Oral History Transcript
Student, Citizen, Soldier: Oral History and Student Veterans

Trinidad, Socrates

U.S. Marines, E4

Interviewer:

Interview conducted by Robert Amerault, Salem State University, on 4/2/2018

Summary of transcript:

Socrates Trinidad was born in 1990 and grew up in Lynn, Massachusetts. He talks at length about the difficulties he faced during his childhood in Lynn. He joined the military as a “way out” of the poverty he experienced growing up, and chose the Marines because he wanted the challenge. Trinidad was deployed to Kuwait in 2011, where he served on the Anti-Terrorism Security Team. After getting out of the Marines, Trinidad moved to San Diego, California and began to pursue his undergraduate degree before returning to Massachusetts to be closer to his son. Now, Trinidad attends Salem State while working for the National Parks Service. He ultimately hopes to run for president of the United States.

Robert Amerault: Hello, my name is Robert Amerault. Today's date is April 2, 2018 and I will be interviewing U.S. Marine Corp Veteran Socrates Trinidad as part of the Salem State University's Veteran Oral History Project. So, welcome Mr. Trinidad. Thank you for coming in.

Socrates Trinidad: Thank you for inviting me.

R: So, I'm going to go through this interview mostly chronologically, just to kind of get a full picture of your life and what the military meant to you.

S: Oh, alright.

R: So, you had that, on your biography sheet, that you went to school in Lynn. I was wondering, what was it like growing up there?

S: Yeah, Lynn was interesting, especially being at such a young age. I went to Classical [High School].

R: Yeah.

S: In Lynn. But I started school in Lynn since Elementary: Covit, Emmergene, and then worked all the way up to Classical and I graduated there in 2009.

R: Nice. Awesome. I actually had a quick question. Is Socrates a family name? Because I noticed your dad had the same name.

S: Yes, it's a family name. I'm going to start the tradition.

R: Oh.

S: I'm the junior. I'm going to make sure my son's name in the future is going to be Socrates and just start off that tradition. Yes, it's going to become one.

R: I actually had the same way. My name is Robert and so is my dad and my grandfather, so I'm going to do the same thing.

S: Yeah, continue the legacy right.

R: Yeah. So, did you know that you wanted to join the marines from an early age or was it something you realized throughout high school?

S: From an early age. Since I was in middle school I already knew. Because I already knew my parents wasn't going to be able to pay for college.

R: Oh

S: I already knew that I wasn't gonna be able to make it. So my parents told me off the bat, "Hey, you know, going into the military is your way out." And I was like, "But what if I want to do something else?" And he was like, "Don't worry about it. Go into the military. It's your way out." So that was pushed onto me from really young and he used to talk about my grandfather and how he served for his country. So he was like, but here is for us Latinos, being a Latino here is going to be really hard. Join the military and get out of poverty because that was the lifestyle that Lynn brought to my family and that was the lifestyle that we had in Lynn.

R: So, you mentioned your grandfather. What did he serve for?

S: He served in the police in the Dominican Republic. He was there. He loved it and he retired, got out, and that's all he talks about when he's farming in the Dominican Republic. He talked about his years in the military and that's all he pushed upon my father, but my father started a, you know, help by coming to the United States and trying to help, you know, his family back in the Dominican Republic and now I'm in a good position where I can help my dad help his family.

R: That's wonderful.

S: Yeah, it's pretty great, because the sacrifices my father made coming here and now me going through the military being able to, you know, get out of it and be so privileged to come to Salem State University and just so excited to be here. Once I got here, being that I was right next to my home and hearing all these great people talking about how they came out of Salem State and got all these opportunities. It was just unbelievable when I got the opportunity. I got accepted here and I definitely worked hard and I was able to achieve these goals.

R: Congratulations, that is wonderful.

S: Thank you.

R: The other thing I had is, would you recommend joining the service right out of high school? Because we have a lot of people who, some join out of high school, some go middle college, after college-

S: Yes, right out of high school if you are in the poverty or in the lower class, for sure.

R: Got you. So, I have here that you went to boot camp at Paris Island. I actually have a friend who just got out of there. Did your experience compare to some of the horror stories that some people tell about it?

S: Yeah, but I was mentally strong. I'm from the sin city, I'm from Lynn, you know. I experienced so many things when I was younger. I went through so many experiences that boot camp was nothing.

R: Really?

S: Right.

R: Wow.

S: You know what I am saying? I've been yelled at, I've been screamed at. I've been thrown at. I've been slammed up. It's just, coming out of Lynn, you have to have that mentality that you can, you know, overcome everything and being from that area, you know, you're raised in a society where it's all about, you know, conquering and being able to succeed and being able to, you know- how resilient you are. So it was an extremely important for me to be resilient during what everybody called hard, but nobody lived in Lynn, where I was at, you know. Where you guys all from? Oh. But some of them did, and we were able to relate because some other kids that went through boot camp and it was easy for them and oh, alright, cool, so you come from those areas, from Lynn, too? Alright.

R: Yeah, you got each other.

S: Me too. You know, but it's been- it was a great time. It was a great experience, something different and boot camp was able to provide a lot of things that my parents wasn't able to provide, or the discipline that my parents wasn't able to be because they had to work all the time. They couldn't be there for me all the time, you know?

R: Yeah.

S: So, boot camp right out of high school for kids that, you know, are, are going through a hard time or, you know, are trying to figure out what to do next. The military is a great, it's a great opportunity.

R: That's awesome. That's a really cool story. So why did you join the Marine Corp versus, say, the Army or the Navy?

S: Because everybody kept talking about how hard it was. [laughs] It was just like, come on, like oh it's gonna be so hard and it was nothing. I was in better shape than the people at boot camp, than my drill instructors. So then when they told me we were going to run the whole island, I was like let's do it! [laughs] Let's see who's going to last longer because I ain't gonna give up. When I see you drop, I drop.

R: Wow.

S: Yeah.

R: So what about, like, a lot of people talk about the indoctrination process, it's supposed to break you down. But clearly you seem very resilient to it. What did you think of it?

S: It was a great strategy but it didn't work for the people that came that was brought up being tough or, you know, having to, you know, endure, you know, certain situations that, you know, that kids shouldn't be going through and to be able to succeed or people believe that they're going to be able to succeed, you know, those situations. The indoctrination, how they did it was great. I thought it was a great strategy, you know, nobody crossed the line. Everybody was moving fast. It worked, you know, it worked and got us together, worked together. It got us to, you know, have that same mentality, have the, you know, the same drive and be able to work together as a team, so I think it worked.

R: That's wonderful.

S: Pretty good.

R: So, when you were in boot camp did you always intend to work with the 0152 MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] or-?

S: Yeah, security forces, yeah. Yeah. Once I sat down with my recruiter, my recruiter told me "Hey, these are the lists," and I was like, "Alright, what's going to have me travel around the world?" Because I'm not going to have the opportunity to because my parents are not going to pay for it. I mean I have to work for it. So I was like let's do something that's going to have me travel the world early, and I kind of go make the best out of this. And he told me, "Hey, listen. You want to be on the front lines, you want to go out there and be pushing and kicking down doors? Or do you want to be pushing papers and do you want to be in an office setting and do you want to have that administrative skills? Do you want to be out there hands

on and get in the action?" I was like, "Yo, bring me the toughest thing out there because ain't nothing can stop me." If I survived Lynn and if I got out of sin city, I can get out of anywhere, so. And it was life-changing because I thought my life was hard.

R: Wow.

S: Yeah.

R: So, you mentioned that you were in the anti-terrorism security team. Was that the fleet anti-terrorism security team?

S: Yes.

R: Oh.

S: Big, yeah, it was, we have- it's a force. It's like a small sector, it's like a- we're considered like the SWAT team, right. You could kind of consider it like a SWAT team, you know. Their fledged in with other bigger organization, but it's like their specializing in security and we go around the embassies and provide security all over. Make sure that we know the ins and outs in, and how to protect all the people that are doing all the administrative work for the people there and making sure everyone is getting accounted for, and making sure that, you know, policies and procedures are being, you know, in place.

R: Definitely invaluable.

S: Right, so we have to make sure that that security was there, making sure that all that information was being protected.

R: That's great.

S: Yeah.

R: So, you mentioned that you were deployed in Bahrain.

S: Yes.

R: What was some of the duties that you had there?

S: So, in Bahrain we had to do security. We also enhanced our military training with different weapons and we also got the opportunity to train with other militaries as well.

R: Oh, the other branches?

S: Yeah, from our military and from their military, from the Bahrainian Army.

R: Oh, I got you.

S: Yeah, we got to work with the Korean Army as well. They had like small little armies and Special Forces teams, security teams. So, it was helping them as well as, you know, policies and procedures. You know, helping them try and increase their knowledge and be able to work with them where, you know, their skills are also, you know, progressing.

R: That's really interesting.

S: Yes, it was extremely- it was a great opportunity. I got to, you know- I'm there, an eighteen, nineteen-year-old, you know, telling a twenty line squad fire with guns. It was awesome and being able to have felt that sense of leadership and be able to have that amount of control at that age got me prepared to what was next and the type of leadership that I want to become and the type of man that I want to become. 9:29

R: What do you mean when you say that, like the type of leader that you want to become?

S: Oh, I'm going to run for president.

R: You're- wow that- I saw that. I was going to ask you that near the end.

S: Yeah for sure.

R: Wow. That's- that's an ambitious goal. I really like that.

S: Yeah, for sure. Everybody talks about how hard it is. We're about to prove everybody wrong.

R: That's great. I'm hoping to see you on a ballot one day.

S: Right. Donald Trump made it look easy. [laughs] So you know what I mean. It's got to be easy because if he can do it, I can do it. So it's just the same thing. [laughs]

R: Great. So, I had a question. You said you never saw combat, but your MOS makes it sound like, that you would consistently be like, ousting enemy offenses or like reclaiming

lost outposts. I don't know if I was reading the wrong description but it kind of seems contrary.

S: We was always ready for whatever happened. We was always on alert. We was always trained like if it was right in the middle of the action, what should I do at all times and I loved it. Because I was always ready and I know I'm still ready and I could still go out there. I still work out and I still have that mentality that they could come here, you know. And making sure that I'm ready for whatever happens is something that, you know, we was training and I love the opportunity. And, you know, that I got to, you know, be able to make sure that my family is safe and that I have the skills and the knowledge to help keep my family safe, you know. A little bit more than just the average.

R: I got you. So after serving in Bahrain and all that, did your views of the War on Terror change from before you joined the Marines, to now that you served? Or is it the same now?

S: Still, I mean, I gained more knowledge. So now that I understand what's really going on and how people are handling it, and you know, how to handle it. You know, my perspective has, you know, progressed in a way where it's just really different I believe. Because I've seen it in one way and a lot of people seen it in a different way.

R: Well do you mind sharing how you can see it? Because obviously I don't have the experience that you have and I'd be interested in your opinion on it.

S: So, what is your perspective in anti-terrorism? What is your definition of anti-terrorism?

R: Well, to me, it sounds like a defensive force. That you're just looking out for any potential threats attacking the U.S. bases or buildings in foreign territory. So I was wondering, to you, is that how it works out there? Or do you, like, have prospective targets you're looking out for or something?

S: We're always on alert and ready for everything. So, you know, my mind, my mindset right now is always could be that potential that, you know, someone could attack. Someone could invade us. You know, there's always some, you know, type of level of awareness. That I'm always ready for it. Even if nothing's happened in years, you know. It's cool. I still live my life but I'm always on alert. I'm always ready. You never know. I'd rather have my back, you know, than not watch it at all, you know. So I'd always rather be ready for the situation in case it does happen, and for me that's pretty much worst case scenario, you know. If I'm not ready to fight back terror or terrorism- and terror could, you know, it doesn't always have to be something physical, it could also be mentally, it could be emotionally. So as long as I'm ready to overcome those objectives, you know, I feel like my mindset is always, you know, waiting to see if it's going to happen.

R: Got you. So with your time in the Marines, did that effect how you viewed U.S. military actions in the Middle East?

S: In which concept? Because there's so many different ways that I could view the military. Can you go a little bit deeper on that one?

R: Yeah, of course. So some people view, like, the joint War on Terror as kind of like a West versus East situation. There's a lot of critics of the war, saying it was unjustified and people thinking we're just invading for the sake of invading. I wondered what your opinion was on the topic.

S: People are invading just to invade? I mean, I guess that- I mean people invade because their president told them to invade, you know, so. But I believe the military has the same view as, you know, we're in the embassy we're always ready to see if they're gonna come and attack. We're always ready for it. So, you know, the military will see it the same way, you know. We're ready, we're training our guys to be ready, you know. Whoever it is, it's not really a West versus- it could be our same people because I also been nonlethal weapons which means that when, you know, U.S. citizens wants to, you know, protest and they want to get violent, I have to be ready for that too. So it's not really, you know, them versus us thing. It's just-

R: Okay.

S: Overall.

R: Alright, thank you.

S: And that's how I see it and that's how everybody in the military sees it.

R: Awesome.

S: Because I trained with so many different people from so many different cultures, from some many ethnicities, from, you know, classes and economic status and so many different point of views, and so many different- it's incredible. To be surrounded by so many different, you know, people that are from different countries and different origins and just, the diversity is unbelievable. The people you meet and the way they see discipline, the way they see leadership, and the way they see, you know, how finish should be taken care of or how things should be taken care of is a lot. But we have one way or one structure to do things. You follow the structure, we overcome. So then we all get into an agreement. Hey listen, this is the structure. This is the way that they want you to see it, they want you to think about it.

Understand their point of view, how their coming through it, you guys, we all have our point of views but we sign a contract. So it is what we have to do. And we have to understand it and be able to, you know, defend it.

R: Thank you.

S: You're welcome.

R: That's a very good answer. So, what would you say that your most memorable moment was from your time in the military?

S: Every single moment!

R: Every single moment?

S: Every single moment! Even when I was shirtless, in the cold and had to get ready for, you know, what if I was in a moment of that sort. I loved it. I was getting ready for it. At the moment, it was tough, but I'm from Lynn. I can get through anything.

R: So you're always prepared? That's nice.

S: Always ready.

R: So, what about the transition coming out of the military? Because a lot of people speak of it can be difficult, that you have like, a months-long transition into the military, but when you're getting out you get like a week or two.

S: Right, right. All that talk.

R: Yeah, how did you go through that? How was that for you?

S: I made it happen. I made it work. I had to adjust to whatever I had to adjust to and I made it work. And I made the process be as smooth for me. Why? Because I can overcome anything. Oh, this process is going to be hard? No it ain't.

R: You're just ready.

S: Ready. Send paperworks early, send in everything early. Make sure that everything's done, you know, months prior. Everybody's always- it's because you guys are all doing it. You guys are all following the system. That system of, you know, the military has a system

of doing it, you know, three months before you get out, or six months, actually. You can start that process of that transition six months prior. But I was doing it a year prior. I was ready, because I was like yo, I'm about to transition, where're the contacts. I'm making sure I had everything ready. Who do I have to talk to, just, you know, making sure that I was involved with my other peers that were in that field, and be able to- okay, what do I have to do to do this. And then talking to other veterans that were just getting out, or getting out right after, you know, at that time frame. Telling me, "Hey you want to start this early." And I was taking all their advice, and being able to- alright cool, start the process early, boom, and I did it. And I was able to connect and make phone calls and, you know, break out. I broke out of that bubble of being timid, and oh I want to be in my comfort zone. No, and you know, that's what the military helps you, helps you break out of that comfort zone and be able to, you know, succeed and I used every resource. I took everything, you know, and I didn't take nothing for granted. I took every lesson that they want to give me. I did it. I processed it. I was recruited by, you know, other city teams, and I was like no, I already have one planned. It's in my plan, it won't change. I would have been honored to be part of, you know, other great special teams, but, you know, some of my other peers that was their goal and that was their mission and I already had once since I was young and it's just still it.

R: So that plan is- that's the final goal to be president?

S: Yes.

R: Do you want to elaborate on that?

S: Just be president. Change the world in a way that I can, even if- and I know I can change the world by becoming president.

R: Wow, that's really nice.

S: Yeah, but if I can just change one person's world, that's awesome too.

R: So, you keep mentioning this proactivity. You're always ahead of the game. Did that help you in the transition into college life?

S: Yes, Yes. Being ready, you know, helped me understand, you know, the system that is ran here. How's the system ran here at Salem State. So I started doing my research, started doing my papers, started getting ready for whatever's going to` come. The slowness, the laziness, the people want to take days off. I was ready for all of it, you know, so making sure that, alright, cool. How many people do you guys have on staff? Asking the right questions, making sure that, alright, how long will this process take? Well it takes about, you know,

seven days. Alright, great, that really means twenty-one days. Alright, cool, let's make it happen. Hey, okay great. Go in the next day, you know, being consistent, being able to just keep progressing and figuring out the next day. Hey, hey how's that paperwork moving along? Alright, great, thank you. You're still there, great. Just keeping in touch. But the transition to college has been- it's been awesome. It's been a good transition.

R: That's wonderful. So, when you returned, did your family or friends notice anything different about you or your personality? Did the military seem to change you?

S: Yes, yes. It changed me in ways where, I was more disciplined than everybody else, you know. All the motivational talks, you know, Tony Robinson and all these great other, you know, motivational speakers, they all talk about the same thing. The process and the structure that the military tries to give you. Talks about being motivated, move fast, you know, be consistent. And I'm like, all these guys are making so much money, just talking about it and trying to teach the public about this and I went through the whole system, three months of intensive training to actually mold me into that so. And they already- they developed that, you know, self-discipline and that inner motivation and twisted motivation to be able to endure. It's just incredible that I was able to, you know, relate to them of what they're talking about because I was able to go through it. Through the military and then to be able to be here.

R: I got you. So how does your MOS training help you in civilian life now? Because you mentioned you're always ready. You're always prepared. You're always, is that, like, the planning part the most important, or the most helpful?

S: Yes, the strategic planning is the most successful to be able to, you know, get ready for what's coming and the transition.

R: I got you.

S: And I see that my family members were, you know, questioning that. You know, why are you so strategically planning for everything? Why are you that way? And it was very interesting because I was like, how do you guys not know this, you know? [laughs] Like, how do you guys not know this and I seen a pattern and I seen the patterns that they're only doing what their parents taught them and what they learned from their parents and from what they learned. And I was like, well I definitely broke that, and the structure of the military was able to help me to break whatever was going to come down from my parents. From what they learned from their parents and sometimes, in this generation, in this, you know, culture that we're living in, it's changing so rapidly and so fast that the military was able to help me to adjust to that and help me see, you know, their point of view of how to become successful and being able to develop that work ethic to get there.

R: That sounds incredibly useful. I wish I could kind of- I was thinking of joining back in the day but I-

S: You definitely should.

R: Seems like something that could really help you out in a situation like that.

S: Yeah, but if my parents had money and I could have paid for college, and they could have paid for college, I would have just went to college. Because then I- right now I would have been twenty-four in where I was at. Hoping, or maybe I'd be partying. I really don't know, right? So hey, who knows. But, you know, if I could have just skipped that whole process and gone to college first and then go to the military, I would have definitely done that for sure. Because then I would have been an officer, I would have been in a leadership position already. With, you know, all the great knowledge I was able to gain through school, and all the information I was able to learn through a university and through the educational system that they try to give us and it was enough, you know. It will be enough for me to be out there and for me to be a good leader. Not everything. They don't talk about holistic lifestyle, you know. How to, you know. But they have courses that they increase it to be able to, you know, get really deep into all these other subjects that are growing in other different fields that are, you know, that may be offered in other universities and be able to give that to the students and I think that's what Salem State is trying to do, and that's why I love this university. To be able to reach out and trying to increase all their, you know, all the knowledge and all the areas where they can give back to the students. Where, hey this is a university where we're trying to, you know, increase our curriculum to be able to give back to you guys and be able to learn here and I just joined that mission and I'm doing great. And I love being here and I want to be able to do that.

R: So, you think Salem State's been super accommodating to the veterans that are here and even the students in trying to incorporate more into the curriculum?

S: Extremely, yes. They try to do everything they can and in their power and with the resources they have and the funds that we have to be able to try to reach out and get people from the military to come here. Like, hey, this is transition, is a good transition and we're working with Ted. Ted is, you know, on top of everything. Hey, Ted I'm trying to figure out how to do this and Ted is like, one minute, yeah I'm looking for the question to this. Boom, alright. This is the answer for you. Boom. It's just that fast. I mean, I'm looking at him like, yes, that's what I'm talking about! We should have veterans in every field, in every field of the administration office to get things moving faster, because right now I'm working at the administration office at a national park and it's awesome, because now I'm trying to get their

whole system running and it's like, what have you guys been doing, and I'm trying to just make it better, you know. So I'm just learning, like, what is going on here and how I can make this a lot better and how I can get to the top.

R: I was going to ask you about your national parks job. You said that it was more of an administrative job?

S: Yes, I am always trying to be- because now I am trying to transition into the administrative side so I can learn all, you know, policies and procedures and how things are ran. So I can be out in the world and become superintendent. So I can be able to become, you know, the head of the national parks. Or then I can be able to talk to the president and then I'm gonna be able to get into Congress and I'm a be able to do what I need to do to become president.

R: Wow, that's incredible.

S: Thank you.

R: So, see a lot of people think national parks and think, you know, park rangers, but it's really the administrative side that seems to get a lot of things done.

S: Yes, yeah in every field it's all about the, you know, I got great respects to everybody who's you know, typing away for hours in the administrative side, trying to get paperwork done and trying to get so many meetings in. I definitely respect it. But I'm trying to, you know, I'm always trying to increase the procedure or the way things are being ran or always trying to make things better, so if-

R: The productivity of it all.

S: Right just trying to see how I'm just a small piece of the puzzle, how can I make this puzzle, you know, look better.

R: That's awesome. So Salem State is actually, on your biographical information I was reading, is actually the third university you attended. With the first two being in San Diego. Is there a reason you decided to return home?

S: Yes, and my reason to return home was because of my son. Yeah I decided, you know, there is nothing better than a son to have his father there and especially one that was able to be able to experience everything I have experienced. To be able to give back and teach him a different way than what my parents tried to teach me in my childhood, and now trying to

make that better. So I was now definitely, want to pour out to my son and make sure that he has, you know, what I should have had.

R: That's wonderful.

S: So I definitely did. Like, oh I'm coming back to, you know, Lynn and I definitely did not want to come back. I wanted to stay out in California. California is a great state, stay there. And I definitely- I'm working hard now so I can go back. I want to be back over there and there's the way their systems is ran I just- I love it. And now being able to go to all those other universities helped me understand how other policies and how other universities run their organizations and how and why they do what they do and made me see different perspectives. I went to an international school and that international school, Allied International, an amazing university, small but with so much diversity that I felt that I was out of the country. I was like, wow, this is what feels like what I'm actually what I felt like I was in a different country. Because it was so many languages and so many different cultures, it was unbelievable. And I was able to gain from that. I made so many friends, and have snap chat and I see the map and everybody. I go around the world, and I'm like yes, I got friends everywhere and it's an amazing experience to be able to connect with people all over and that is what I am trying to do now. I'm trying to connect with everyone and make sure, you know, I'm staying in touch. What are you guys doing, you know, making sure that everybody's progressing. Trying to help everyone along the way, and it's been a great, you know, transition in their systems as well with the military transition to those universities. And that was awesome as well. I was able to talk to them and if they wasn't doing their job I was the one, you know, poking you know.

R: Yeah I bet you were.

S: I was making sure because I already have the plan so being able to go to other universities and be able to come here was great. And I got accepted as well as because my plan was to go to San Diego State University. And I got accepted and right before I was going to start I ended up coming back to Salem State and I decided to come here versus Boston College and versus other universities.

R: Oh really?

S: And versus anywhere else I was going to apply. Because, you know, I'm definitely going to get into Harvard, it's going to happen. Somehow-

R: Somehow?

S: It's going to happen. You know wherever along the line, even if I have the National Park pay for it. Whatever it is, I'm going to get there you know. But I have to get into law and that's another story. But so, I got this planned out and it's gonna be awesome and being able to transition here from those universities has been great. I was able to come back here, you know, and still have my plan work here at Salem State. I'm so close to my son, you know, I'm so close to my family at home. Now I have family, now I have my son here, now I have a great university that, you know, like Salem State to be able to be a part of and I was able to dig into their system and figure out how to make it better and I did.

R: It all came together right here.

S: Yeah, it all came together right here.

R: That's great.

S: Salem State made it happen for me.

R: That's awesome. It's really cool to hear.

S: Yep, they definitely, you know, Salem State definitely gave me the opportunity to be able to get to the next level. Because of the work and the team and the way that I've experience at Salem State having diversity and being able to work with everyone that's so willing from all, from up to John Kennan himself who will sit down with a student and help you out.

R: That's great.

S: It was- being at Salem State, it's awesome.

R: That's good. I've had a similar experience. I'm a transfer student this year so it's- you're right, the systems been super welcoming. I can see it works both ways.

S: Yeah, I see everyone's point of view here, you know? I understand the, you know, cultural hardship that's here as well. How can we make it better and I'm working with some as well. How can we make, you know, other policies and procedures better and how can we make things better here for the grad students. Being part of the grad program here, how can we make it better for them and being able to, you know, transition being into the grad program here and seeing that system as well and I was able to help and I was able to be a part of that system. It's been a great system. And I've been able to learn from so many great leaders, you know, like Kathleen and Barbara and everybody. It's an amazing, amazing experience and they're always there to help you on a personal level, as a friend, as a

professional. So the working staff here are great. The students, the grad students, and if their point of view is different how can we make it better? Let's talk about the problem how can we make it better? Let's go out there and do something about it.

R: That's a good discourse here.

S: So it's a good balance and that's the thing, and everything's always changing. We have to try to see how we are going to overcome it.

R: Awesome. So, I actually had a question about your son. How would your reaction be if he expressed interest in the military too? Trying to be like his dad and great grandfather?

S: Definitely, go in. But his decision would be either before college or after college, because I'm actually going to give him the choice.

R: You're not going to force it on him?

S: No, I'm going to tell him, "Hey listen you can go now and this is what could happen and you can go off and join later, but you got college paid for. You don't have to worry about it." This is what I went through, this is the disciplines and skills that I got and this is what I formulated in my life because of the military. If you want to create that type of structure, I'm not there with you 24/7 so I can't create that structure for you, you know. But the time that you are with me I'm going to start. I'm going to build that within him to start doing it. You see how far you've gotten with me here, you can either go and join the military and amplify all those great, you know, personal lessons that you learn and all those personal, you know, so many different experiences that you want to experience that you haven't been able to experience. If you want to go through that now and fast, this is your choice. You can join the military now and experience all that. It's going to be tough. It is going to be hard. It is going to be, you know, sometimes, you know, you're going to want to feel like, but you know just look to your side. Someone's still breathing, so you can still keep going. You know? And you can do that now, you can do that after. Go through your knowledge base, have fun, party it up, do what you going to do now, you know. You're eighteen, I am not going to get in trouble. So do what you got do now. But, hey if you want to go later, go into it later and go in there and change the system. Change the way they do things. If their way of leadership is outdated, go change it. They think their, you know, screaming at you is, "Oh my god, so hard," have more pow wows or something. I don't know, you know. Go change, go put that into writing and that's the hardest part. How do we get it into writing and how do we get it into law. How do we make it you know something that's part of the structure. And if he doesn't want to join the military use the knowledge you got from the university to go

change the world or, or just work to retire. Like hey, just have a good life. Do what you have to do.

R: That's a great way to be.

S: That's it. You got to be positive and progressive.

R: So, so when are you planning on running?

S: That's a great question. 2042.

R: 2042? Any particular reason?

S: 42 for, you know, Jackie Robinson.

R: Oh. That's actually kind of cool. That's interesting.

S: Yeah, he was the first, you know- I love baseball you know. My dad brought me in baseball and because I think around that time frame Latinos would- the population of Latinos will have increased to be able to get more votes from Latinos. Hey.

R: You're thinking ahead.

S: Always.

R: So just to wrap this up, what would you like people to get out of this? This whole interview process?

S: You know, the only thing that's hard is whatever you make hard. You know, and have a plan to whatever you do and be able to- be able to go out there and get it and pass it along, you know, don't be selfish. You know, don't be selfish. You're this little in the whole world, you know, go out there and make someone's day better even by saying hi. Or, you know, whatever you can do. Whatever. Just be a better person every day. Be better, and you know this interview has been great and I've been able to, you know, to touch back on some memories and be able to you know, also for the 100th time today think about my plan, you know, and walk it through. Because I'm thinking about it every day, every step, every decision. Make the right decision. You know, along the way you always have a decision in everything. So if it ain't gonna better your future then don't do it, you know. So if you got to stay in, you got to stay in. Like, it is what it is. So if you got to, you know, save money, save money, like. But just do it. Discipline make the right choices and everything has a choice. It

was the right choice for me to come here today and interview. Because now it just makes me so proud of where I'm at where I've come from and, you know, and every time I talk about it and this is just a great, you know, time to come out, to be able to share with you.

R: And everyone, it's great.

S: Yeah but, you know, you're here you know? So to be able to directly, you know, talk to you and see how I can impact your life in the future had been great, you know. Rob, I appreciate you being here and being my interviewer and everybody watching and I hope I've been able to impact their life as well.

R: Alright, well thank you very much. Really appreciate it.

S: Yeah it was great really appreciate it thank you.

R: Thank you.