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Gonzalo Rangel

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University of Texas at El Paso

Institute of Oral History

Interviewee: Gonzalo Rangel

Interviewer: Edmundo Valencia

Project: Paso del Norte Entrepreneurs Oral History Project

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: 2 June 2010

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Biographical Synopsis of Interviewee: Gonzalo Rangel was born in El Paso, Texas on January 12, 1936. His father Sergio Rangel was a mechanic who owned Nick's Garage and his mother Sabrina Rangel was a homemaker. Gonzalo attended school at San Jacinto, Dudley, Mesita and El Paso High School. Gonzalo began working at the age of 13 and is the owner of a Mexican cuisine restaurant, G&R in El Paso, Texas. Gonzalo has three children, Bonnie Rangel, Patricia Rangel-Robinson and Nick Rangel.

Summary of Interview: Gonzalo began working at the age of 13 in a parking lot off of Wyoming St. in El Paso, Texas. The parking lot was owned by Bud Fischer and Gonzalo would park cars and clean them to earn money. By the time he was 15 years old, Gonzalo was able to purchase a 1938 Chevrolet. During high school, Gonzalo and his girlfriend had a baby and got married and Gonzalo left school to work to support his family. He briefly worked at Sanker Plumbing before leaving to work at Bray's Washing Machine to support his new family. Though his father owned a mechanic shop, Gonzalo did not have the chance to work there and instead worked with his brother at a foreign car shop called John Bull Motors. Gonzalo worked there for a time and then left to work on foreign cars at this father's mechanic shop. Opportunities began to arise for Gonzalo when his father gave him full responsibility of a parking lot. Gonzalo was able to charge for parking and he washed cars there as well, making a lot of money in the process. Gonzalo was able to acquire a second parking lot. After 17 years, he had lost a parking lot and the opportunity to purchase a restaurant happened. Gonzalo would have coffee at a restaurant called Nacho's that served Mexican cuisine and would often talk with the owner, Ignacio (Nacho) Varagon. At the time when Gonzalo lost one of the parking lots, Nacho offered to sell Nacho's for \$1500 to Gonzalo. Nacho stayed on to help Gonzalo learn the restaurant business and Gonzalo hired Jesusita Morales to cook for his restaurant, a professional relationship that lasted over 30 years. Gonzalo moved his restaurant from Myrtle Street to Nevada Street between 1976 and 1977 and renamed the restaurant G&R. During the 1980's Gonzalo and his wife Irene divorced. In 1987, after much success with G&R, Gonzalo opened a

second location on the eastside of El Paso. Two of Gonzalo's three children help run his restaurants; Patricia runs the restaurant on Nevada and Nick runs the restaurant on the eastside. Although Gonzalo has had much success as a business man without a high school diploma, he advises young entrepreneurs to get an education and to be prepared for long work days and hard work.

Length of interview: 43:00

Length of Transcript: 17 pages

Name of Interviewee: Gonzalo Rangel
Date of Interview: June 2nd, 2010
Name of Interviewer: Edmundo Valencia

Edmundo Valencia: This is an interview with Gonzalo Rangel on June 2, 2010 in El Paso, Texas. Interviewer is Edmundo Valencia. This interview is part of the Paso del Norte Entrepreneurs Oral History Project. When and where were you born?

Gonzalo Rangel: Back in El Paso, Texas.

Edmundo Valencia: And what year was the date?

Gonzalo Rangel: January the 12th, 1936.

Edmundo Valencia: And where did you grow up?

Gonzalo Rangel: I grew up on south side.

Edmundo Valencia: On what street?

Gonzalo Rangel: On Oregon. Oregon, and I think it was 7th – 7th and Oregon, about two blocks from the Sacred Heart, the church.

Edmundo Valencia: Who were your parents?

Gonzalo Rangel: Sergio Rangel and Sabrina Rangel – Rodriguez her maiden name.

Edmundo Valencia: What were their occupations?

Gonzalo Rangel: My mother was a housewife all of the time, and my dad was a mechanic – car mechanic.

Edmundo Valencia: And what can you tell me about your mother?

Gonzalo Rangel: My mother was the life of the party. She liked to party with us though. "Gonzalo, get a blanket and make a shade, like an umbrella in the backyard," and we'd have a cookout back there, and she'd take the radio, and take it outside to listen to music. Very happy lady, very, very, and my dad was just the opposite. Real silent, "Don't play with me, don't." You couldn't joke with him. You couldn't do anything with him. He didn't like it.

Edmundo Valencia: And where did you go to school all the time when you were a child?

Gonzalo Rangel: I started in – as far as I can remember I started in San Jacinto, because we lived on La Calle Hill in San Antonio.

Edmundo Valencia: That was elementary school?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yes, yes, and then we moved. Right across the street was Moorhead right here.

Edmundo Valencia: From this street?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, and then in the 4th grade, I went to Dudley, which is Mesita now. I was the first Mexican in that school.

Edmundo Valencia: And how was that experience?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh my God. Let me tell you. Of course, being the first Mexican in Dudley Mesita, they kept away from me, you know? Finally when they started accepting me, it was on school grounds. I could be talking to them from the classroom to the gate, and they would be with me, and as soon as we hit the outside, "Hey, what happened?" It hurt a lot, you know, because they – I was brought up with the cream of the crop in those days. Mickey Schwartz was – his dad owned the popular – Steve Schuster, Dr. Steve Schuster that his parents owned Providence Hospital at the time; Bonnie Gibbon, which her parents owned Gibbon Brothers. So, I was brought up with the cream of the crop at the time.

Edmundo Valencia: And how long were you at that school?

Gonzalo Rangel: From the 4th grade until I graduated.

Edmundo Valencia: From middle school? High school?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, yeah from middle school, because – from Dudley. It was sinking. So, they were afraid with the weight of us, and the kids, and all that that it would go down, so that's why they built Mesita, and that's when we moved.

Edmundo Valencia: Okay, and then from – well, before we go into – what do you recollect about being, like your first jobs?

Gonzalo Rangel: My first job?

Edmundo Valencia: I mean, as a child maybe. Like, or – like did you have to help your father, or –?

Gonzalo Rangel: I started working at the age of 13. There was a car lot on Wyoming. It belonged to Bud Fischer, and I started wiping the cars off, cleaning the cars off at 13. So, by the time I was 14, 15, I had already saved enough money to buy me my little 1938 Chevrolet that used more oil than gas, and seeing the people over here, and when they finally accepted me, I got invited to a party on Rim Road. That time, if you lived on Rim Road, you had made it. To my surprise, I had never been. So, I walk into Bonnie Gibbon's grandfather's house, and the party was in the backyard, and oh my God. They had a – to me it seemed like they had a table a mile long with hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, spare ribs, and we just do mole and beans, you know? I started seeing the upside of the upstairs maid and the downstairs maid. I said, "Boy, this is the way to live. This is the only way to live." That motivated me to do something.

Edmundo Valencia: And when you started working there, that was your first working experience? Before that you didn't?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no.

Edmundo Valencia: You never help your dad with the shop or anything?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no, no.

Edmundo Valencia: Actually, did he own the shop, or he was an employee?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, he owned the shop.

Edmundo Valencia: He owned the shop?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah.

Edmundo Valencia: And where was that located?

Gonzalo Rangel: It was right here. Do you know where the Federal Building here on Kansas?

Edmundo Valencia: The Federal Building. You mean the one on San Antonio and Kansas?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no. The one here on – it used to be Wyoming.

Edmundo Valencia: Oh, Wyoming, and what was the name of the shop?
Gonzalo Rangel: Nick's Automotive – Nick's Garage, I'm sorry.

Edmundo Valencia: Nick's Garage?

Gonzalo Rangel: Nick's Garage.

Edmundo Valencia: And your father –?

Gonzalo Rangel: Owned it, and he –

Edmundo Valencia: He started the business?

Gonzalo Rangel: Uh huh, uh huh.

Edmundo Valencia: And what would you consider that you learned from your father?

Gonzalo Rangel: To work hard, and be honest. Don't cheat anybody or anything, because it'll catch up to you. He was a very strict man, a very strict man.

Edmundo Valencia: And there on where do you go to high school?

Gonzalo Rangel: El Paso High.

Edmundo Valencia: And how was that experience?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, it was good. It was good, because I – by the time I got out of Mesita, believe it or not, I couldn't speak Spanish – Latino from the 4th grade to the 7th grade. So, I get up there, and the guys from La Mar, and **Bailas**, and all that. Oh my God. They wanted to beat me up, and everything, because they didn't – they said, "¿Que Mexicano?", and "¿No que hablan?"

Edmundo Valencia: What was the primary language spoken at home?

Gonzalo Rangel: It was a mixture. I could talk to my mom. You know how, born here, and raised here, and all that. Half of it was in English, and half of it was in Spanish. See, and my dad didn't like that. You either spoke Spanish to him, or English to him, and if you tried to mingle both of them, he wouldn't answer you. He would not answer you. He would not do anything. So, really like my dad, I spoke to him in Spanish mostly, and my mom I could mix it up, or whatever, and she was fine.

Edmundo Valencia: And how do you pick up Spanish again after Mesita?

Gonzalo Rangel: God, you know, I don't know. I think just listening to the guys in school at El Paso High, and being scared. I got to learn Spanish, man, or these guys are gonna kill me.

Edmundo Valencia: And after that, what were your jobs?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, after that, I got my wife – I got her pregnant. So, I had to quit school so I could go to work. This – my first job was Bray's Washing Machine – well, no, Sanker Plumbing as a plumber's helper. They had promised me \$35 a week, and they wound up paying me \$25 a week. Then from there, I went to Bray's Washing Machine on Piedras, and I was earning 40 bucks a week, which was fantastic.

Edmundo Valencia: And this was before you finished high school?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh, yeah. Um-hum, um-hum. I never finished. I never went back, as a matter of fact.

Edmundo Valencia: Around what year was this?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh my God, '51 – about '55, '56, somewhere around there. Then, I started working with my brother at the John Bull Motors, strictly foreign cars. From there, I was on commission, and man. My first check was \$125. So, I said, "Oh my." It seemed like a million bucks to me then, with a kid, and my wife, and all that. I worked there for about three years, four years, and then we had an argument, my brother and I – goodbye. So, I left. Then, I came to my dad's shop. I started doing some work there for some customers that we had – that I had had at John Bull.

Edmundo Valencia: Mechanical work?

Gonzalo Rangel: Pardon?

Edmundo Valencia: Mechanical work?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, uh huh, uh huh.

Edmundo Valencia: And that's also what you did at the foreign car –?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, yeah. My dad had rented a lot a block away from the shop, and he couldn't hack it. He says, "You know." One morning I got there, and he says, "You know what? I'm gonna give that lot up. I'm paying rent, and I can't get enough cars parked there to even

pay the rent." I said, "Dad, let me have it." He goes, "What are you gonna –?" I said, "Let me see if I can pick it up," and thank God he did. That's where I started making good money.

Edmundo Valencia: And what did you do on the lot, also –?

Gonzalo Rangel: Just parked cars. I parked cars, and then I got one of my nephews, and we would wash cars there too, because we had the cars anyway, and I stayed there 17 years until I opened the restaurant on Myrtle Street out of desperation, because I had just bought a house in Mission Hills, and I had lost the lot – one of the lots. By then, I had two parking lots, one across the street, and this one. The gas company [**Speaking Spanish**], the flower shop? He's the one that owned the lot, and the gas company – I was paying \$175 a month, and the gas company offered him \$1,000 a month for the same lot, and they were gonna pave it, and this, and that. So, "Goodbye, Gonzalo." I didn't know what to do, and I didn't know – and Nacho was a block away from the parking lots. I would go in there every morning to have coffee, and then I would go park cars.

I was always joking with him, and everything. He noticed that I was very quiet, and all that, you know? He says, "You know? You're not yourself. What's your problem?" I told him, "You know, Nacho? I just bought a house, and I lost one of the parking lots, and I'm not gonna be able to swing it." He says, "You know? I'm tired. Why don't you buy the restaurant?" I said, "What in thearnation do I know about –? Are you crazy? [**Inaudible**]." So, it stayed like that, and stayed like that, and I couldn't find anything else, and I couldn't find anything else. So, I said, "Nacho, okay. I'll buy it from you. How much do you want?" He says, "You know what? Give me 100 bucks. It will total to 1500 bucks." He says, "Give me 100 bucks down, and pay me 50 bucks a month, and I'll stay for a while, and teach you the ropes, and everything." [**Inaudible**]. I did. I got a hold of this lady that I, personally, figured that she's the one that made me. She stayed with me for 33 years as a cook, but that's the only one that – she would make the pot of red chili, and she would scrape it all up. She would cook the beans, and she would do the same. [**Speaking Spanish**]. He would tell the employees, "No, no. She would. I didn't have to be here. I didn't have to do anything, because she was like the owner."

Edmundo Valencia: Let me ask you something before we go into that. What was the name of the – the full name of Nacho?

Gonzalo Rangel: Varagon, Ignacio Varagon.

Edmundo Valencia: And what was the name of his restaurant?

Gonzalo Rangel: I think it was Nacho's.

Edmundo Valencia: Nacho's?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah.

Edmundo Valencia: And that was located – you said?

Gonzalo Rangel: On Myrtle.

Edmundo Valencia: On Myrtle, and what other streets did it intersect?

Gonzalo Rangel: God. Well, it's Myrtle; it's Florence, and Campbell, right behind the church, where they're building it.

Edmundo Valencia: Uh huh. Right across where they're building the new Federal Courthouse?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah.

Edmundo Valencia: Okay, and how did you know Nacho?

Gonzalo Rangel: I used to go in there and drink coffee, you know?

Edmundo Valencia: Yeah [**inaudible**].

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, and sometimes I would eat lunch. Yeah, but mostly I would go in the morning, have my coffee, and then I would go to work.

Edmundo Valencia: And what – how was that place? What do you remember from it?

Gonzalo Rangel: You know, I didn't pay that much attention until I got so desperate. I just thought, "He's a nice guy. I drink my coffee here," and you know, and all that, pero it never dawned on me that when I started going in there that I would own it one – you know what I mean? Especially the restaurant business with my dad being a mechanic, my brother being a mechanic, and the whole – and a long time I tried it. [**Speaking Spanish**] I went to work for my brother, and I figured; I said, "You know? This working with my hands, I'll never get rich. I'll make a living, but I'll never get rich. So, I'm gonna have to do something with the brain, or something so I can make some money."

Edmundo Valencia: And what is the present name of your company?

Gonzalo Rangel: It's called G & R Restaurant.

Edmundo Valencia: And you can describe your business. It's a basic restaurant operation, the – as far as –

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, yeah. It's been real good. I never dreamt I would make the money that I – that I've made.

Edmundo Valencia: How many employees do you have?

Gonzalo Rangel: I would say about 20 within both places.

Edmundo Valencia: And you guys focus on Mexican food?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, yeah, and strictly Mexican food.

Edmundo Valencia: And this one, Nacho's, it was also Mexican food?

Gonzalo Rangel: Um-hum, oh yeah. Um-hum.

Edmundo Valencia: And how many years has your restaurant been in existence?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh my God, since 1960, '60, '61.

Edmundo Valencia: This one on **[inaudible]**.

Gonzalo Rangel: No, the one on Myrtle.

Edmundo Valencia: The one you started in 1960?

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, um-hum.

Edmundo Valencia: And for how long did you – was that open?

Gonzalo Rangel: Hijo, until I came up here in '75 – '75, '76. No, I think it was '75.

Female Speaker: Hi.

Edmundo Valencia: And –

Female Speaker: How are you? Oh, I'm sorry.

Edmundo Valencia: We continue with the interview with Gonzalo Rangel. So, from 1960 to around 1975 you had that restaurant on Myrtle, and how

was that experience owning that place? Did you have any previous experience with restaurant at all?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no. I had to learn, and let me tell you, it's like my cook told me one day after we were here as a matter of fact, she says, "Gonzalo, you're not the same Gonzalo as when I started with you." I said, "You know, **[Speaking Spanish]**, I'm gonna tell you something. I'll be the first one to admit it, but you guys will not admit is the way I am, you all made me the way I am." I said, "Because you know good and well that when we started, you told me this is the way to cook this, and this is the way not to cook this. Throw this away, because it's bad. I didn't know, so I had to depend on you." So, gradually I learned to where now, I don't claim to know everything, but I can defend myself. If some cook tries to pull a fast one on me, or something, I can, "Hey. No, no. No, no." I've been there, you know? So –

Edmundo Valencia: And this lady you mentioned, the one that – you depended on her, she was working at Nacho's?

Gonzalo Rangel: No.

[Crosstalk]

Gonzalo Rangel: She was working. You know Alejandro from Alejandro's? Okay. She was working for Alejandro, because they had a restaurant on San Antonio and **Este**. She came to work for us, and I mean the rest is history, man. Let me tell you. **[Speaking Spanish]** it was 30 some odd years that we lasted.

Edmundo Valencia: What was, or what is her name – full name?

Gonzalo Rangel: Jesusita Morales.

Edmundo Valencia: And Ignacio Varagon, Nacho, how – what kinda well, training did he offer for you, or guidance?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, as far as the guidance, he would tell me where to buy, what to buy. Since it had been his restaurant, "They like this. They don't like this," and stuff that I picked up like I was – to me, I was the first one to start using white cheese. I was the first one to put liquor in a Mexican restaurant, you know?

Edmundo Valencia: You already mentioned this, but let me ask you just to have it like on record here, why did you decide to go into business for yourself?

Gonzalo Rangel: Why? Because I had figured that working for somebody, or working with my hands, I would never – everything would always go back to the house on Rim Road, and that I would go after school. There was **[inaudible]** there on Cincinnati and Stanton, and I would see Mickey Schwartz, which his dad owned a popular, or Steven Schuster, or Jimmy Spear, or all of them. I would – you know they would pull out a \$10 bill, as much as even \$50 dollar bill. In here, I was lucky to – if I had a dollar, because my dad couldn't afford it. That's what motivated me more than anything else – that I saw with the carpet, and then, you know.

Edmundo Valencia: And who encouraged you?

Gonzalo Rangel: I think I did it myself, you know? Just seeing how we lived. It was very moderate. We had beans. We had **[Speaking Spanish]** frijoles **[Speaking Spanish]**, but then you see the chicken, the steaks, the hams, the – all of that. I said, "Boy, this is –."

Edmundo Valencia: Being that you grew up on the south side of El Paso, and then later you became acquainted with the people on – and even – how was that experience for you to see the contrast?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, for – at first it didn't matter, because we moved from here where the Federal Building is right here on Kansas and the freeway. We moved to Kern Place. No vea Mexicanos, no – I – to me it was so, and then I wasn't accepted. So, I would get on my bicycle, and I would come down here, and play with these guys, and all that. Then, they started going up there, and teasing me. Like I used to tell them, "Hey, I had nothing – this is my dad. My dad's the one. I don't know why he bought that damn house up there."

Edmundo Valencia: And how was that experience for your family as a whole?

Gonzalo Rangel: I don't think it bothered them, because they – like my mom would stay home. She would talk to the maids from across the street, because the Aronsons from the Aronson Brothers – the clothing store that they had, she would talk to them. My dad of course, he would come down to the shop.

Edmundo Valencia: On Kern Place, where was your house?

Gonzalo Rangel: It was on Campbell, North Campbell – 28 something, you know? Maybe 16 – something like that.

Edmundo Valencia: And going back to when you became the owner of the restaurant on Myrtle, how were the economic conditions in the region?

Gonzalo Rangel: How were they? Well, I had the telephone company that parked with me, and they would eat with me. It was fine. The only time that I suffered was when – they were union, and if they went on strike, I would starve to death. I had some of the Courthouse that would come and eat, pero my main thing was the telephone company.

Edmundo Valencia: And how did you decide later to move to this street? To – what is this street?

Gonzalo Rangel: Nevada –

Edmundo Valencia: And Kansas.

Gonzalo Rangel: I always wanted to own my own building to do as I please, you know? The building next door came up for sale, and I didn't go look at it. I didn't – I don't know. I don't know – just the good Lord. The guy says, "Hey. Don't you wanna go look at it?" "No, sir. How much do you want? \$15,000. Okay. How much do you want down?" So, I don't remember how much. "Here it is, and that's it." I said, "Just give him a month, two months, and get him out."

Edmundo Valencia: And this was in, around 1975.

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, um-hum, '74, '75, somewhere around there.

Edmundo Valencia: And do you need, or how do you – what kinda funding did you need to go into – to move your – did you move the restaurant, or did you keep the other one?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no. I moved from there over here. I sold that one to a Chinaman for \$10,000, and that's what I used.

Edmundo Valencia: That's was your funding.

Gonzalo Rangel: Uh huh, um-hum.

Edmundo Valencia: And how many years were you here next door?

Gonzalo Rangel: About a year and half, two years, and then I bought.

Edmundo Valencia: How did it – the sale, how did it work out?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, we just – yeah, no, no. That place, I remember I opened the first week, and I went and bought the food on Saturday afternoon. I went and bought the food, paid the help, because I had **[Speaking Spanish]**, and I was the guy that took up the plates out of the oven and the dishwasher. Jesusita was the cook. See, and that's what – how we started it out, and then I paid Jesusita. Of course, I did myself, but the first week – the first week, I cleared 300 bucks, and I was so excited I called my wife, and, "Hey, you know what? We've made it. We've made it." "What are you talking about?" "We've made it. We've – I bought the food for next week. I paid Jesusita, and everything, and I got \$300 left for incidentals, and all that." Then, it just scaled up to fabulous.

Edmundo Valencia: Did you find any major obstacles in the startup phase?

Gonzalo Rangel: In the starting? Oh, yeah. I remember – I don't know why I went to Mr. Annette. He was the Senior Vice President at the El Paso National – El Paso Bank. I saw him once. "Mr. Charlie, can I borrow \$5,000?" "For what?" "To open up a –." "What do you know about a restaurant?" **[Speaking Spanish]**. So, I **[inaudible]** the loan, and about a week, two weeks later, I went back, and he loaned it to me. **[Speaking Spanish]**. He became one my best customers here, you know? Mr. – "Well, anybody can make a mistake." I said, "Well, at the same time, help us. We need the help."

Edmundo Valencia: So, in what year did you open here – current location?

Gonzalo Rangel: '75, '76.

Edmundo Valencia: This one? Operating this one?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh, '76. Como, '76, '77 **[Speaking Spanish]**, because it was about a year, and then it took us quite a while to make the chairs, because they – I hired a guy from Juarez **[inaudible]**.

Edmundo Valencia: And what factors have helped your business grow?

Gonzalo Rangel: I think just being honest with the people, trying to do our best. I think the biggest thing that helped me was I would just cook so much, more or less for the late. We have always tried to keep everything as fresh as possible. There's a lot of times where people don't – "Why don't you make some more?" I tell them. I say, "Look. I can buy 50, 100 pounds of the stew meat. I can make all **[Speaking Spanish]**. I can make the chili with it – con carne, and you come in, and you 'Hey. This is delicious. I wanna bring my

wife, or I'm gonna bring my associate,' or whoever. Well, you don't make it, because the next day – you wait about four days, five days, and I'm still serving the 50, 100 pounds **[Speaking Spanish]**. 'Hey this doesn't taste the same.' So, you have to, in that respect, you have to bear with me that I just cook so much." This is what happened. This is what happened.

Edmundo Valencia: And then you mentioned earlier that you were the first Mexican restaurant to carry liquor.

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah, as far as I know.

Edmundo Valencia: How has that – that was back there in –

Gonzalo Rangel: No, here.

Edmundo Valencia: Here at this location **[inaudible]**.

Gonzalo Rangel: Yeah.

Edmundo Valencia: And how was that process to get the – or how – in general, how was that for business?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, you have to apply for – no. The first year – you saw the bar area?

Edmundo Valencia: Um-hum.

Gonzalo Rangel: Okay. I made \$40,000 selling the liquor. See, now I don't know what she makes, because I don't have nothing to do with it.

Edmundo Valencia: But how did you get that idea?

Gonzalo Rangel: I don't know. I really – I just I think it was maybe one that I've always had an aching for a bar, or something like that that did it. I wanted a complete deal where you could sit down, and have a couple of drinks, and then eat.

Edmundo Valencia: And what challenges have you faced during a business as a Hispanic?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, the help is – getting good help is the toughest thing, especially now with these kids, and the drugs, and all that. That's been the toughest.

Edmundo Valencia: And what role has your family played in the growth of your business?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, my daughter went to work for us, and my son is in it, and – but it cost the divorce. That's the sad part about it – that – "You're not gonna change. All you can think about is the restaurants, and da, da, da, da, da, da." "I promise I'll change." "No, you're not going to," and I begged her. We used to have a table, and I can still remember it, and that's over 20 years that we've been divorced.

Edmundo Valencia: What is her name?

Gonzalo Rangel: Irene Sosa.

Edmundo Valencia: And your children's names?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, there's Bonnie Rangel, Patricia. I don't know. Sometimes she goes by Robinson, and sometimes she goes by Rangel, and then Nick Rangel.

Edmundo Valencia: So, who are the ones that have worked with you? Patricia?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, Bonnie is the judge, and then Nick – Patricia runs this one, and Nicky runs Pebble Hills.

Edmundo Valencia: And when did you open that location?

Gonzalo Rangel: In '87.

Edmundo Valencia: And how did you decide to expand?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, I thought, you know, we're making good money here to invest it. Tambien we did it over there, and the people on the east side are the ones that, "Come on. Open up one on the east side so we won't have to drive so far," and all that. That's when they – you know.

Edmundo Valencia: Have you enjoyed the same success over there?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's been good. It's been good. It's been good for the kids, and everything.

Edmundo Valencia: Do you think that your company enjoys and advantages of being a Hispanic-owned business?

Gonzalo Rangel: God, that's a hard question to answer. I don't know how to answer that. Sometimes I think so, and sometimes the Mexicano **[Speaking Spanish]** no. So, I don't know.

Edmundo Valencia: Along all these years, have you ever felt discriminated?

Gonzalo Rangel: Oh, more when I was kid that I was thrown up there, but I don't know. Maybe the success has made me harder, and say, "I'm just as good as you. I don't care if you gotta Ph.D., or whatever, and I didn't finish high school," you know?

Edmundo Valencia: Let's see. Do you belong to any of the Chambers of Commerce?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, no. I don't. It's politicking and all that I don't like. I don't like it. "How are you?", and all this, and you can't stand the person – no.

Edmundo Valencia: Do you view yourself as a leader or role model?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, I don't – no. I've never – no, I don't think so. Just –

Edmundo Valencia: And looking back on your business, what would you have done differently?

Gonzalo Rangel: Probably the worst thing is I didn't see my kids graduate. I didn't see them in a play, or when they got honors, and all that. I regret that very much, and I would. That's what I would do. I would pay more attention to my family now than I would the business.

Edmundo Valencia: Do you consider that the business climate is better for Hispanics today?

Gonzalo Rangel: A little, a little.

Edmundo Valencia: What do you – in what sense do you think it's better?

Gonzalo Rangel: Well, we're opening more businesses up. I see more people with checks, and credit cards, and all these which you didn't see all that. I saw **[Speaking Spanish]** and they would take to pay the rent. So, it's getting better for us. The thing that I regret the most is the education for the kids that they're not doing – the percentage of the kids that are going to college and finish college, and you know that it hasn't improved. It hasn't improved, and look at the blacks, **[inaudible]** Presidente. When will we ever see a Mexican president? I hope to see it.

Edmundo Valencia: What advice would you offer a Hispanic starting a business today?

Gonzalo Rangel: Starting? Well, I would rather tell him to get an education. Get an education, and then if they wanna start a business, start it, and work hard. You're gonna have to work hard. It's 12, 14, 16, hours a day. You better prepare yourself for that.

Edmundo Valencia: We're almost – I'm almost over with the questions. What hopes do you have for the future?

Gonzalo Rangel: I hope that the economy gets better, we quit fighting, end of the wars, and all that, and for us to get along. I don't care if you're black, or brown, or white, or whatever – to really, really get along.

Edmundo Valencia: And here in El Paso, what are your hopes?

Gonzalo Rangel: That the Mexican people – that we can do better, all of us. There's too much poverty con los Mexicanos, too much.

Edmundo Valencia: And I don't have any more questions. Is there anything you would like to add, a story you would like to tell me?

Gonzalo Rangel: No, that's about it. I'm just so – like I said, I hope we can – the Mexican people can progress. I hope they can get a better education, see more politicians, more doctors, more lawyers, more professionals. I would love to see that, you know? I hope it gets there with the help of you guys, and all that. You educated people, and all that **[inaudible]**.

Edmundo Valencia: Okay, sir. Thank you very much. This was an interview with Gonzalo Rangel on June 2, 2010 in El Paso, Texas. The interviewer is Edmundo Valencia. This interview is part of the El Paso del Norte Entrepreneurs Oral History Project.

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