

2007

Interview of Arthur Grover

Arthur Grover
La Salle University

Joseph M. Curley
La Salle University

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Joseph M. Curley
History 650
May 1, 2007

FIELD NOTES

Narrator: Arthur Grover

Interviewer: Joseph M. Curley

Time/Date: 2:00 PM/April 13, 2007

Location: Mr. Grover's Office in the Security and Safety Building at La Salle University

Mr. Arthur Grover is the Director of Security and Safety here at La Salle University. Mr. Grover is a native Philadelphian and a graduate of La Salle College, class of 1977. Mr. Grover received his degree in Criminal Justice and following his graduation, he decided to join the Philadelphia Police Department. At the time Mr. Grover entered the police academy, the department had very few officers with college degrees.

After Mr. Grover's graduation from the police academy, he was appointed a patrolman and worked the street in that capacity. Early on, police supervisors noticed a strong work ethic in the way that Officer Grover performed his assigned duties. Officer Grover was encouraged by these supervisors to study for the police promotional tests. Officer Grover took the test to be a detective and another test to be a sergeant. He was promoted to the rank of detective and assigned to a detective division. Detective Grover handled normal investigative cases such as assaults, robberies, burglaries, major thefts and such. Much to Mr. Grover's regret, he did not remain a detective for very long due to his high score on the police sergeant's test.

It is interesting to note that during the time he was promoted to sergeant, his wife, Elizabeth, who was also a police officer, was promoted to the same rank at the same time.

Both Mr. Grover and his wife are justly proud of that accomplishment. Mr. Grover was appointed a police sergeant at a relatively young age. He was actually the youngest member of his squad, but he says the men under his supervision responded well to him and did not react negatively to so young of a supervisor. Following a few years as a sergeant, he took the police lieutenant's test and passed.

Lieutenant Grover had a number of assignments as a command supervisor. He was assigned patrol supervisory duties as well as other positions. Lieutenant Grover was promoted, yet again, to the rank of Captain. His final assignment with the police department was as the Commanding Officer of the police academy, responsible for the training of all new police recruits. Mr. Grover is very fast to point out that of all the positions he held as a police officer, it was his time at the academy that he is most proud of.

Soon after retiring from the police department, the job of Director of Security and Safety at La Salle University opened up and Mr. Grover interviewed for the position. Of late, La Salle has had a history of hiring former police commanders as their Directors of Security and Safety. La Salle continued this practice by offering Mr. Grover the position.

In November of 2004, the university announced the appointment of Mr. Grover as Director of Security and Safety. Mr. Grover replaced outgoing director Mr. Mark Dorsey (also a former Philadelphia Police commander). Since his return to La Salle, Mr. Grover has been busy conducting a review of the department's practices, policies, and procedures. Mr. Grover has not been in his current position for a great length of time, but his contact with La Salle had been on going since his graduation and his experience in the Philadelphia Police Department would only be an asset to him for this position.

I chose to interview Mr. Grover for a number of reasons. After reading the list of people on the interview sheet, I noticed that many of the different university departments were represented. The people listed worked in a variety of academic, administration or staff positions, even the physical plant was represented. I felt that with La Salle being an urban campus in a large city, a person from the security and safety department would be a good addition to that list. I knew that Mr. Grover was the Director of the Security and Safety department. I had known Mr. Grover from his time in the Philadelphia Police Department and I thought considering his over 20 years of police service, he would be an interesting person to interview. Dr. Allen consulted with Brother Joe Grabenstein and they thought Mr. Grover would be an acceptable person to interview for the project. Brother Joe was particularly interested to have a person from the Security and Safety Department because there was not much information on that department in the university archives.

Early in February 2007, after Dr. Allen's approval of the project, I went over to Mr. Grover's office to ask if he would be willing to be interviewed. Mr. Grover (as a habit, I called him Captain Grover) said he would be happy to help with the project and to contact him when I was ready. With my own scheduling concerns, I decided that I wanted to get the other course assignments completed before I started with the formal interview. I did move forward with my background research of Mr. Grover as well as the Security and Safety Department itself. To gain some knowledge about Mr. Grover, I turned to people I know who worked with Mr. Grover while he was in the police department. Of particular help were two people who I work for in my current position; Captain Dennis Cullen, Commanding Officer of the 9th Police District and Lieutenant John Bradley, Commander

of One Squad (my squad) in the 9th District. Both of these officers knew Mr. Grover and Lieutenant Bradley worked for him when he was at the police academy.

They were both generous with their time and provided valuable information. I met with Captain Cullen in his office for approximately 40 minutes on February 22, 2007. Captain Cullen gave me insight on what it means to be a commander in a major police department. We spoke about how an officer rises through the ranks to command level. Captain Cullen spoke of the benefit of continuing education in the command ranks. Captain Cullen is a graduate of La Salle University. The police department sends personnel to various schools for command training such as the FBI Academy or the Public Safety Institute at Northwestern University (both were attended by Captains Cullen and Grover).

Lieutenant Bradley was able to provide me with information about being an instructor and a supervisor at the police academy while Captain Grover was in charge. Lieutenant Bradley is also a graduate of La Salle University. He stated that Captain Grover was very involved with the recruits at the academy. He took a personal interest in ensuring that the students were prepared for when they were sent out into the districts. Lieutenant Bradley provided helpful information on the day to day tasks of a police supervisor, as well as, the duties of a police academy instructor. Finally, Lieutenant Bradley reviewed the interview questions and gave me some topical suggestions.

To obtain information about the history of La Salle's Security and Safety Department, I turned to the university archivist Brother Joe Grabenstein. I met with Brother Joe several times (he had mistaken me for another student on two occasions) and I

reviewed school and press material that highlighted security and safety issues from the late 1960's to present. I concentrated on the time period Mr. Grover was here as a student. I saw that the problems on campus reflected those of the surrounding community. Thefts, burglaries, vandalism and property damage reports were common in the area near campus during this period. La Salle at this time contracted with a private security firm, Globe Security. From reading the school newspapers and publications, I got the feeling that the student body felt as if they were being protected by the "Keystone Cops." In an effort to overhaul the campus security system, La Salle hired former Philadelphia Police Captain John Traver as the Security and Safety Director in 1976.

Following the appointment of John Traver, the Security and Safety Department moved away from a contract security firm to an internal security force that would be employed by La Salle. Archival material shows that move streamlined the security force and laid the ground work for its development into the current form. There was a great difference between information that was put out to the campus from the 1970s versus the 1980s and beyond. The latest form of the Security and Safety Department is much more pro-active in their communication with the campus. Safety brochures, crime bulletins, student escorts, emergency contingency plans and many other programs are a testament to La Salle's support for the evolution of the Security and Safety Department.

The interview with Mr. Grover took place on Friday, April 13, 2007 at 2:00 PM in the Safety and Security building on campus. The lower floor of the building is set up like a police station. There are video monitors, radio dispatch terminals, computers and a number of officers moving throughout the room. I knew a few of the officers and told them

I was there to see Mr. Grover. After contacting Mr. Grover by telephone, I was directed to go upstairs to his office. Mr. Grover called out to me, using my first name, and said to come in. His office is on the north side of the building. There are two windows (both wide open), one is facing north towards the library and the other one faces east over the athletic fields. The weather was mild and sunny, but windy. Upon entering the office, Mr. Grover rose, shook my hand and asked how I was. I replied that I was fine and thanked him for his time. He motioned me to have a seat and I unpacked my book bag, taking out my digital recorder and other supplies.

Mr. Grover's office is not cluttered, it is neat and organized. His desk faces north. Behind him are a few standing book shelves against the wall. On the shelves are various books, mostly professional in nature. There are only a few wall decorations. One that I recognize is a plaque, and on it are two pictures of Mr. Grover, one showing him as a police recruit and the other as a captain in his departmental uniform. On his desk are folders with FBI logos, a computer and telephone sit to Mr. Grover's left. A circular table is to my right and on it sit volumes containing crime statistic reports that he is compiling for the end of the academic year. The floor is carpeted and the walls are white. There is a good breeze moving through the office via the two open windows and the door staying open.

Mr. Grover is dressed in a business suit with his jacket off, but his tie is on. He has sandy colored, thinning hair and a mustache. He is a little less than six feet tall and of a medium build. He carries himself in a slightly reserved, semi-formal manner, much the way he did when he commanded the police academy-friendly, but not familiar. He speaks now and throughout the interview in a steady, measured tone that does not carry much

inflection, even when making a point. As I am setting up, I explain the scope and purpose of the project. He knows that this assignment is for a history class and he says that in school and even now, he enjoys reading a about history. He asked me how things were going downtown in the 9th District and how Captain Cullen was doing. I said things are good and Captain Cullen and Lieutenant Bradley send their regards. I presented the legal releases and he signed the without notation. I turned on the recorder made the standard introduction and asked permission to record this interview. Mr. Grover gave permission and we started the interview with the questions that Dr. Allen approved.

I formatted my questions to follow four areas. I wanted most of them to be open ended to allow Mr. Grover to expand on his answers. The areas that I wanted to cover as follows:

1. Personal information and family background
2. Early adulthood and attending La Salle University
3. Choosing a career in law enforcement
4. Returning to La Salle

In the end, I had 56 questions for Mr. Grover and he answered them all without reservation. On a few occasions his answers flowed into next question without my having to ask it. The idea was to let Mr. Grover to take as much time as he wanted and not feel rushed.

He spoke fondly about his parents and siblings as well as his childhood growing up

in Philadelphia. He went to Catholic schools and his father told him he would pay for half of his tuition for college. He said he chose La Salle because it was close to his home and the importance of that was he was going to be a commuting student. He enjoyed his time at La Salle, saying he liked the campus and having a female point of view on campus. (His high school was all male). He found the different teaching philosophies interesting. He noted that some teachers were more formal in a traditional sense and others were more open in a give and take style.

He speaks very well of his time with the Philadelphia Police Department. He gives good detail about the different areas and assignments that he had. He was most proud of his time as commander of the police academy. He decided to return to La Salle because he felt he could have a positive impact on the school and as an alumnus, he felt an obligation. He is excited to be back here and he looks forward to the university's expansion and growth.

Problems with the interview were few. The wind, on a number of occasions, banged the window shut and open. Mr. Grover's phone rang a few times, but he let it go unanswered. Once, his cell phone rang and he had to take the call. The recorder was turned off and I wondered if it would save the information. Sometimes, the grounds crew outside the window would get loud, or rev up their equipment, but this did not happen often. Mr. Grover was kind enough to allow me two full hours to interview him. He was open, candid and straightforward. He is very thankful for his formal education and following a career of public service, he is happy to be back at La Salle University.