

A Reader's Guide to the "Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force" (1919)

Richard Ribb, PhD

August 2020

Context:

State Representative José Tomás Canales, representing the Rio Grande Valley along the border with Mexico, filed House Bill 5, calling for a modest reform of the Texas Rangers, on January 15, 1919. Since 1915 Canales had attempted to work with Ranger authorities to reform the paramilitary force, which he viewed as a "shame and disgrace to my native state," to no avail.¹ Met with persistent promises unfulfilled and political double-crossing by Governor William Hobby Jr, Adjutant General James Harley, and Ranger Inspector William Hanson, Canales shifted to a legislative solution for the reform of the Rangers.

The Ranger leaders reacted to the filing of HB 5 immediately and with a vengeance, seeking to derail the bill before it became a distraction. Outmaneuvered initially by Canales, Ranger supporters scrambled to move the bill into open hearings

¹ Canales Testimony, "Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force," 36th Legislature, Regular Session (14Jan19-19Mar19), typescript, Legislative Papers, Texas State Archives of the State Library, Austin, 869 [hereafter, *RFI*, TSLA]. Secretary Pridemore produced three texts in all; see Pridemore to Harley, 10May19, AGGC. A second text exists in the Harbert Davenport Papers, Miscellaneous Papers, TSLA. According to James Sandos, the third copy is in the files of Mexican Claims Commission of 1923, Records of Boundary, Commissions, and Arbitrations, Record Group 76, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Sandos writes, "The committee ordered its own three volumes of testimony sealed," which is not the case; *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman and London: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 207. Canales's last legislative act was to place a copy of the transcript in the State Library, "to be kept as one of the archives of the state." Perhaps aware of the possibility that the copy might disappear, Canales included in his resolution the necessity for obtaining a receipt from the State Librarian; House *Journal*, 36th Leg., 1st & 2nd Called Sess. (5May-22July19), July 15, 420. In 1975 Sandos was told that he was the first to see the copy in the Legislative Papers since Walter P. Webb in the 1930s; *Rebellion*, 210, n.11. Carlos Larralde reported that a University of Texas librarian had considerable difficulty in gaining access to the transcript. She informed Larralde that the "proceedings were lost for eight years" at one point; Martha P. Cotera to Larralde, 26Sept1979, cited in Larralde, "J. T. Canales and the Texas Rangers," *Journal of South Texas* 10 (Fall 1997), n.1, 58. My take is that Webb and the Ranger loyalists at the archives in his thrall informally made them off limits in the 1930s.

to ensure a rousing confirmation of the Rangers' fabled status among Anglo Texans. They also quickly focused on making Canales himself a target of any investigation. Canales managed, nevertheless, to shape the joint committee appointed to undertake the investigation: His successful concurrent resolution created a committee of four House members and three Senate members to oversee a full inquiry.²

The extensive hearings uncovered many instances of murder, torture, dispossession, and other illegal activities by active members of the Ranger Force. Canales chronicled many of them in a list of charges that grew to twenty-one with the inclusion of complaints offered by fellow legislators. The committee, nonetheless, provided a sweeping endorsement of Ranger leadership and exonerated the Rangers.³ Despite the testimony and documentation entering the public record, HB 5 as proposed by Canales did not pass. A wholly different version substituted by Chairman William Bledsoe of the investigating committee struck the systemic reforms of Canales's original bill, notably a bonding provision to align Ranger qualifications with all other federal and state law enforcement officers. Bledsoe's version, in fact, provided for less public scrutiny, effectively inoculating the Ranger Force to any serious challenges in the future.

Adversaries Rep. J.T. Canales and Adj. Gen. James Harley met in a crowded 600-sq. ft. Railroad Commission hearing room on the second floor of the state Capitol. A joint committee of legislators sat as judge and jury. Robert E. Lee Knight, Hobby spokesperson and former legislator, and Dayton Moses, attorney for the Southwest Cattle Raisers Association, joined the Rangers' defense team early in the hearings. During the twelve days of the hearings, eighty witnesses generated 1400 pages of testimony, and the advocates entered more than 200 pages of documents into

² House *Journal*, 36th Legislature, 211; *Austin Statesman*, 28Jan19, 8.

³ See, for example Ranger self-congratulatory messages in Hanson to Blackwell (emphasis added), Harley to Knight, and Harley to Moses 19Feb19 (telegs.), AGGC.

the record. Reporters from the Associated Press and newspapers across the state reported the developments.⁴

Canales wanted to show that the Rangers committed illegal and violent acts against residents of the state and that Harley and Ranger Inspector Hanson overlooked or blindly justified them. The Ranger team sought to make the hearings a referendum on the continued existence of the fabled force and an inquiry into the trustworthiness of Canales. Everyone believed that the fate of Canales's House Bill 5 to reform the Rangers depended on the outcome of the hearings.

Following is a chronological presentation of the testimony and related matters. While it cannot substitute for the full transcript, it will provide the reader a guide to the proceedings.

Day One: Thursday, January 30

Chairman Rep. William Bledsoe of Lubbock convened the Ranger Investigating Committee at 2 P.M., Thursday, January 30.⁵ Bledsoe stated that the committee would summon witnesses and pay them the usual witness fee of \$2 per day and mileage. He asked the press to announce that all persons with "grievances" could appear before the committee. Bledsoe then asked Harley and Canales to give their reasons for agreeing to the investigation.⁶

Harley and Canales provided answers consistent with their recent statements.

⁴ Three reporters from the Dallas *Morning News* (hereafter, *DMN*) three from the San Antonio *Express*, two from the Austin *Statesman*, and an unknown number from the Brownsville *Daily Herald*, *La Prensa* (San Antonio), *El Imparcial* (San Antonio), and other newspapers covered HB5 and the hearings; see Austin *Statesman*, (hereafter, *AS*) 14Jan19, 3.

⁵ Newspapers do not identify other members of the committee present that day. The transcript of the hearings begins the following day. Today, the Governor's Press Office includes the area of the hearing room.

⁶ "Inquiry Into State Ranger Force Begun," *DMN*, 31Jan19, 1, and "Ranger Probe Is Started Today," *AS*, 30Jan19, 1. The *Statesman*, as a local, afternoon paper, generally provided reports the same day as the testimony, at least concerning the morning sessions, while the *Morning News* provided copy the following day.

Harley asked for the committee to determine whether the Rangers had been “detrimental or beneficial in the enforcement of law and order,” and said that, if detrimental, “we shouldn’t have them.”⁷ Harley submitted a long list of witnesses and suggested a scope of the investigation that included the Rangers’ historical purposes, their work on the draft laws, and their role in some controversial events, notably the Parr-Glasscock imbroglio still occupying the legislature. He also wanted the committee to investigate Canales’s claims of threats made against him and his motivations for HB 5 and the inquiry itself.

Canales opened his statement with the contention that he was “between the devil and the deep blue sea” in the matter of Ranger reform, that is, caught between those who sought to abolish the Rangers and those who accepted them blindly. While acknowledging that the Rangers had provided a “great deal of good” over the years, he noted that practices had been “creeping in” that he saw as “a menace to the people and inimical to free government.” “I am not here to protect any Mexican bandits,” he assured the audience, but “if a man is murdered, another man shouldn’t be murdered. Two wrongs don’t make a right.” Emphasizing his point, Canales continued, “The law can not be enforced by putting lawless men in charge.” Harley interrupted Canales to ask him, “Is it your purpose . . . to abolish the Ranger force?” Canales replied, “with emphasis,” according to a Dallas reporter, that his motives were “pure” and that he wanted to “improve” the force, not abolish it—as his legislation specified. He closed by noting that if he were to file charges specifying individual Rangers, he placed himself in additional “danger,” an allusion to the threats made by Ranger Frank Hamer.⁸

The committee asked Canales to write out all charges he might wish investigated and compile his own witness list. He informed the committee that he

⁷ *DMN*, 31Jan19, 1.

⁸ *DMN*, 31Jan19, 3.

soon would have ready enough charges to keep them busy for ten days. The committee then adjourned until the following morning, at which time it would hear testimony from “prominent” border residents, cued up by the Rangers team, who were “conversant” with the conditions there.⁹

Day Two: Friday, January 31

Bledsoe raised the gavel at 10 A.M. before a committee of Sen. Paul Page, Sen. R.L. Williford, Rep. W.M. Tidwell, and Rep. Dan S. McMillin. Two members, Sen. R.C. Witte and Rep. Sam C. Lackey, were absent.¹⁰ Walter Pridemore, shorthand reporter, settled in as secretary of the Joint Committee to Investigate the State Ranger Force. Bledsoe opened the session by saying that he intended to direct an “absolutely fair and impartial” investigation regarding the activities and “necessities for a continuance” of the Rangers. He intended to find out “what, if anything,” could improve the service of the force to the people of Texas. He reiterated the committee’s interest in hearing from any citizen with allegations regarding Ranger behavior, warned the considerable crowd about maintaining “absolute order” in the hearing room, then turned his attention to Caesar Kleberg, King Ranch heir and leader of a contingent from South Texas. Bledsoe asked Kleberg’s group to decide among themselves who would relate the general conditions of South Texas to the committee. Thus, the need for an education regarding South Texas for the benefit of the committee, audience, and the reading public was made clear. Bledsoe then offered the floor to Canales.¹¹

⁹ *DMN*, 31Jan19, 3, and *AS*, 30Jan19, 1.

¹⁰ Bledsoe represented Lubbock County; Page: Washington, Burlison, Lee, and Bastrop; Williford: Limestone. Freestone, Robertson, Brazos; Tidwell: Ellis; McMillin, Grayson; Lackey: DeWitt; Witte: Eastland.

¹¹ RFI, 1-2, TSLA.

Canales passed to the members and secretary of the committee copies of six specific charges against the Rangers, then read them into the record.¹² A written prefatory note to the first five charges stated that he filed these charges “under oath” and that they were free of malice and “improper motive.”

Charge One claimed that Rangers George B. Hurst and Daniel Hinojosa, “while in a state of intoxication,” fired their pistols in the streets of San Diego, Duval County; “intimidated” the town’s citizens; and threatened to kill Constable Ventura Sanchez if he tried to serve them with a warrant. Canales included affidavits from two witnesses to the affair and a letter from resident Virginia Yeager who complained of additional Ranger activity.¹³

Charge Two alleged that Ranger Sgt. John Edds and other Rangers, as yet unidentified, “tortured and brutally treated” Jesus Villareal of Duval County in an attempt to elicit a confession to a “supposed” violation of the law. He filed affidavits from Villareal and two others involved in the incident.¹⁴

In his Charge Three, Canales asserted that Sergeant Edds killed Lisandro Muñoz under “circumstances” that made Edds guilty of manslaughter or second-degree murder. Ranger Inspector Capt. William M. Hanson and Adj. Gen. James Harley knew of Edds’s affidavit in the matter, yet retained Edds on the force, according to the charge. Harley had not yet turned over the affidavit to Canales, the charge continued, so Canales could introduce as evidence only a letter from Edds’s

¹² *RFI*, 2, and “Evidence On Need Of State Rangers Heard,” *DMN*, 1Feb19, 1; the *News* also printed the text of the charges, 1Feb19, 4. Charges 1-5A appear pp. 3-5, *RFI*.

¹³ *RFI*, 3. The date of the alleged offense was 16 November 1918. Affidavits came from M.A. Muñoz and Juan Barrera. Yeager’s letter appears in *RFI*, 7. The charge originated with the Cameron County contingent that testified before the Military Affairs Committee two days earlier. Yeager’s letter provides a general context for Canales. Newspapers did not list the names of living Rangers charged with misdeeds.

¹⁴ *RFI*, 4. The event occurred “on or about” 15 September 1919. The charge also condemns Royal Collins, who was not a Ranger, for his participation. Affidavits came from Eulalio Benavides and Guillermo Benavides, both of whom were present at the event; see “Statements of Jesús Villareal and Eulalio Benavides,” *RFI*, 1574-76.

commanding officer Capt. Will Wright stating the incident “could not be avoided under the circumstances.” He planned to summon the county attorney, justice of the peace, and sheriff from Starr County to testify in the matter.¹⁵

Edds again was the target in Charge Four. Canales accused Edds of ordering two “mexicans” [sic] to murder José María Salinas. He offered as evidence a report by Hanson that concluded that Salinas had been “murdered” by the two vaqueros “because his body was found in the middle of the road, hand-cuffed and shot in the back,” but that Edds himself had acted “as any other officer would.”¹⁶

In Charge Five, Canales declared that Rangers A.P. Lock, George W. Sadler, and John B. Sittre of Capt. Charles Steven’s company murdered their prisoner Florencio García. Canales complained that the adjutant general’s office had not discharged or otherwise reprimanded the men, despite voluminous evidence in its possession that Canales found incriminating and had asked to be entered as evidence before the committee. The charge rested on the identification of a corpse by García’s family after he had last been seen in the company of the three Rangers. In documents

¹⁵ Discussion of this incident on the train ride north from Brownsville in October 1918 was the pivot point in the relationship between Hanson and Canales; see Chapter Four of Richard Henry Ribb, *José Tomás Canales and the Texas Rangers: Myth, Identity, and Power in South Texas, 1900-1920*, dissertation for The University of Texas, 2001 (hereafter, Ribb, *Canales*).

The killing of Muñoz took place on or about 5 October 1918 outside Rio Grande City, Starr County. The county officers were R. Oosterveen, F. Oosterveen, and G.A. Guerra, respectively. For the letter given as evidence, see Wright to Acting Adj. Gen. D.W. Low. 9Oct18, “Adjutant General Records—1919-1921,” Walter P. Webb Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁶ The event occurred on or about 2 September 1918 in Jim Hogg County, just north of Starr County. Hanson’s report contained summaries of his findings, correspondence, and affidavits from Edds and the two vaqueros, Sabas Ozuna and Frederico López; see *RFI*, 761-72. Harley warned Wright, Edds’s commanding officer, about the seriousness of the practice of turning over prisoners to civilians: “Edds will be held accountable. We cannot stand for that kind of dealings [sic] in the Ranger force”; Harley to Wright, 12Sept18, *RFI*, 772. The day after Canales filed the charges against him, Edds was summoned to Austin: “Report here without fail Monday morning [3Feb],” and then acknowledged the order; Harley to Edds teleg. and Edds to Harley teleg., 1Feb19, AGGC. Harley asked Edds’s uncle, Henry Edds, and Sheriff Oscar Thompson of Jim Hogg Co. to bring Ozuna and López to Austin; Harley to Thompson teleg., 3Feb19, AGGC. Canales learned of the killing while in Starr Co. on other matters.

filed, Hanson and Stevens concluded that horse thieves killed him after the Rangers had turned him loose.¹⁷ Canales provided a long list of witnesses for the charge, including Cameron County Attorney Oscar Dancy, Sheriff W.T. Vann, a justice of the peace, and an investigator for the local Mexican consul.¹⁸

Finished for the time, Canales reserved the “right” to file further charges for “other violations of law.” He then filed Charge Five-A on behalf of Rep. John J. Ford, which alleged that Sgt. Sam McKenzie and Private L.C. Bills “maltreated” a prisoner in the jail of Nolan County. Ford indicated neither witnesses nor evidence.¹⁹ Canales then ceded the floor to Chairman Bledsoe, who conducted the rest of the session.

Caesar Kleberg informed Bledsoe that twenty-five to thirty members of his group travelled to Austin at their own expense to testify regarding the “general work and efficiency” of the Rangers.²⁰ Taking the stand first, William G.B. Morrison, an attorney in Cameron County for seven years, offered his views of the Rangers in South Texas under questioning by Bledsoe. Unlike when he first arrived in 1912, when “a good number” of Rangers spent “the greater portion” of their time in

¹⁷ The alleged killing took place on or about 4 April 1918 near Brownsville. Because García was a Mexican citizen, the Mexican consul in Brownsville took an active role in the investigation of the three Rangers and agreed with Anglo residents that the Germans could easily develop hostile propaganda out of the unexplained disappearance of García. Also, County Attorney Dancy and others saw a possible deleterious effect on the retention of *mejicano* field hands. See various documents in *RFI*, 807-815. Canales probably learned of the incident from Dancy, who worked as Canales's law partner from 1915 until he ran for county attorney in June 1918; *RFI*, 551. Canales referred to Charges Three, Four, and Five as charges “made by myself”; *RFI*, 126.

¹⁸ H.J. Kirk served as J.P. for District 2 and W.H. Gray worked for Consul Garza of Brownsville.

¹⁹ *RFI*, 5.

²⁰ “Evidence On Need Of State Rangers Heard,” *DMN*, 1Feb19, 1; “Specific Charges Against Rangers Are Submitted By Canales,” *AS*, 1; Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 7. Bledsoe asked Morrison about his motivation to appear, *RFI*, 33:

Bledsoe: You spoke of being an attorney: Do you appear as representative of any interest or merely as an individual citizen?

Morrison: Simply as an individual of Cameron County.

Q.: Not representing any interest at all?

A.: No, sir.

Q.: Having no interest in this matter except that of a good law-abiding citizen?

A.: That is all.

saloons, Morrison testified, the Rangers for the past two years, that is, since the advent of the Hobby regime and prohibition in Texas, did not have the reputation for drunkenness in Brownsville.²¹ He admitted that “probably some innocent people” had died in the “excitement” of the Border War, but that private citizens “killed just as many as the Rangers.” In all, he said, Rangers and citizens had killed between 100 and 5000 residents, according to figures provided him by “enemies of the Rangers.”²²

These days, Morrison said, Rangers generally were efficient, cooperative with citizens and other agencies along the border, and effective in the performance of their duties, with one exception: Daniel Hinojosa of San Benito, a drunk and lawbreaking private in Capt. William Hanson’s company. Morrison and the others in his party had discussed Hinojosa with Adjutant General Harley and Hanson, “who were surprised to learn of the reputation that he bore, or, at least, said they were.”²³ To Morrison, Hinojosa personified the type of Ranger that the monthly salary of \$40 attracted, and for the force “to be thoroughly efficient,” the pay must increase and rise with longevity.²⁴ In answer to Bledsoe, he stated that he knew of no Rangers convicted for any offenses in either Cameron or Hidalgo counties.²⁵ Summing up, he declared the Rangers “more or less a God-send to the Valley”—the killings notwithstanding.²⁶

After Canales asked to question the witness, the committee conferred, and allowed Canales to cross-examine Morrison. Canales asked Morrison whether he knew of the lynching of Rodolfo Muñiz by citizens who took him from Hinojosa and San Benito City Marshall Frank Carr in July 1915, about which Morrison provided a detailed description. From Canales’s leading questions and Morrison’s replies, an

²¹ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 11.

²² Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 17.

²³ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 14.

²⁴ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 12-3, 16.

²⁵ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 26.

²⁶ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 21.

account emerged that had Carr and Hinojosa attempt to transport prisoner Muñoz from San Benito to Brownsville by car long after dark, despite the availability of train service throughout the day. A group intersected the trip south, demanded the prisoner, sent the officers on their way, hung Muñoz from a tree near the road, then “riddled” his body with bullets. To Canales’s question about whether this incident “was the beginning” of the Border War, Morrison answered, “I think that was the spark that fired the flame among the white people.”²⁷ Representative Tidwell interjected that Hinojosa was not, at the time, a Ranger, but Canales suggested that his hiring as a Ranger after this incident proved poor judgment by Harley and Hanson.²⁸

Canales challenged Morrison’s account of the effective and pacifying activity of the Rangers in 1915-16. Canales, focusing on events immediately following the train derailment in October 1915, inquired of Morrison if he knew the disposition of four prisoners arrested by Rangers near the site. Morrison testified he could not confirm Canales’s story that the slain prisoners’ bodies lay exposed until Brownsville citizens raised the courage and money to bury them.²⁹

Canales then asked Morrison, “With regard to your statement that by giving a man better pay that you will bring better men [into the Ranger force]: Do you believe if you pay a thug \$150 a month that he will cease to be a thug?” Morrison doubted it.³⁰

²⁷ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 28. The events of 1915-16 were described then and thereafter by most Anglos as the “Bandit War.” A more fitting term, however, is “Border War,” in recognition of the instrumental roles played not only by Border Mexicans, but also by the U.S. Army, civilians, and, particularly, the Texas Rangers, in a volatile situation that many called a reign of terror, and what we call today *la matanza*, “the massacre,” and *la rinchada*, the Rangers’ (“*los rinches*”) ethnic cleansing of *mejicanos*.

²⁸ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 33-4. Hinojosa served from 6Sep10 to 10Feb11 and from 7June18 to 3Feb19, three days after Canales filed Charge One; Hinojosa Service Record, AGSR, TSL. Earlier, Tidwell asked whether anyone had a “suspicion” that the Rangers, and not “bandits,” wrecked the train; *RFI*, 24.

²⁹ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 30.

³⁰ Morrison Testimony, *RFI*, 33.

Chairman Bledsoe announced an adjournment for lunch. He also called Asst. Adj. Gen. W.D. Cope into the hearing room and informed him that the committee would “welcome” counsel for the Rangers.³¹

After lunch, the next representative of Caesar Kleberg's group, A.G. Crawford, a garageman in Mercedes for six years, took the stand and immediately defended the record of the Rangers in South Texas. He portrayed Captain Henry L. Ransom, who was identified in the shooting of the four train wreck suspects, as an effective officer. To Bledsoe's inquiry as to the appropriateness of hiring Ransom, free on appeal for the murder of the Houston police chief, Crawford explained that the “times” had been very “strenuous” on the border “and it took a man of his disposition to get along” there and then.³² Clarifying the necessary qualities, he said that Ransom “would kill and kill quick.”³³

Bledsoe asked Crawford whether he could explain the circumstances of “seven Mesicans [sic] strung up” at Ebenezer Station on the railroad branch line in Hidalgo County. Citing his garage's distance of seventeen or eighteen miles from the incident, Crawford claimed he could not explain it, and besides, he testified, “I was pretty busy at the time.” Nevertheless, Crawford stated that the “hearsay” held that a posse, not the Rangers, had committed the mass execution.³⁴

³¹ *DMN*, 1Feb19, 1. The next day Harley wired Cameron County Judge W.R. Jones to postpone his docket and “come up here and help represent the Rangers”; 1Feb, *AGGC*. Jones did not leave his court but did actively support the Rangers; see his appearance before the Military Affairs Committee earlier in the week and his organizing of a letter writing campaign in support of the Rangers; Jones to Harley teleg., [25?]Jan19, Harley to Jones teleg. 25Jan19, Harley to Jones teleg., 28Jan19, *AGGC*.

³² Crawford Testimony, *RFI*, 39-42. Crawford mentioned that Ransom was polite to women; *RFI*, 41.

³³ Crawford Testimony, *RFI*, 43.

³⁴ Crawford Testimony, *RFI*, 46. B.F. Johnson, a banker from Harlingen, testified briefly that he had never witnessed inappropriate conduct on the part of the Rangers and that local citizens did not condone wholesale murder of Border Mexicans. He did not know of any indictments ever returned against Rangers in his area and thought a man convicted of murder “ought not want to remain on the Ranger force”; *DMN*, 1Feb19, 4, and Johnson Testimony, *RFI*, 49-60.

Next up, Alba Heywood, longtime land developer from San Benito, stated that one of the conditions contributing to the violence in the area was that “our people do not understand the Mexicans.” Most residents were not from Texas or the South, and thus, he reasoned, were “afraid” of the Mexicans. To repeated questions from Bledsoe as to the existence or not of “law-abiding Mexicans,” Heywood answered that such citizens “absolutely” were “our asset and our necessity.”³⁵

The Rangers abused Border Mexicans to the point that “innocent people were [as] afraid of them as guilty people,” Heywood testified. Regarding intimidation, threats, and pistol whipping on the part of the Rangers, he declared that “we hear it all the time” and that such incidents had become “common knowledge” in the area. Ranger misbehavior was a “self evident fact” that brought on them the “great shame” of the day. Some Rangers did not care about the low salary level because they were after a “sensation” brought on through their “love of the game.” These men, he suggested, may “stir up something” to fulfill their needs. He argued that only a “small percentage” of Rangers committed the abuses, and that citizen input could ensure that the Rangers would “catch the lawless and not the innocent.” He claimed matters had improved in the past eighteen months.³⁶

The final witness to take the stand on the opening day of testimony was Dayton Moses, who, as attorney for the Texas Cattle Raisers Association, counted dozens of Special Rangers among his cattle inspectors. Moses answered Bledsoe's entreaty to tell “what necessities exist” for the continuation of the Rangers along the border with the statement that Anglos “generally supposed” that *mejicanos* harbored criminals. He admitted that he was “personally . . . not familiar” with conditions

³⁵ Heywood Testimony, *RFI*, 81.

³⁶ Heywood Testimony, *RFI*, 80-2; *DMN*, 1Feb19, 4. L.R. Millican, a Baptist missionary in West Texas for thirty-one years, quickly announced that all the “good people” in his area supported the Rangers; Millican Testimony, *RFI*, 97. Senator Page already had assured him that “I do not think there is any question about the necessity for the Ranger Force”; *RFI*, 91.

along the river, but accepted the views of men he knew there.³⁷

Representative McMillin asked Moses about the “general reputation” of Frank Hamer. Moses, who had known Hamer for five years and had employed him as a cattle inspector, told the committee that Hamer had helped clean out rustlers in Kimble County several years earlier, but that “a great many good citizens” had found his methods “entirely too harsh.” Moses described Hamer’s use of “vile epithets” and threats as conduct unbecoming an officer “or anyone else,” though he insisted that he knew of no unprofessional behavior by Hamer since he had rejoined the Rangers a few months before.³⁸

As did all the previous witnesses, Moses opposed the bonding provision of Canales’s House Bill 5. “You might as well repeal the law” establishing the Rangers, he declared, because placing them under bond like sheriffs and constables would make “moral cowards of them” by making them “doubly cautious” and, thus, one “necessity” of the force would “no longer exist.”³⁹

Canales reasoned that Moses, therefore, considered local officers to be cowards, but Moses demurred.⁴⁰ Canales then asked Moses, who had served as a district attorney for fourteen years, whether the Texas statute severely limiting the admissibility of confessions in criminal trials developed because of brutal interrogation techniques by law officers. Moses agreed that the techniques had “something to do with it.”⁴¹ Moses stepped down.

In closing, Chairman Bledsoe told the audience that the committee had heard enough testimony regarding “general conditions,” thanked the witnesses for

³⁷ Moses Testimony, *RFI*, 100-01.

³⁸ Moses Testimony, *RFI*, 107-08.

³⁹ Moses Testimony, *RFI*, 109 and 117.

⁴⁰ Moses Testimony, *RFI*, 118.

⁴¹ Moses Testimony, *RFI*, 119.

“kindness” shown during testimony, and called again for citizens to step forward with specific complaints about Rangers. Regarding the day of testimony, Bledsoe stated, “I do not think there will be any question on the part of the committee that the Ranger force shall [sic] be continued.” The committee did not want the Rangers “hampered,” but empowered to serve the citizenry fully.⁴² He issued process for the witnesses named by Canales, then scheduled the next session for the following Monday morning.⁴³ Incredibly, Hamer was charged with serving process for these witnesses.⁴⁴

Canales enjoyed a significant victory that day, not in reference to the Rangers, but in the passage by the House of his H.B. 3 to reform real estate practices, which defined actionable fraud and provided for actual and exemplary damages.⁴⁵ That important matter settled for the time, he turned his full attention to the Rangers.

Day Three: Saturday, February 1

The Joint Committee to Investigate the Rangers did not convene for a formal session on Saturday, but did receive five additional charges from Representative Canales. He also provided the adjutant general's office with a copy of the charges.⁴⁶

Charge Six claimed that Harley's office had a “disposition” to “protect and shield” Rangers of “desperate character” who committed “unlawful acts.” He offered the example of Rangers J.P. Nalle and John Bloxom, Jr., who remained on the force until the eve of the legislative session, despite the facts being “so accessible”

⁴² *RFI*, 121. The session ended at 5 PM.

⁴³ *RFI*, 121 and *DMN*, 1Feb19, 1.

⁴⁴ Adjutant General Special Order no.7, 30Jan19, Frank Hamer Service File, in John Boessenecker, *Texas Ranger: The Epic Life of Frank Hamer, the Man Who Killed Bonnie and Clyde*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2016, 191.

⁴⁵ The bill languished in the Senate until 13 February, the final day of Ranger hearings, then went to a conference committee, which eventually returned it to the House, where it passed 95-0; *General Laws*, 36th Leg., Reg. Sess., 77-8.

⁴⁶ Charges Six through Ten appear in pp. 123-27, *RFI*. See the “Exceptions” to the eleven charges filed on Monday, 3 February by Harley, *RFI*, 135-43.

concerning their “notorious” killing of a suspect. As evidence of Harley’s practices, Canales offered correspondence from his files, one of which termed the killing a “cold-blooded murder.”⁴⁷

Like the previous charge, Charge Seven held that a specific incident reflected both commission of an illegal act by a Ranger and Harley’s general attitude toward outrages. Canales alleged that Private D.F. Barnett shot at two Border Mexicans, wounding one, in a manner that constituted assault with intent to commit murder, or at least aggravated assault and battery, but that Harley basically ignored the incident. Harley’s own memo served as evidence for Canales, stating that Barnett fired “perhaps indiscreetly” but the event could be “overlooked” if Barnett were more careful and not discharge weapons “too promiscuously.” Canales also included Barnett’s affidavit.⁴⁸

In Charge Eight, Canales argued that Private W.B. Bentley pistol-whipped a waiter, and that witnesses refused to sign statements because they were “afraid of being similarly treated.” Though Harley had discharged Bentley, Canales filed the matter because it was the “one instance” in which Harley had removed a Ranger for “wrongful action,” and, thus, deserved the committee’s “attention.” Canales filed documents from Harley’s records with the charge.⁴⁹

Charge Nine accused Capt. William Hanson as being “unfit” for serving as the “investigating officer” of the Rangers because he began investigations with the “idea of justifying” the Rangers. Further, Hanson consistently “whitewashe[d]” the acts committed by Rangers of “desperate character,” charged Canales, and referred to the

⁴⁷ *RFI*, 123-24; Sen. W.D. Suiter to Gov. W.P. Hobby teleg. 22Dec18, in *RFI*, 124. The Rangers killed Ernest Richburg in Ranger, Texas, on or about 19Dec18. Nalle received three years in prison for the killing; see *DMN*, 29Jan19, 1.

⁴⁸ *RFI*, 124-25. Harley to Capt. Jerry Gray, 18Oct18, in *RFI*, 124. The incident occurred on or about 24Sept18 in West Texas.

⁴⁹ *RFI*, 126.

killing of Muñoz by Edds. Hanson sought to “get matters shaped up” in such a way as to “fortify” the Rangers, according to a letter to Harley from Hanson that Canales filed as evidence. Hanson also criticized Canales and others in the letter: “I had a long talk yesterday with our mutual friend Representative Canales, and I find that he is rather bitter, and seems a little unreasonable, as usual, and that he as well as all other Mexicans believe the Mexicans should not be killed regardless of the facts of justification in the case.”⁵⁰

In the final charge filed Saturday, Canales objected to the marked “abuse” by Harley of a “longstanding” practice of providing “undue and unnecessary” protection to “political ‘pets.’” Specifically, Charge Ten stated that Harley provided several Rangers at considerable state expense to Caesar Kleberg of the King Ranch, who, personally and through “political henchmen,” had actively lobbied against HB 5 from the first day. Also, Kleberg used the Rangers to deny hunters their legal right to have access to large enclosures. Canales named two witnesses for the charge.⁵¹

Canales spent the weekend formulating additional charges to present to the committee on Monday morning. Harley used the time to create a charge-by-charge rebuttal.

Day Four: Monday, February 3

A Blue Norther whipped into Austin early Monday morning, cooling the already chilly atmosphere of the hearing room.⁵² While confirming that the committee would give all the time necessary to the current charges, Chairman Bledsoe announced that the time for filing charges had ended. “We gave Mr. Canales

⁵⁰ RFI, 125-26; Hanson to Harley, 15Oct18, in *RFI*, 126. Hanson sent this letter the day after the train ride north from Brownsville with Canales that effectively ended their relationship.

⁵¹ *RFI*, 126-27.

⁵² *AS*, 3Feb19, 1.

until this morning” to file charges, commented Bledsoe, and “we will consider the matter closed” because if “we keep this up from day to day we never can see the end of it.”⁵³ Canales countered that the adjutant general’s office had not provided requested documents, specifically ones relating to Charges Three and Six, to threats made against him by Hamer, or to the discharge of Capt. J.M. Fox “for killing prisoners” while in his custody. He provided his letter of inquiry to Harley as substantiation for his request for more time to formulate charges.⁵⁴ Harley objected to the implication that he would not provide the requested documents, claiming that he had delivered several documents that morning and intended to provide the rest when he could find and copy them. “If they are lost,” charged Harley, “[Canales] has lost them.”⁵⁵ Exasperated, Bledsoe told Canales that he had until the following morning, not “two-o’clock tomorrow afternoon.”⁵⁶

Launching a counterattack in the process, Harley handed the committee a list of “exceptions” or objections to the eleven charges filed by Canales. Harley hoped that the committee would use the exceptions as grounds for dismissing the charges, but the committee unanimously decided that the charges had merit enough to consider further.⁵⁷

Adjutant General Harley contended that incidents alleged in Charge One, regarding Hinojosa, and in Charge Two, concerning Edds’s brutality toward Villareal, were not true, but if true, unknown to him. Further, Canales was “derelict in his duty

⁵³ Bledsoe, *RFI*, 130.

⁵⁴ Canales, *RFI*, 130. The text of the letter appears in the transcript, Canales to Adjutant General, 1Feb19, in *RFI*, 129. Canales asked the Sergeant-at-Arms to deliver it to Harley and stood ready to swear that Harley did have the documents in his files; “Additional Charges Filed By Canales,” *DMN*, 4Feb19, 1.

⁵⁵ Harley, *RFI*, 131-32.

⁵⁶ Bledsoe, *RFI*, 132. Bledsoe also notified the audience that he would call witnesses regarding Representative Ford’s Charge 5A.

⁵⁷ See votes taken in *RFI*, 138-42.

as a citizen” for not reporting illegal conduct to proper authorities earlier.⁵⁸ As for Charge Three, Edds did kill Muñoz, Harley admitted, but it was “unavoidable.”⁵⁹ The refutation of Charge Four was simple, according to Harley: Edds did not order the killing of Gómez Salinas and was not present at the shooting.⁶⁰ Harley denied Charge Five, that three Rangers had murdered García, and the evidence “as disclosed” did not prove their guilt “to any reasonable person.” A Grand Jury had no-billed the three Rangers, and an investigation by Captain Stevens, who Harley claimed Canales considered a “good and reliable officer,” cleared the three men, as well. Further, noted Harley, Lock and Saddler no longer served in the force.⁶¹ No evidence Harley knew of and none “obtainable” supported Ford’s charge regarding the torture of a prisoner in Sweetwater.⁶²

Harley had prepared exceptions to the second set of charges as well, and endeavored to have them dropped one by one, a move that the committee refused each time. Charge Six about the retention of Nalle and Bloxom after they shot a suspect drew a lengthy rebuttal from Harley. The “unfair” and “misleading” charge was a “deliberate” attempt by Canales to misrepresent the Adjutant General’s Department. According to Harley, he and Hanson visited the crime scene and conducted interviews soon after the incident took place. Hanson continued the investigation, and Nalle and Bloxom remained on duty because they represented the “only protection” against lawlessness in Sweetwater, according to some citizens there. Harley and Hanson submitted the completed report to Governor Hobby, who asked that Harley dismiss

⁵⁸ “Exceptions of the Adjutant General to the Charges Filed by Mr. Canales, in *RFI*, 135 [hereafter, “Exceptions”].

⁵⁹ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 136.

⁶⁰ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 136.

⁶¹ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 136-37. The source for this belief on Harley’s part is not clear. Canales actively worked to have Harley remove Stevens from South Texas; see Chapter Four in Ribb, *Canales*.

⁶² “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 137, regarding Charge Five(A).

Nalle and Bloxom, which he did.⁶³ Under questioning by the committee, Harley maintained that the “delay” in dismissing the two Rangers was “irrelevant” and that consideration of such matters would keep the committee busy “all the year.”⁶⁴

Harley also found Charge Seven, involving Ranger D.F. Barnett’s shooting at two men, an “unfair” and “misleading” effort to suggest that Harley “was encouraging bad conduct,” an implication that he argued was not true. The deputy sheriff with Barnett had assumed “all responsibility” for the wounding of one of the men, and, thus, the charge must be dropped, reasoned Harley. Bledsoe reminded Harley that the charge specified that Barnett shot at the men, a fact that Harley accepted.⁶⁵

Harley labeled Charge Eight, alleging a pistol-whipping by Ranger Bentley, “false” and claimed Canales knew it was so. Canales knew that Bentley had been discharged before the incident, insisted Harley, and thus the charge sprang from an “evil intent” to “mislead” the committee.⁶⁶ Hanson’s “diligent” and “faithful” service alone refuted Charge Nine. Canales looked at Hanson with “disfavor” because he was “too active in [the] enforcement of the law” in South Texas, argued Harley. To clear up the matter, Harley suggested, Hanson should testify.⁶⁷

Harley entered an “emphatic denial” to Charge Ten concerning “political pets,” terming it a “malicious, unwarranted untruth.” “This Administration,” Harley argued, “has no political pets.” According to Harley, Canales filed the charge to discredit Governor Hobby and Kleberg, who “happens to be friendly” to the Hobby administration. Kleberg came to Austin to “enlighten” the legislators who do not know the conditions in South Texas and to “assure” them that the “good citizenship

⁶³ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 138.

⁶⁴ Harley, *RFI*, 138-39.

⁶⁵ “Exceptions” and Harley in *RFI*, 139-40.

⁶⁶ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 140.

⁶⁷ “Exceptions” in *RFI*, 141.

[sic]" there requires a "strong force" of Rangers to live in safety.⁶⁸ Senator Page suggested that Harley should want to remove doubts of favoritism through an open investigation, but Harley countered that he "especially" wanted the "reasons" for the charge investigated. This statement reinforced the view that the Adjutant General's Department had held from the beginning of the session, namely, that the focus of the investigation must be on Canales as well as the Rangers.⁶⁹

After the acceptance of the new charges and the exceptions to all charges, Chairman Bledsoe asked if any citizens wished to be heard by the committee. When none appeared, the committee adjourned until the following morning.⁷⁰

Day Five: Tuesday, February 4

Canales opened the morning session of the investigation by presenting seven additional charges to the committee. The latest charges accused Rangers of torture and murder and Harley of covering-up such incidents to the extent that he should step down.

Charge Eleven alleged that Capt. J.M. Fox and his company arrested, disarmed, and "murdered" fifteen Border Mexicans "without any justification" and without giving the men "any chance to prove themselves innocent." Canales found that Hanson's investigation of the matter sought to "justify" the Rangers and, thus, offered further support for Charge Nine regarding Hanson's being "unfit" to lead the Rangers. An independent U.S. Army report described the prisoners as having been "killed in cold blood." While Harley did discharge Fox, he did so not for Fox's involvement in the killings, argued Canales, but because of "political reasons," namely, that Fox supported ex-Governor Ferguson, not Hobby, in the primary election

⁶⁸ "Exceptions" in *RFI*, 141-42.

⁶⁹ Harley, *RFI*, 142..

⁷⁰ *RFI*, 143. Rain in the Valley delayed the serving of summonses, according to *DMN*, 4Feb19, 1.

of July 1918. Canales included several documents from the Adjutant General's records as evidence for the charge. This charge carried the most direct accusation of the process and scope of a Ranger murder scene. The killings took place on or about 28 January, 1918, near El Porvenir, Presidio County, in West Texas.⁷¹

According to Canales's Charge Twelve, Hanson investigated the Nalle and Bloxom killing of Richburg, the basis for Charge Six, with the intent "to justify" the Rangers' actions. Hanson reported that the shooting occurred in a gambling house, though it was a "notorious fact" that the killing took place at Richburg's place of business. Canales offered Hanson's investigation as evidence.⁷²

Charges Thirteen and Fourteen accused members of Captain Stevens's company of mistreating Border Mexicans near the river. Rangers fired at Pédro Tamez and Arturo García, wounding García. Rangers also "flogged and horsewhipped and maltreated" José Hernandez, a suspected horse thief. Hanson told him that Fred Winn, a Cameron County deputy sheriff, confessed to the act against Hernandez, but Winn knew nothing of the matter, according to Canales. At this attempt to misrepresent the facts, Canales said, "I woke up to the fact" that Hanson, in "all" investigations, tried "to shield" Rangers by "getting statements" from local officers that claimed responsibility for such acts.⁷³ Canales offered correspondence from Hanson to Harley as corroborating evidence.

Charges Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen targeted Harley in his role as supervisor of the Ranger force. Charge Fifteen stated that the Ranger force consisted of many "men of desperate character," "notoriously" known as "gunmen," whose

⁷¹ *RFI*, 145-46. For a full discussion of the murders, see Monica Muñoz Martínez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2018).

⁷² *RFI*, 146.

⁷³ *RFI*, 146-48. The incidents described in Charges Thirteen and Fourteen took place near Donna, Hidalgo County, "in the first part of August" 1918. The discussion between Hanson and Canales about Winn and Hernandez occurred on the train ride north from Brownsville in October 1918.

“only qualification” was that “they can kill a man first and then investigate him afterward.” As Canales saw the situation, either Harley was “negligent” in the selection of these men, or he sought to use such characters “to terrorize and intimidate” citizens. Canales called for a general “review” of the men on the force.

“Peaceable and law-abiding” citizens in South Texas refused to make charges against the Rangers because they “have become convinced” that the Adjutant General did not conduct legitimate investigations of Ranger activities, but instead notified the dangerous Rangers. In support of Charge Sixteen, Canales offered a telegram from Harley to Hamer regarding his own experience with Hamer as evidence of the use of threats instead of investigations to respond to complaints.⁷⁴

In Charge Seventeen, Canales declared Adjutant General Harley “wholly incompetent” to perform his duties. Harley “could have,” but had not, made proper investigations, eliminated “bad men” from the rolls, and avoided the considerable expense of the hearings by the joint committee. Canales asked the committee to recommend that Governor Hobby find “some proper person” who could perform the duties “with dignity and economy and with honor to the State.”⁷⁵

The committee immediately moved to disallow Charge Seventeen on the grounds that it exceeded the scope of the resolution establishing the committee. After a brief discussion, the committee voted to strike out the charge calling Harley incompetent and asking Hobby to replace him.⁷⁶ Seeking to show that the resolution permitted such charges, Canales argued that Harley was a *de facto* Ranger, and that as Adjutant General he “absolutely” controlled the force through administrative, fiscal, and appointive powers. To exempt Harley from scrutiny, Canales contended, left him “to shoot little rabbits” while the big game escaped. Canales sought through his HB 5

⁷⁴ *RFI*, 148-49.

⁷⁵ *RFI*, 149. Canales estimated the investigation would cost \$12,000-15,000.

⁷⁶ *RFI*, 150-51.

and the investigation to get some sorts of structural remedies for the outrages he chronicled. Exempting Harley, as head of the Rangers, from the investigation, blocked one avenue to top-down reform.⁷⁷

Canales then read his rejoinder to Harley's exceptions to the first eleven charges. Referring to Harley's description of him as "derelict" in his duty for not reporting crimes by Rangers, Canales explained that he already "had become" convinced of Harley's "incapacity" or "unwillingness" to address complaints long before.⁷⁸ As to Edds's killing of Muñoz expressed in Charge Three, the act clearly constituted second-degree murder, according to his interpretation of Harley's files.⁷⁹ The "custom" along the border called for Grand Juries not to indict Rangers, argued Canales in relation to Charge Five, and, thus, "we" appealed to Harley for "protection" from the Rangers.⁸⁰ Canales denied "evil intent" regarding Charge Eight and provided documents stating that Bentley was still a Ranger when he pistol-whipped the waiter.⁸¹ Conceding that Hanson was "shrewd" and "smart," Canales did not accept Harley's characterization of Hanson as "diligent" and "faithful," unless, wrote Canales in defense of Charge Nine alleging Hanson to be unfit for his position, those terms meant "to cover up and protect and defend desperate characters" among the Rangers.⁸² Finally, in reference to Harley's assertion that Canales sought to discredit the Hobby Administration in making the charges, Canales answered that as a "friend and staunch supporter" of Hobby, he had visited with Hobby prior to filing any charges to clarify his goal of "cleaning out" the Rangers.

⁷⁷ *RFI*, 151-54 (quotations, 154 and 151). According to Canales, other members in the House concurred with his broader interpretation of the resolution; *RFI*, 151.

⁷⁸ *RFI*, 156.

⁷⁹ *RFI*, 156.

⁸⁰ *RFI*, 157.

⁸¹ *RFI*, 158-59. Canales submitted Sgt. C.H. Arnold to Hanson, 5Oct18, which referred to "Ranger Bentley" and include handwritten notations by Hanson concerning "Ranger W.B. Bentley."

⁸² *RFI*, 160.

Hobby indicated his desire to know about any of his appointees who were not performing their duties fully, Canales revealed, and a fellow legislator could corroborate the conversation. As Canales told the story, he had tried to avoid public inquiry that might discredit Hobby through revelations regarding his appointee Harley.⁸³

At the conclusion of his reply to Harley's Exceptions, Canales presented two additional charges on behalf of others.⁸⁴ Charge Eighteen alleged that H.E. Roberson "unjustifiably" killed H.F. Boykin and an "innocent bystander." According to the charge, Roberson had previously served as a Ranger after standing trial for murder. Further, the charge acknowledged that Roberson was not a Ranger at the time of the shooting of Boykin, but again gained a commission as Ranger after being convicted of murdering Boykin.⁸⁵ Charge Nineteen held that Ranger Private W.B. Sands, "while in a very intoxicated condition," killed Army Sgt. Owen Bierne, who had entered a "notorious" saloon to "quell a disturbance." Canales cited three legislators who could explain the two matters.⁸⁶

With the deadline to file charges by Canales at hand, Chairman Bledsoe announced that it was time to "arrange these charges in the order that we desire to present them and get the witnesses here on each specific charge and *let's get through with this just as fast as we can.*"⁸⁷ Haphazard availability of witnesses, however,

⁸³ *RFI*, 160. Sen. J.J. Strickland was present at the meeting with Hobby on 25 January, according to Canales.

⁸⁴ "Investigation Of Ranger Force Continues," *AS*, 4Feb19, 1. The article mentions that three of the first seven originated with others, but misconstrues the comments by Canales.

⁸⁵ *RFI*, 164. The killing of Boykin took place "about" two and one-half years before the hearings in Sierra Blanca, Hudspeth County, West Texas. Canales asked process to be served on Sen. R.M. Dudley and Representatives Adrian Pool and R.E. Thomason.

⁸⁶ *RFI*, 164-65. The killing occurred in El Paso in 1917.

⁸⁷ *RFI*, 162 (emphasis added). Harley objected to the presentation of charges through Canales, but Bledsoe assured him that no "abuse of that privilege" would take place; *RFI*, 163.

immediately wrecked Bledsoe's plans to move orderly and quickly through the charges.⁸⁸

Harley called to the witness stand Col. H.J. Slocum, commanding officer of the 13th Cavalry at Fort Sam Houston and a forty-seven-year Army veteran with thirty years of experience along the border.⁸⁹ Slocum testified that the Rangers consistently, fully, and effectively cooperated with his troops and that he met on several occasions with Hanson. To direct questions from Harley, he responded that the he knew of no misconduct or outrages on the part of Rangers. Bledsoe asked whether the Rangers in 1918 were "any worse" than before, to which Slocum replied, they were "about the same."⁹⁰ Through questioning, Harley established the existence of a letter to him from Slocum praising his handling of the Fox matter. Harley also asked whether Canales had ever offered to help him "keep down" German propaganda or "anti-Americanism"; Slocum did not recall any such offers of assistance.⁹¹

Under cross-examination from Canales, Slocum stated that he had not been in the Valley during 1915-17 and had taken command at Brownsville, where he met Hanson, in January 1918. When Canales attempted to establish through his own set of leading questions that he had participated in several ways to combat German intrigue before Slocum's command, and had continued to work in 1918 through James Wells, district head of the state readiness board, Bledsoe cut him off.

The committee members, Canales, and Harley all contributed to a long discussion regarding the proper rules of procedure for the investigation that focused on the appropriate range of cross-examination, a matter that directly affected

⁸⁸ "Witnesses Tell Of Work Of Rangers," *DMN*, 5Feb19, 1: "The testimony today covered in a spotty manner several different events of import to the investigation and did not attempt to be complete, as it was take to accommodate witnesses who are in a hurry to get home for various reasons, which the committee considered good."

⁸⁹ Slocum Testimony, RFI, 167-95, *passim*, and *DMN*, 5Feb19, 1, 4.

⁹⁰ *RFI*, 170.

⁹¹ *RFI*, 172.

Canales's effort to establish that he had been active in loyalty activities regardless of Slocum's knowledge of them. The committee agreed to follow, "as nearly as practicable," the rules governing district court proceedings, but a basic problem existed in Canales's status as, in Senator Page's words, a "prosecuting witness," a creature not found in district courts.⁹²

When the cross-examination resumed, Canales asked a series of questions regarding Slocum's knowledge of Hanson, whom he had known for one year. Slocum said he did not know that Hanson had been a "secret service man of General Díaz," the ex-president of Mexico; or that he had promoted the ousted leader's interests in Tampico; or that Mexican authorities had arrested and "expelled" him for being "an undesirable citizen." Under questioning by McMillin, Slocum admitted that he knew nothing of the facts of the Fox incident, but merely applauded the principles of integrity stated in Harley's letter.⁹³

Harley next called Capt. Harry Harrison, Army intelligence officer of the Brownsville District, who praised the assistance of the Rangers in neutrality matters. Answering a specific question from Harley, Harrison stated that Canales "never assisted me in any way," though under cross-examination by Canales he admitted that he frequently sought legal advice concerning immigration law from Canales and his law partner at the time, Oscar Dancy.⁹⁴ After Harrison's testimony, the committee adjourned until two o'clock.

The Army officers Slocum and Harrison testified to general conditions in South Texas, not on specific charges, and praised Ranger behavior regardless of direct

⁹² *RFI*, 177. At one point in the legal wrangling, Canales interjected, "I don't know how the Colonel knows even though he wasn't there. However, if the colonel says he doesn't know anything about it, I would take his word to be true because I know any member of the United States Army in high standing, his word is absolutely true—I never go back of that"; *RFI*, 177.

⁹³ *RFI*, 178-79.

⁹⁴ *RFI*, 195 and 199.

knowledge, despite Bledsoe's instructions that such testimony no longer was needed. The mere presence of witnesses, more than their relevance or continuity with previous witnesses, often determined who spoke when.

When the afternoon session opened, new counsel for the Adjutant General and Rangers took the floor, a move that surprised Canales.⁹⁵ Robert E. Lee Knight of Dallas, attorney and former legislator, came to the defense as a vocal supporter of the Rangers under Governor Hobby, for whom he had delivered more than 2000 "loyalty" speeches during the recent campaign season.⁹⁶ The first witness he handled was Edward Tyrell, veteran agent of the Secret Service in San Antonio.

Knight, having asserted that the border was "infested" with "banditry," asked Tyrell to "tell the committee whether or not the ranger force consists of rugged, robust, red-blooded fearless men or Sunday school teachers and pacifists?" After Canales objected to the breach of rules regarding admissible evidence, Thomas Hook, who was waiting his turn to testify, raised a "point of personal privilege" from the audience. Hook pointed out that he had taught Sunday school before volunteering for the service and did not wish "to yield the point to anybody" about an individual not being able red-blooded and religious, simultaneously. Hook's interruption provided space for a display of Canales's humor:

Knight: "I have a tender sympathy with the gentlemen; I myself am an ex-Sunday school teacher and did not mean any reflection on myself and certainly not on him.

Canales: "But you are an 'ex-.'"

⁹⁵ Canales asked who he is and what he is doing in the hearing; *RFI*, 203.

⁹⁶ Hobby's "loyalty day" was July 20, 1918, a few days before the Democratic primary election. Lewis Gould includes a quotation by Knight to indicate a shift in focus of his "loyalty" speeches from Germans to communists: "I think the world is in a worse condition than it was a year ago" because "the menace of Bolshevism" had "wonderfully and fearfully" "infected the U.S., and citizens were ready to explode." Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era*, (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1973), 252-53.

Apparently the room exploded in laughter, forcing Bledsoe to call for order.⁹⁷

Knight returned to Tyrell, asking him whether “law-abiding, patriotic” citizens voiced any “serious” criticisms of the Rangers, to which Tyrell said he believed not.⁹⁸

Harley asked to present two additional witnesses who were anxious to leave Austin, Col. Francisco Chapa and Edward J. Hamner, and, after Canales agreed, called Chapa to the stand. Harley focused on Chapa’s and Canales’s relationship with Captain Hanson during the questioning and tried to establish an inconsistency in Canales’s views. The testimony of Chapa was important for Canales: he served as an advisor to Hobby, as he did to governors before; had been present for discussions with Canales and Harley and Hanson over the years; and represented the best entry point for influence into the Hobby administration.

Most people in South Texas concurred with Chapa’s assessment of Hanson, formed over sixteen years, as a diligent and effective leader, testified Chapa. Hanson promulgated rules of interaction with Valley residents, Chapa revealed, that promoted harmony and understanding.⁹⁹ Chapa was proud of his recommendation of Hanson to Hobby as head of the Rangers because Hanson knew “everyone there— merchants, business men, lawyers, cotton men.” Basically, Chapa confessed, “I was glad to see a man that was humane . . . at the head of the Ranger force.”¹⁰⁰

Canales elicited testimony showing that Hanson, whom Chapa had nominated to be Inspector of the Rangers, and Chapa had violated neutrality laws regarding their work with Mexican counterrevolutionaries. Hanson worked as a “private detective”

⁹⁷ Tyrell Testimony, *RFI*, 204. Hook’s interruption provided space for a display of Canales’s humor: Knight: “I have a tender sympathy with the gentlemen; I myself am an ex-Sunday school teacher and did not mean any reflection on myself and certainly not on him. Canales: “But you are an ‘ex-.’” Apparently the room exploded in laughter, forcing Bledsoe to call for order; *RFI*, 204.

⁹⁸ *RFI*, 206.

⁹⁹ Chapa Testimony, *RFI*, 208-09.

¹⁰⁰ *RFI*, 219.

for ousted strongmen Porfirio Díaz and General Huerta, for which he was forced from Mexico. Chapa was convicted for supporting a scheme to reverse the course of the Mexican Revolution.¹⁰¹ In showing Hanson and Chapa's political maneuverings, Canales was trying to establish that they were well-equipped to conceal their double-crossing of Canales in the run-up to the elections in November 1918, and thus Canales's persistence in working with Hanson.

According to Chapa, Canales expressed to a crowd in Mercedes in September 1918 the shared view that the Rangers under Hanson had improved.¹⁰² Under cross-examination, he told Canales, "You were always full of praise" for Hanson and began to complain about the Rangers only since Hanson "has been stepping on your toes," referring to investigations in the Parr-Glasscock battle taking place down the hall.¹⁰³ Canales disputed the charge and established that he had sent Chapa a letter complaining of the Edds matter long before the November Parr-Glasscock election fight, though Chapa did not remember where the letter was nor what exactly was in it.¹⁰⁴

Harley sought to minimize Hanson's expulsion from Mexico, suggesting, erroneously, that "pretty near every other American" had been sent out, too. Chapa provided his own defense of Hanson, in proclaiming, unsolicited, that there were "thousands in this country just as good or better" than Canales. The idea was to cloud the image of the Ranger leaders as convicted felons.¹⁰⁵

Tidwell asked Chapa whether his relationship with Canales had "heretofore" been "pleasant"—Chapa assured him it had been. Tidwell then wondered aloud when

¹⁰¹ Chapa Testimony, *RFI*, 211-14.

¹⁰² *RFI*, 210.

¹⁰³ *RFI*, 214. The Parr-Glasscock hearing, with the entire Senate sitting as special committee to hear it, heard opening remarks on this day.

¹⁰⁴ *RFI*, 211 and 214.

¹⁰⁵ Harley quotation in Chapa Testimony, *RFI*, 213; Chapa's assessment in same.

the “estrangement” between the men had begun, but Chapa quickly offered that he had come to Austin on other matters, not the investigation, and, in any case, held the “young man” Canales in “high regard.”¹⁰⁶ He confirmed a close relationship with Harley, with whom he conversed by telephone almost daily, and noted that Harley had dismissed the drunken Ranger Bentley on the basis of one such call.¹⁰⁷

Next appeared Thomas Hook, captain in the U.S. Army and a Sunday school teacher, who told about an encounter two years before with Ranger Capt. John J. Sanders.¹⁰⁸ Knight immediately objected, claiming that Hook’s testimony did not apply to any formal charge, and thus, was irrelevant to the proceedings. Canales argued that Hook’s testimony would be pertinent to his “general charge of people being taken out of jail and killed.”¹⁰⁹ Canales had expected Hook to provide him with information about his experience, but Hook insisted on testifying in person.¹¹⁰ The committee reluctantly allowed Hook to testify, though Senator Page warned Canales and Hook that “I have talked to some of the committee and they want this examination as limited as possible.”¹¹¹

His story began with the removal of two suspected *sediciosos*, José Morín and Victoriano Poncé, from the Kingsville jail in May 1916 and their subsequent disappearance. The presumed death of Poncé and Morín at the hands of authorities prompted Poncé’s widow to request an intermediary to approach Hook for help in locating her husband’s remains for proper burial. Hook, probably aware of the

¹⁰⁶ *RFI*, 215-16.

¹⁰⁷ *RFI*, 216 and 218. Following Chapa was Edward J. Hamner, a Sweetwater attorney, who testified that Rangers worked with the State Council of Defense to work with citizens suspected of disloyalty by “lecturing them good and giving them a chance to [be]come good loyal citizens instead of putting them in jail.” He stated that “good” citizens had no complaints about the Rangers, though some “yowling on the street” originated from “other citizens”; *RFI*, 228-29.

¹⁰⁸ Thos. W. Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 238-253.

¹⁰⁹ *RFI*, 238.

¹¹⁰ Canales, *RFI*, 238, and Thos. W. Hook Testimony, 239.

¹¹¹ *RFI*, 238.

irregularities in transporting prisoners through northern Cameron County, checked with undertakers in Brownsville, but “they were never able to recover the body,” he recalled for the committee.¹¹²

Border Mexicans in the area had worried about their safety for a long time, but with the recent arrests of many prominent Tejano citizens during tensions surrounding a predicted flare-up of the Plan de San Diego, Hook related, Tejano residents moved to protect themselves. Led by Rev. Fenón Moraida, the local priest, several local residents, including many of the individuals recently incarcerated on suspicion, such as Manuel González, editor of the Spanish-language newspaper, approached Hook for assistance in drafting an appropriate document to President Woodrow Wilson and Governor James Ferguson. Hook told them to compile their information, then he would prepare a formal petition to the government leaders.¹¹³ To the investigating committee, Hook explained that he had assisted the petitioners because he “thought it was a good opportunity for the good element among the [Border] Mexicans to get in closer touch with the government and the government in closer touch with them.”¹¹⁴ Bledsoe asked Hook to read the petition into the record.¹¹⁵

Thirty-seven Kingsville *mejicanos*, mainly Tejano citizens, signed the petition to Wilson and Ferguson protesting the alleged killing of Poncé and Morín and asking for protection under the law. The signatories stated that “some officer” ordered the transfer of the two prisoners to Brownsville, who then died in route, though “the place where and by whom killed, is not learned.” The petitioners “presume[d] [Poncé and Morín] were prisoners of, and in charge of, and under the protection of the Department of Justice,” and, thus, appealed to Wilson for justice and relief.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 245-46.

¹¹³ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 241-42.

¹¹⁴ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 242.

¹¹⁵ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 246.

¹¹⁶ [Thirty-seven Petitioners] to Pres. Woodrow Wilson, 3June16, in *RFI*, 247 [hereafter, “Petition,”].

The signatories described the rampant killings of Border Mexicans by authorities in their prosecution of the Border War. The recent incident only typified “the indiscriminate killing of Mexicans in this State lately, without a trial, many of whom we believe were wholly innocent, and all of whom are presumed so until proved guilty.”¹¹⁷ “[I]t is no crime to belong to the Mexican race [sic]” insisted the petitioners, yet many fellow residents “who have been killed without a trial lately, have been guilty of no other crime than being Mexicans.”¹¹⁸ Like all reasonable residents, the signatories “deplore[d]” the “terrible wrongs wrought by bandits” further south, but guilt by association must not replace the rule of law. “We would call the attention to the fact that it is as unjust and as un-American to kill an innocent man of the Mexican race because of a crime of a Mexican bandit,” argued the writers, “as it would be to kill an American citizen of any other race although innocent, for the crime of another.”¹¹⁹ The petitioners were explicitly rejecting the Rangers’ use of revenge by proxy.

Under the circumstances in South Texas, wrote the petitioners, “we have reason to believe that our liberty and even our lives are menaced.” The petitioners noted that “if there are those here who are above the law, we who are certain of our lives under the law, are uncertain thereof under those despots.”¹²⁰ The petitioners concluded with a plea for Wilson and Ferguson to “issue such instructions” as necessary to prevent the reoccurrence of “unjustifiable acts.” Again invoking the notion of equality before the law, they also asked that any officer who disregarded the law “be brought to trial as effectually as a bandit who disregards the law.” With an equitable administration of justice, “we will know that law is supreme.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ “Petition,” in *RFI*, 248.

¹¹⁸ “Petition,” in *RFI*, 246-47.

¹¹⁹ “Petition,” in *RFI*, 246.

¹²⁰ “Petition,” in *RFI*, 248.

¹²¹ “Petition,” in *RFI*, 249.

According to Hook, Ferguson had replied that he did not know anything about the disappearances of the two prisoners and made no commitment to find out.¹²²

Wilson initiated an investigation immediately and responded to Hook on behalf of the signatories one month after receiving the petition, but the committee refused to hear the letter. Regarding the letters from Ferguson and Wilson, Bledsoe stated, "We don't care about those replies."¹²³

Hook's association with the petition drew the attention of Captain Sanders, he stated. At the time of the incident two years before, Hook was an attorney in private practice in Kingsville who was conducting business before the district court in its term at Falfurrias, Brooks County.¹²⁴ In the courthouse, Sanders and another Ranger approached Hook, who was arranging legal documents at a table in the courtroom. After confirming Hook's identity, Sanders asked him to step outside into the anteroom at his "leisure." Hook assented, covered his papers so they would not blow away, then exited to the foyer where Sanders immediately asked him, "Are you the son of a bitch that wrote that petition at Kingsville?" Hook replied that he had assisted the petitioners, to which Sanders objected, "Don't you know that all that stuff was a damned lie?" Hook countered, "No, I don't, and more than that I believe it [is] all true." Sanders then pulled his pistol and began swinging it at Hook, who managed to ward off four blows with his left hand despite the other Ranger's attempts to pin his arms, according to Hook. He chided Sanders for trying to pistol whip an unarmed adversary and taunted the reeking Sanders, "What is the matter with you—are you drunk?" The scuffle ended with the appearance of district stenographer J.B. Dodson and Brooks County Deputy Sheriff L.N. Porter.¹²⁵

¹²² Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 251.

¹²³ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 243.

¹²⁴ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 238.

¹²⁵ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 243-45.

Deputy Porter forcibly separated Hook from Sanders, who left the courthouse after murmuring an apology for attacking an unarmed man. Hook asked Porter to relay to Sanders his wish to continue the fight elsewhere, saying that “if he will take off that gun I will meet him any time, anywhere.” Porter refused to “carry any message” between the two men because he was “too good a friend” to each man, so Hook stormed off to present the challenge to Sanders himself. Hook found that the two Rangers already had checked out of the hotel and learned in the “mean part of town” that they had left town by automobile.¹²⁶

Senator Page asked Hook the identity of the sheriff of Kleberg County and whether he was in attendance at the hearings. Sheriff J.B. Scarborough was in the hearing room at that moment, replied Hook. Bledsoe asked Hook to write out the charge against Captain Sanders, which Hook filed the following day.¹²⁷

Canales called Sheriff J.B. Scarborough of Kenedy County to the stand. Scarborough provided the context for the petition and assault discussed by Hook by relating activities involving Poncé and Morín. In April 1916, information surfaced about a planned renewal of the Plan de San Diego to commence on May 10 under the direction of a former Villista, General José M. Morín. From a proclamation supposedly distributed by Morín along the border, Scarborough and other officers learned of Morín's plan to blow up county seats across the borderlands from Kingsville to in El Paso at the strike of 1 P.M.¹²⁸

On May 9, however, Justice Department Agent R.L. Barnes arrested Morín aboard the train from San Antonio to Kingsville and papers found on him led to the arrest of his alleged Kingsville accomplice, Victoriano Poncé, a former Villista

¹²⁶ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 245.

¹²⁷ Hook Testimony, *RFI*, 249. Hook's Charge Twenty sets the date of the assault in Fall 1916 or Spring 1917; *RFI*, 335-36. With the Sweetwater, Nolan County, charge filed by Representative Ford, referred to by Harley as Five(A), twenty-one charges were presented to the committee.

¹²⁸ J.B. Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 259-60.

captain. The two presumed insurrectionists were placed in the Kleberg County jail in Kingsville under his supervision.¹²⁹ While the federal government thought about what to do with Poncé and Morín, Texas officials acted, Scarborough stated.

Despite lack of authorization, Scarborough transferred the two men to the jail at Sarita, county seat of neighboring Willacy County to the south.¹³⁰ The process of transfer began when Sheriff Clint Adkins of Willacy County notified Sheriff Scarborough that one of his deputies could confirm the identity of Morín, for whom he claimed to hold a warrant on a charge of horse theft. According to Sheriff Scarborough's testimony, Adkins then asked Scarborough to deliver both prisoners to him, apologizing for the request, but explaining that he had no car to facilitate the transfer. He offered to pay for the car that Scarborough had to hire. Adkins also assured Scarborough that he had a witness who could identify Morín as a participant in "two of those raids in the Valley." As for Poncé, Adkins wanted him in Sarita because "if he was ever identified" as a participant in the train derailment at Olmito, then he could more easily be transferred from there to Brownsville, presumably because it was just down the rail line. Pressed by Canales about the unclear legal reasons for the transfer of Poncé, Scarborough suddenly remembered that Poncé actually had been "identified by one man in my jail" as a participant in the Olmito train derailment and, further, that Adkins had referred to the possibility of "both" men being identified by his deputy.¹³¹

Just a few days after the arrest of Poncé and Morín, Scarborough testified, he placed the men in chains and handcuffs in Kingsville and took them to Sarita.

¹²⁹ Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 258 and 260.

¹³⁰ Wilson to Hook, 8 July 16, Wilson Papers, PCL. Wilson wrote to Hook that "the two men were left in the custody of the sheriff at Kingsville with the request that they be detained until formal proceedings against them could be instituted." Scarborough conceded that the federal government did not "authorize" the transfer of the prisoners; *RFI*, 261.

¹³¹ Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 254-55, emphasis added.

Accompanying him on the trip were Tom Moseley, Special Ranger working for the Cattle Raisers Association, and Ranger Joe Brooks of Captain Sanders's company. Scarborough said he wanted the two Rangers as "help" and "for protection if anything should come up." Scarborough delivered the prisoners to Adkins, retrieved his chains and handcuffs, then left. The two Rangers stayed behind.¹³² Scarborough did not know what happened to Poncé and Morín after that time.¹³³

Representative Tidwell followed a line of questioning regarding ethnic relations in Kleberg County.

Tidwell: Have you any Mexican officials in your county?

Scarborough: No, sir.

Q: Any Justices of the Peace, Constables or deputy sheriffs of Mexican extraction?

A: No, not at present. We have a Mexican janitor at the courthouse.¹³⁴

Knight then elicited from Scarborough his opinion of Captain Sanders as a "cautious" officer.¹³⁵

The next witness called by Canales was J.C. George, Hobby campaign chair and Brownsville attorney, who currently was representing Rangers Lock, Sadler, and Sittre in the Florencio García murder case.¹³⁶ George testified about the activities of developer Lon Hill and his "henchmen," among them Rangers, who attempted to drive the Villareal family from their lands "absolutely by force."¹³⁷ George introduced into the record the term "evaporated" to refer to prisoners whose whereabouts could not be specified. He knew of "lots of men who have evaporated in that country" since 1915, and noted, "I remember coming down [to] the train several other times when

¹³² Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 255.

¹³³ Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 257.

¹³⁴ Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 264.

¹³⁵ Scarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 268.

¹³⁶ J.C. George Testimony, *RFI*, 268-69 and 282.

¹³⁷ George Testimony, *RFI*, 269 and 275.

people [clients?] were supposed to come to Brownsville and never got there.”¹³⁸

Admitting that Rangers were “no worse” than lawyers in approving extralegal steps to thwart raids, George related that the Rangers “kept on and kept on” in their activities, eventually drawing “a good deal” of complaint from local citizens.¹³⁹ Declaring the Rangers necessary for the border, he also believed that placing the Rangers under bond would serve “public justice” by improving the character of the corps.¹⁴⁰ Senator Page interjected that neither surety companies nor citizens, including George, would write bonds for Rangers “under any circumstances.”¹⁴¹

George also described for the committee the Rangers’ practice of not allowing bonds for prisoners, a practice that both reflected and resulted from “a lot of friction” between Rangers and local authorities. In one case, Captain Stevens kept a client “in hock” and would not release him on bond, and in another case, which drew considerable interest from the committee, the Rangers abducted a county commissioner on election eve, refused to grant him bond before a local judge, transported him to the next county, and finally released him a day later only when George, Canales, and others came across the kidnapping party. The Rangers claimed they removed the judge to keep liquor, which they presumed he had handy, from influencing the election.¹⁴² Before turning George back over to Knight, Canales commented again about “common knowledge about threats” to his life in the preceding years.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ George Testimony, *RFI*, 273. Headlines of the Dallas *Morning News* for 5 February featured George’s testimony, though not necessarily with a connection between one subheading and the next: “Witnesses Tell Of Work Of Rangers”; “People Who Disappear In Valley Are Said To ‘Evaporate’”; “Had Great Deal To Do.”

¹³⁹ George Testimony, *RFI*, 279.

¹⁴⁰ George Testimony, *RFI*, 273.

¹⁴¹ *RFI*, 273-74.

¹⁴² George Testimony, *RFI*, 276 and 280-83.

¹⁴³ *RFI*, 280.

The final witness of the day, called by Harley, was Dr. S.N. Leach, examining physician in the case of a presumed prisoner suicide in the jail in Sweetwater, Nolan County. Bledsoe and Page expressed their incredulity that a man could hang himself with a belt looped around a bar several feet off the ground and a handkerchief stuffed far down his throat. Page asked the doctor whether the prisoner had crammed the handkerchief down his throat “to prevent himself from crying out”; Leach answered, “I think so.” The testimony related to Representative Ford’s charge alleging brutality by Rangers against Nolan County inmates.¹⁴⁴

While the committee was hearing the final witnesses, Senator J.C. McNealus of Dallas County presented Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 13, which called for all testimony in the joint proceeding to be printed in the House and Senate *Journals* “in order that the public may be properly informed.” The resolution was adopted without debate and sent to the House, where it passed the following day.¹⁴⁵ On the basis of the day’s developments, Harley called for assistance from two Ranger supporters, Dayton Moses and Congressman Claude Hudspeth of West Texas. Harley wired Moses that he “must” come to defend Special Rangers Roberson and Moseley, who he claimed were “under charges by Canales.”¹⁴⁶ To Hudspeth, Harley wired, “You remember your promise to me last August when you said you would be here to defend the Rangers[?] I expect you to keep your promise.” Hudspeth notified Harley he would come as soon as possible.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Dr. S.N. Leach Testimony, *RFI*, 289-92. The incident, which occurred in March 1918, involved a prisoner referred to as “Bostick.”

¹⁴⁵ Senate *Journal*, 228, and House *Journal*, 305.

¹⁴⁶ Harley to Moses and Wroe, Attorneys. 4Feb19 (teleg.), AGGC. Scarborough mentioned Moseley as one of the Rangers accompanying him to Sarita; Hook’s charge did not mention Moseley. Moses arrived the following day.

¹⁴⁷ Harley to Hudspeth and Hudspeth to Harley, 4Feb19 (telegs.), AGGC.

Day Six: Wednesday, February 5

The morning session opened with Senator Williford requesting adherence to rules of evidence used in district court, else the record become “cumbersome” and the hearings continue “another week.”¹⁴⁸ Canales called Virginia Yeager, landowner, suffragette in Duval County, and the only woman to appear before the committee, to testify about drunkenness and threats on the part of Rangers. She testified that a Ranger accompanied Oscar Thompson, sheriff of the neighboring county and leasor of some grazing land from her, when he threatened her about her suit to exclude him from access to water for non-payment, a suit she eventually won.¹⁴⁹ In another instance, Ranger Pat Craighead, whom she claimed was drunk, threatened her mechanic, whom Craighead ordered to repair his car immediately, or Craighead would whip him “like a tied dog.”¹⁵⁰ She alleged other instances of Rangers’ firing weapons in San Diego, Duval County, her hometown.¹⁵¹ Border Mexicans left South Texas by the thousands, she argued, not because they did not support the war effort, which she claimed they did, but because they were afraid of the Rangers.¹⁵² She had summed up her general views in a letter to Canales in which she said “It was and still is a reign of terror” because of the activities of the Rangers.¹⁵³

Ranger counsel Knight questioned Yeager extensively about what he characterized as her effort to assist a Border Mexican avoid induction.¹⁵⁴ Senator Page pursued the interrogation of Yeager regarding her loyalty by asking about her

¹⁴⁸ *RFI*, 301.

¹⁴⁹ Mrs. Virginia Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 307 and 328. In its coverage of the day’s proceedings, the Dallas *Morning News* featured Yeager’s testimony: “Claim Rangers Add To Border Terrorism; San Diego Woman Testifies They Were Abusive And Discourteous; Should Be Restrained”; 6Feb19, 1 and 3.

¹⁵⁰ Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 303.

¹⁵¹ Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 332.

¹⁵² Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 316.

¹⁵³ Yeager to Canales, 25Jan19, in *RFI*, 7; Exhibit A attached to Charge One.

¹⁵⁴ Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 318-32.

husband's "nationality," assuming that he was German. After Yeager offered that he was, in fact, English, Page repeatedly asked her position on the U.S.'s war involvement against the Germans, which she consistently described as "justified."¹⁵⁵

Closing the morning session was Canales's witness Ventura R. Sánchez, constable in San Diego. Ventura told of several instances in which Rangers were "drunk and raising thunder" in San Diego and specified two times that they had threatened him directly.¹⁵⁶ Knight defended the Rangers' activity in San Diego, calling them the "night errants [sic] of our civilization," and ascribing to Sánchez a disloyalty inherent in his heritage, or "blood." "He may be an American citizen, . . . but the blood is there," Knight observed, and Sánchez's relatives probably deserted or avoided the draft altogether. Sánchez replied simply that "We came from Mexican descent and we are proud of it, but are ten times more proud that we are American citizens."¹⁵⁷ Sánchez asked the committee for "some protection" from Ranger Hurst, in Austin for the proceedings, because he feared Hurst might fulfill a threat to kill him. Bledsoe told him not to worry.¹⁵⁸

To open the afternoon session, Canales called R.B. Creager of Brownsville, frequent Republican federal appointee and long time attorney.¹⁵⁹ Creager commented that during his twenty years along the border, some "clean gentlemen," including "a number" of the "finest men I have ever known," had served on the Ranger force, but

¹⁵⁵ Yeager Testimony, *RFI*, 333.

¹⁵⁶ Ventura R. Sánchez Testimony, *RFI*, 338-39. On 16 November 1918, Rangers George Hurst and Daniel Hinojosa fired weapons while drunk, Sánchez alleged, and on 24 December 1918, Rangers Hurst and C.J. Blackwell threatened him, saying they were going "to shoot Hell out of you, you son-of-a-bitch." When Canales asked Sánchez whether it was the custom for Rangers to come to San Diego to get drunk, he answered that it was. Canales then asked, "Isn't it a fact that the best place to get a drink now is to go to a Ranger camp and get it?" Sánchez replied, "That is what I have been told, yes." See *RFI*, 338-39.

¹⁵⁷ Sánchez Testimony, *RFI*, 347.

¹⁵⁸ Sánchez Testimony, *RFI*, 348.

¹⁵⁹ R.B. Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 353 and 369.

that a “great many” Rangers were of the “opposite character.”¹⁶⁰ Rangers burned ranches, tortured suspects, and shot prisoners, leaving their bodies to rot, in an effort to “terrorize” Border Mexicans, Creager testified.¹⁶¹ Citizens “of standing in the Valley or even halfway standing” added the name of Border Mexicans to a “black list” circulated among officers and citizens, after which the man would “evaporate” or flee, explained Creager. He cited one instance in which railroad workers found five corpses with empty beer bottles shoved in their mouths.¹⁶² Altogether, 100 to 200 Border Mexicans, “conservatively” estimated, perished in the Border War, and “in my judgment,” he told the committee, 90% “were as innocent as you or I of complicity in those bandit outrages.”¹⁶³

Creager explained that a “great number” of local officers and citizens “followed the lead” of the “majority” of Rangers in the brutal treatment of Border Mexican residents. Citizens and local officers committed atrocities “under the encouragement and protection of Rangers “without a “shadow of doubt,” said Creager.¹⁶⁴ In one instance, the polarization between Independent- and Republican-controlled Brownsville officers and Wells-controlled county officers resulted in the death of client Toribio Rodriguez while in the custody of Captain Sanders and two deputies. In a “Dying Declaration” dictated to Creager and others, Rodriguez swore “one of them shot me in the back”– a deputy, he believed– then Sanders murmured “that if I did not have enough with that to die, they would give me more.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 354.

¹⁶¹ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 381 and 371.

¹⁶² Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 356.

¹⁶³ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 355.

¹⁶⁴ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 381.

¹⁶⁵ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 367 and 356-57; “Dying Declaration of Toribio Rodriguez.” 12 November 1912, in *RFI*, 375-76. Rodriguez identified the two deputies as Mañuel Saldaña and Andrés Uresti; he stated, “I think it was Uresti” who shot him. The other witnesses were Harry Kalman Loew, H.L.D. Kirham, J.R. Rentro, and M.A. Saldaña, Sr; *RFI*, 376.

He deplored raiders' "cowardly" assassination of Anglo residents but insisted that the brutality of the Rangers and their followers had caused them.¹⁶⁶ The violence by the authorities, he claimed, was "multiplying the bandits" by providing grounds for revenge that would last for two or three generations.¹⁶⁷ Thus, concluded Creager, "the conduct of those officers more than any one other thing caused the bandit trouble to attain the dimensions that it did."¹⁶⁸

In an effort to obtain Creager's views on an example of presumed tactics of terror, Canales introduced a photograph of three Rangers on horseback with their lariats tied to corpses of *mejicanos*. Knight immediately objected, stating that Creager was not "qualified" as an "expert on rigor mortis," and then dismissed the incident in the photograph: "It seems that some of the boys have some dead men there."¹⁶⁹ Creager identified Capt. J.M. Fox and Special Ranger Tom Tate as two of the riders in the photograph and testified that the photograph was sold widely as a postcard.¹⁷⁰ Knight asserted that the committee knew "as much as you will ever know" about the photo, then pointed out that Fox had been dismissed since the taking of the photograph, so why "waste time" on it?¹⁷¹ Canales, after protesting Knight's frequent interruptions to extol "imperial knights," continued by asking Creager whether the photograph captured the "attitude" of the Rangers "as you find them now." Creager stated that it did.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 382.

¹⁶⁷ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 380-81.

¹⁶⁸ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 354-55.

¹⁶⁹ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 364. Canales asked to enter the photograph and an enlargement of it into the record on page 375, though the Table of Contents for the transcript places it on page 394. The two copies of the transcript seen by the author no longer included the images. For a fuller discussion of the photograph, its messages, and messengers, see Ribb, *Canales*, Chapter Seven.

¹⁷⁰ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 366.

¹⁷¹ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 365.

¹⁷² Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 367.

Creager's solution to the violent attitude was to require a bond for Rangers that would act as a "restraint" in a manner that substantially increased salaries alone could not. "Hot blooded young fellows without much education" who "lead the lives they do," Creager suggested, were not the "type of men" to entrust with property and lives. South Texas would be "infinitely better off" without Rangers than to continue with Rangers without bond. Failing to provide restraint, he argued, was asking for a repeat of the previous twenty years, when the Rangers had "done more harm" in South Texas than good.¹⁷³

The tension between Canales, on one hand, and Knight and Bledsoe, on the other, reached new levels during the day's testimony. At one point in late afternoon, Knight tried to shift focus from Creager's stories about Ranger outrages to a discussion about dollar economic damages from "bandit" raids. Canales, exasperated by the frequent misdirection and interruptions by Knight, spoke out:

I object to that as being immaterial and irrelevant. We are not investigating about property. It is not the dollars and cents—it is [Ranger] men we are investigating here and their conduct. This gentleman comes from Dallas where they always look at things from a dollars standpoint but we fellows over here believe ... the lives of the citizens are worth more than dollars and cents.¹⁷⁴

A bit later, Canales was inquiring into Creager's assessment of Hanson. Bledsoe ruled it "improper." Canales, increasingly frustrated by what he considered a double standard regarding restrictions of counsel imposed by Chairman Bledsoe, reacted:

Canales: I am sorry that my cross-examination always goes too far and it seems, to me, that the other one never goes far enough.

Bledsoe: While I am chairman of this committee, I am not going to permit any suggestion of that kind from you. Every courtesy on earth has been extended to you and will be... but I am going to ask you to respect this committee and its rulings.

Canales: I will respect this committee and its rulings but I believe that some rules that apply to me should apply to opposing counsel.

¹⁷³ Creager Testimony, *RFI*, 372-73.

¹⁷⁴ *RFI*, 383.

Bledsoe: Mr. Canales, they have; and I am not going to have a suggestion otherwise.

The final five witnesses of the day testified about conditions in Sweetwater, Nolan County. John J. Ford, who brought Charge Five-A, called the first three individuals, including one ex-Ranger, who roundly criticized current Ranger behavior there.¹⁷⁵ Knight presented two witnesses who argued the Nolan County prisoner committed suicide.¹⁷⁶ At six o'clock, the committee recessed until Friday morning in order to give Knight an opportunity to attend to "urgent" business.¹⁷⁷

Day Seven: Friday, February 7

Before hearing one more witness about the Sweetwater death, Bledsoe released all the other relevant witnesses, remarking, "You gentlemen who have been so anxious about your oil wells and sick wives can go, too."¹⁷⁸ The committee

¹⁷⁵ The first of three witnesses called by Representative Ford, District Judge W.W. Beall, stated that Rangers were useful but recently were targets of a "good deal" of complaints by the town's "best citizens." Rangers should be bonded like other law officers, he judged, because their "own ideas and consciences" were not sufficient safeguards; W.W. Beall Testimony, *RFI*, 395-96. Deputy Sheriff Willis Barbee, a former Ranger, testified that a "large majority" of citizens wanted the Rangers stationed in Sweetwater removed. According to Barbee, Rangers Barron G. Parrish and Dudley White had displayed "overbearing" behavior, including "cold-decking" men and conducting illegal searches. Ranger Sam McKenzie, recently stationed there, gambled heavily and assaulted citizens, said Barbee; W.M. (Willis) Barbee Testimony, *RFI*, 415-16 and 418. Barbee testified he served as Ranger in 1911-12 and 1917-18. John Bryan, local justice of the peace, admitted that he had entered a suicide finding in the public record regarding Bostick, the man found hung in his cell, despite severe misgivings about the incident; John Bryan Testimony, *RFI*, 423-25.

¹⁷⁶ Jailer T.B. Thompson recounted that Sam McKenzie and another Ranger delivered Bostick after midnight, then left. When he made his morning rounds, Bostick had hung himself; T.B. Thompson Testimony, *RFI*, 434 and 436. Thompson claimed to have slept at the jail. Ex-sheriff Jack Yarborough testified that Bostick committed suicide without question. He also testified that local citizens advised him to call in the Rangers to make an anticipated large number of arrests without warrant because of the possibility that the people arrested "might want to sue our bondsmen for false arrest or mistreatment." Sheriffs are bonded, he explained, while Rangers are not; Jack Yarborough Testimony, *RFI*, 448.

¹⁷⁷ *DMN*, 6Feb19, 1.

¹⁷⁸ *RFI*, 455.

dismissed a dozen potential witnesses because it had heard “enough of the situation.”¹⁷⁹

Canales then called Jesús Villareal, constable of Duval County, to testify about the incident forming the basis for Charge Two. Villareal's testimony was translated into English on the spot by C. Valle.

Villareal testified that around midnight one night in early September 1918, he was transporting three men to his ranch near the Rio Grande, having driven for ten hours, when Ranger John J. Edds and other officers arrested them. Edds and Roy Collins, an Army scout, interrogated the three passengers first, using harsh methods, including pistol whipping, to obtain a confession that the men were heading to the river to avoid the draft. Edds and Collins then questioned Villareal about his presumed role as conveyor of slackers. They forced Villareal to lie down, then Collins sat on him. Villareal insisted that he was taking two of the young men to Roma to buy goats and another, his cousin, to Falfurrias to get married. Edds and Collins then choked him for several minutes, before repeating the question—Was he taking the young men to the river? Still denying their allegations, Villareal had a cocked pistol shoved into his mouth and heard the officers demand “the truth.” Villareal stayed with his story and Edds or Collins crammed the cocked pistol into his mouth again, demanding “for the last time” for Villareal to confess to draft evasion plans. After a moment, according to Villareal, the officer removed the weapon and brought up a different strategy to deal with him. One officer said they should place a knife in Villareal's hand, but the other one suggested, “We will put it there after he is dead and tell them he attacked us.” Deciding against the plan, the officers took all four men to a nearby

¹⁷⁹ “Activity Of Rangers On Border Recounted,” *DMN*, 8Feb19, 1. Attorney J.H. Beall of Sweetwater continued discussions regarding Rangers and prisoners there. Rangers, including Sam McKenzie, not the sheriff, sometimes controlled access to prisoners who were his clients, he recalled; Judge J.H.Beall, *RFI*, 460.

Army camp on charges relating to draft evasion. They soon were tried and found not guilty.¹⁸⁰

Canales next called to the stand Sergeant Edds, implicated in Charges Two, Three, and Four. Adjutant General Harley had suspended him two days before, “pending this investigation,” Edds said. Regarding his personal background, Edds insisted that his mother was Spanish, not Mexican.¹⁸¹ Chairman Bledsoe then warned Edds that if he chose to testify regarding the shooting of Lisandro Muñoz, for which he had very recently been indicted by a Grand Jury, he must do so fully and without immunity.¹⁸² Knight interjected that he now represented Edds.¹⁸³

Edds denied threatening or abusing Villareal or the others in his car. He stated that one of the young men confessed readily and revealed that Villareal received \$70 to transport the slackers to the river. Villareal “denied everything” and acted “impudent” and drunk. Edds admitted cursing at Villareal and shoving a pistol into his stomach, but refuted Villareal’s charges of torture.¹⁸⁴ Edds further testified that he discovered several suitcases full of clothes, that the men were “wearing too much new clothing to be out buying goats,” and that a common crossing spot on the river was less than one mile from where he arrested the supposed slackers.¹⁸⁵ Edds considered his actions instrumental in breaking a major slacker ring.¹⁸⁶

Edds also testified about Charge Three, alleging second degree murder in his shooting of Lisandro Muñoz near Rio Grande City. Edds basically repeated a version

¹⁸⁰ Jesús Villareal Testimony, *RFI*, 467-78. The incident occurred on the night of 3 September 1918 near Rio Grande City, Starr County. Canales stated that he would file the affidavits of Villareal and two of the passengers, Eulalio and Guillermo Benavides, with Charge Two, but did not file them until the final day of testimony, 13 February, and then only Villareal’s and Eulalio Benavides’s; *RFI*, 1573-76.

¹⁸¹ John Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 481.

¹⁸² Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 482.

¹⁸³ *RFI*, 182.

¹⁸⁴ Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 496.

¹⁸⁵ Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 496-98.

¹⁸⁶ Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 499.

of events that he had sworn in his affidavit of 18 October 1918, which Hanson had shown Canales on the train north from Brownsville a few days later.¹⁸⁷ According to Edds, he obtained information that a suspected deserter, Alonzo Sánchez, would spend the night at his father's home outside Rio Grande City on the night of October 5. Near dawn, Rangers Monroe Wells and R.W. Lorenz staked out the father's property while Edds entered the backyard, where he found two men sleeping on cots. Recalling advice that "if I found a [moustached] man there in all probability" he would be Sánchez, Edds awakened the likely suspect, discovered himself almost at once in a scuffle with the man, then shot him in the groin, the man dying at once from loss of blood. The other sleeping man, awakened by the gunshot, identified the man as Lisandro Muñoz, not Alonzo Sánchez.¹⁸⁸

The proceedings highlighted certain features of the Ranger team's strategy. Responding to the announcement of Edds's indictment by the Grand Jury, Knight handed Edds a list of the names of the Grand Jurors, asking him, "[I]f you know any of them, I would like for you to tell the committee whether or not they speak English." Following objections by Canales, Bledsoe, and Page, Knight explained, "I wanted to show their probable antipathy to [Edds] as their racial prejudice."¹⁸⁹

Regarding Charge Four and the "evaporation" of Salinas at the hands of the two vaqueros, Edds steadfastly maintained that he did not order their killing.¹⁹⁰ He explained that he gave Salinas to the two vaqueros who had originally detained him because he trusted their judgement and because he had commitments in court in Rio Grande City the following day. Under questioning as to why he did not carry the prisoner with him, then take him to Hebbronville, the intended site of incarceration,

¹⁸⁷ See Chapter Four.

¹⁸⁸ Edds Testimony, *RFI*, 487-91.

¹⁸⁹ *RFI*, 492.

¹⁹⁰ "Activity of Rangers on Border Recounted," *DMN*, 8Feb19, 4. One subheading of the front-page headline read, "Ranger Edds On Stand."

he stated, "I would have no legal authority to take him to Rio Grande City; for several reasons I could not take him" there.¹⁹¹ He mentioned, too, that James B. Wells represented the two vaqueros in the matter.¹⁹² The committee then broke for lunch.

Filmore C. Decker, in soldier's uniform, opened the afternoon session with brief testimony about two Rangers knocking him down, then handcuffing him to a tree in Eastland County. The illiterate Decker could not recall the number of times he had been arrested and admitted serving about two years in the penitentiary. Representative Ford had called the witness, but was absent; Bledsoe conducted the questioning.¹⁹³

Canales called Jesse Dennett of Brownsville, garageman and city commissioner, to testify about threats Ranger Frank Hamer had made in Brownsville. Dennett, 29, had lived in Brownsville all his life when Canales and Hamer entered his business the previous December, Canales saying to Dennett, "Mr. Hamer has just told me if I did not stop monkeying with the Rangers, I am going to get hurt." Canales asked Dennett to confirm for the committee Hamer's acknowledgement of the threat at the time.¹⁹⁴ Dennett testified he had spurned Hamer's attempts "to explain" the remark. In response to Canales's question about public hostility toward the Rangers, Dennett stated, "I have seen the time in Brownsville when people were afraid to walk on the streets on account" of the Rangers, but, then again, also days when they welcomed the Rangers "with open arms to defend their homes." Dennett, who considered Hamer a "personal friend," remarked that the Rangers "ought to be stationed" along the Border "at all times." Dennett concluded that in "95% of their actions," Rangers were used as "tools for men higher up," though he did state their handlers' identity.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Edds Testimony *RFI*, 502.

¹⁹² Edds Testimony *RFI*, 486.

¹⁹³ F.C. Decker Testimony, *RFI*, 511-27.

¹⁹⁴ Jesse Dennett Testimony, *RFI*, 528.

¹⁹⁵ Dennett Testimony, *RFI*, 529.

Louis Brulay, heir to the Brulay Plantation a few miles southeast of Brownsville, testified that in his own investigation as to why Border Mexicans were fleeing the area in 1915-16, he discovered that they were “scared to death” of the Rangers. He worked with others to disarm residents in the immediate area because “any Mexican caught with a gun would be considered as out of the law”; they were given receipts for their weapons, he continued. He testified that the area of his and the nearby Piper Plantation gained relief from the presence of U.S. troops, that the raiding ceased when General Nafarrette left his command in Matamoros, and that the Rangers did not have “anything” to do with the cessation of raiding.¹⁹⁶

As Knight did with most witnesses, he asked about Inspector Hanson. To Brulay, he concocted a false narrative in linking General Naffarette to Hanson’s ouster from Mexico:

Knight: Do you know what his connection was with running Captain Hanson out of Mexico...?

Brulay: No, sir.

Knight: You never hear of that?

Brulay: No, sir?

Following Brulay to the stand was Oscar Dancy, law partner of Canales until he had won a position as Cameron County Attorney. He provided information about the disappearance of Florencio García, the basis for Charge Five, as well as about the efforts of Canales to suppress disorder during the height of the Border War.¹⁹⁷ In Dancy’s company, Florencio García’s father identified some clothing, including a light jacket with two bullet holes, and tufts of hair, forty-six days after his disappearance.¹⁹⁸ Dancy eventually learned that Florencio last had been seen leaving

¹⁹⁶ Louis Brulay Testimony, *RFI*, 535-37.

¹⁹⁷ Oscar Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 548 and 551. For a full discussion of the murder of García, See Muñoz, *Injustice*, esp. 1-6.

¹⁹⁸ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 553-55.

Brownsville with Rangers Sadler, Sittre, and Lock of Captain Steven's company, and arrested them on suspicion of murder.¹⁹⁹ Dancy informed the committee that as county attorney, he did not seek an examining trial against the Rangers because he did not want to provide ammunition, in the form of public testimony, to a suspected German propagandist working out of the Mexican Consul's office.²⁰⁰ He also implied that a Grand Jury would not return an indictment because they are "almost solidly [Anglo] American, mostly newcomers" and that the last one had a single Border Mexican and "only two old-timers" on it.²⁰¹ The accused Rangers remained on the force and left for West Texas with Captain Stevens when Harley transferred them.²⁰² When asked about his assessment of García, Dancy replied, "I have heard the pro and the con, I have heard him accused of being one of the biggest cow thieves in Mexico, and then I have heard of him as being an absolutely straight, square Mexican boy, above the average laborer or peon."²⁰³

Through leading the friendly witness, Canales established that he had organized a system of Tejano scouts to patrol the river and deliver information to the Army, an effort that risked his capture, torture, and death, according to Dancy. Canales also managed to elicit that two of his cousins, working as deputies, arrested two suspected train wreckers and delivered them to the sheriff, in contrast to the summary executions of suspects by some Rangers, such as Captain Ransom.²⁰⁴ Dancy also provided information about Canales's participation in the delegation that worked

¹⁹⁹ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 545-46.

²⁰⁰ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 546. W.R. Jones, ex-U.S. District Attorney, Hobby Campaign Chairman for Cameron County, and County Judge at the time of the hearings, and J.C. George served as co-consul for the three Rangers; *RFI*, 546-47.

²⁰¹ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 557.

²⁰² Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 546.

²⁰³ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 557.

²⁰⁴ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 548-49.

for the removal of General Nafarrette, the pro-*sedicioso* commander of Matamoros, from the border.²⁰⁵

Representative Tidwell, as he often did, sought to undermine testimony favorable to Canales, in this case Dancy's assessment that Canales had risked his life in setting up the Canales River Scouts. He asked whether Dancy knew of any "conspiracy or confederacy or determination on the part of the Rangers...to do Mr. Canales harm" or to "threaten vengeance" on him.²⁰⁶ Dancy, who as Canales's law partner would have been unlikely to be told of such plans, replied he had not.

The next witness, W.T. Vann, Sheriff of Cameron County since 1915, related several instances of Rangers killing suspected criminals. Vann also related an incident involving Daniel Hinojosa, target of Canales's Charge One, which alleged rowdiness and gunplay. Vann told of Hinojosa's failure to protect three suspects locked in the San Benito jail from citizens' administration of lynch law. Vann stated that Hinojosa purposefully ignored the legal duty to protect prisoners from vigilante action.²⁰⁷ He told of the raid by a posse of twenty, led by Ranger Capt. Henry Ransom, on the ranch house of the Flores family that resulted in the killing of the father and one of his sons. The Flores men, unarmed according to Vann, were being interrogated by the posse when one of the group fired the first shot.²⁰⁸ The final incident described by

²⁰⁵ Dancy Testimony, *RFI*, 549.

²⁰⁶ *RFI*, 556.

²⁰⁷ Vann Testimony, *RFI*, 569-70. See Ribb, *Canales*, Chapter Seven, *La Rinchada?*, for additional information about the killing fields outside San Benito.

²⁰⁸ Testimony of "Captain [sic]" W.T. Vann, *RFI*, 561 and 568 (quotation). Ranger J.L. Anders and other Rangers returned the following day to discover the surviving brother hidden by the women of the family beneath a bed. Anders claimed that after the suspect fired at him point blank, he returned fire, killing the man; *RFI*, 561 and 568. Canales did not raise the possibility that the burn marks on Anders's face may have been caused by his own pistol's discharge.

Vann also involved Captain Ransom and represented a continuing depiction of Ransom as a remorseless killer.²⁰⁹

The day after the train derailment in October 1915, Ransom arrested four individuals suspected of having participated. He told Vann that he was going to kill them and asked Vann to join in. Vann declined, then Ransom replied, “[I]f you haven’t got guts enough to do it, I will do it myself,” then did. Vann refused to hand over two other prisoners.²¹⁰

Vann stated that the Rangers had improved since the Border War in terms of murdering prisoners, but claimed that Captain Stevens directed his men to conduct illegal searches and confiscations, to arrest suspects without filing charges, and to deny bond to prisoners.²¹¹ Concerned about the continuing abrogations of due process, a situation exacerbated by the huge number of Rangers in the Valley, Vann had called recently for the abolition of the Ranger Force, but then decided to support the Canales reform bill when it appeared. He strongly supported the bonding provision, arguing that “they have no right to be without bond” because all peace officers in the state were under bond themselves.²¹²

W.W. Jones, a rancher in Jim Hogg County, testified regarding Charge Five about preferential treatment by the Rangers. Canales did establish that the only residents near Norias, where Rangers commonly were stationed, were King family members or their employees. But in arguing from geography—no towns were nearby

²⁰⁹ Vann had traveled to Austin to object to Ferguson’s appointment of Ransom because of his reputation as a killer, a label deriving, in part, from Ransom’s shooting of Houston Police Commissioner Brockman; Vann Testimony, *RFI*, 574.

²¹⁰ Vann Testimony, *RFI*, 574-75. Regarding the four dead men, Vann noted that their fate was sealed when “they were arrested—they were unfortunate by living that close to the wreck”; *RFI*, 589. Ransom’s report for the week did not mention the incident: “A number of trails were followed east from the place of the wreck to Mexican shacks & into the brush going in the direction of Brownsville. Returned to Harlingen”; entry for 19 October 1915, “Scout Reports—Co. D,” Ranger Records, Texas State Library and Archives, [hereafter, TSLA].

²¹¹ Vann Testimony, *RFI*, 583-84, and 587.

²¹² Vann Testimony, *RFI*, 579 and 581.

to protect—Canales was forced to confront the fact of the infamous Norias raid of August 1915, source of the postcard of slain raiders, which Knight invoked.²¹³ Canales often had not discussed testimony with his witnesses before they took the stand, and Jones revealed the dangers of violating the cardinal rule for attorneys: Know your witness.

Canales turned next to the coroner who had performed the inquest on the remains of Florencio García, whose death Canales charged resulted from three Rangers' actions. H.J. Kirk read his finding that the cause of death was unknown and that the family readily identified the clothing on the decomposed body—the corpse of Florencio García.²¹⁴ He testified that families often asked him to accompany them to bury their slain members because they were “afraid that the Rangers would shoot them.”²¹⁵ He told of being asked by Border Mexican families to help with twenty bodies on Jeff Scrivener's ranch, but declined because the ranch was beyond his jurisdiction.²¹⁶ He did visit another mass gravesite for fifteen Border Mexicans.²¹⁷ He also testified at length about the exodus from the Valley by Border Mexicans because “they feared the Rangers would visit them.”²¹⁸ Reflecting the hurried issuance of summons to appear before the committee, Kirk noted that he would have brought his records to document the number of bodies he had presided over in inquests, but “didn't know what I was coming here for.”²¹⁹

The committee adjourned late Friday afternoon until 10 A.M. Saturday

²¹³ Testimony, *RFI*, 590-94.

²¹⁴ Testimony of H.J. Kirk, *RFI*, 597. Kirk had served two terms as J.P. of Precinct 2 at the time of the hearings; *RFI*, 596.

²¹⁵ Kirk Testimony, *RFI*, 598-99.

²¹⁶ Kirk Testimony, *RFI*, 599. Scrivner was neighbor to the Pizañas and led the posse to the ranch on the raid in August 1915; see Chapter Three, Border War.

²¹⁷ He may have been referring to the site at Alamo or Ebenezer; see Wells Testimony, below.

²¹⁸ Kirk Testimony, *RFI*, 605.

²¹⁹ Kirk Testimony, *RFI*, 601.

morning.²²⁰ The appearance before the committee of James B. Wells promised to be the highlight.

Day Eight: Saturday, February 8

Canales's witnesses for the day yet to appear, the committee allowed Harley to present a witness. Opening the day's testimony was a longtime border resident called to provide information about Edds and Rio Grande City, site of Edds's shooting of Muñoz. C.E. Valle, merchant in Rio Grande City, appeared as a Ranger witness and repeated accounts of the political power of bosses in Starr County. In response to the witness's opinion that Edds was an "exemplary man," Senator Williford asked, "Do you think an officer . . . is a good officer, who will go to a house looking for a deserter and not search the house?" Continuing, Williford wondered whether a good officer should "walk up close enough for the desperate man to grab his arm?"²²¹

Knight managed again to solicit praise for Hanson, with Valle opining that he was "a good, straight upright man" and one of the "best officers ever"—and to whom he loaned a car for an investigation free of charge.²²²

Canales then called Aurelio Farfán, former colonel in the Mexican National Army under Díaz and Madero, to testify about an alleged incident of mistreatment at the hands of Edds and an accomplice.²²³ Canales had learned of the incident when Farfán had retained him as personal attorney a few months before to represent him in a hearing concerning his alleged involvement in counterrevolutionary activities along

²²⁰ Two final witnesses closed the day's hearings: Joe Scott, resident of San Benito for seven years, and Russell Savage, city attorney for Corpus Christi, Nueces County, the largest city in the 23rd Senatorial District. Scott claimed that soldiers, not Rangers, killed the suspects outside San Benito in the incident referred to by Vann; *RFI*, 607-08. Savage stated that the Rangers cruised the city on primary election day in July, the first time he had seen Rangers in the town on such day; *RFI*, 609-10.

²²¹ In Testimony of C.E. Valle, *RFI*, 621.

²²² Valle Testimony, *RFI*, 616., 618

²²³ Testimony of Aurelio Farfán, *RFI*, 622.

the border.²²⁴ According to Farfán, in August 1918 Army Scout Royal Collins cursed him, pistol-whipped him, and locked him in a closet for an hour while Edds searched his room.²²⁵ In short, Collins assaulted him with a pistol in a manner reminiscent of the Jesús Villareal case, the basis for Charge Two, and did so with the same accomplice, Ranger Sergeant Edds.

A second new item presented by Farfán was his association with Hanson during the Reyes conspiracy to invade Mexico in 1911. These ties between Farfán, Hanson, and Reyes—and, hence, with Chapa and Colquitt—established a counter-revolutionary cadre that had operated out of San Antonio for almost a decade by the time of the Ranger investigation. When asked by Knight whether he had worked for German interests along the river, Farfán referred him to Hanson for an answer.²²⁶ Further, Farfán described having been brought before Hanson, a member of the “Intelligence Bureau of the National Army” of the U.S., in Knight’s terms, twice after being arrested by Immigration authorities.²²⁷ No rebuttal of Farfán’s charges regarding Edds surfaced in Knight’s cross-examination. Knight, instead, sought to link Canales and Farfán as co-conspirators in illegal activities along the border. That line of questioning was successfully refuted by Farfán when he stated that he first met Canales when Canales brought church services to the jail in which Farfán was being held.²²⁸

²²⁴ Farfán never was indicted for violation of the neutrality acts; Farfán Testimony, *RFI*, 632-34.

²²⁵ Farfán Testimony, *RFI*, 623-24. This alleged incident preceded the Villareal incident by three weeks.

²²⁶ Farfán Testimony, *RFI*, 625 and 632.

²²⁷ Farfán Testimony, *RFI*, 636. The correct label is “Military Intelligence” of the Army. Hanson was not actually employed by Military Intelligence—another one of his enhancements—but did share information consistently while a railway investigator and Ranger.

²²⁸ In Farfán Testimony, *RFI*, 632-33 and 638.

Farfán provided corroborating evidence regarding the brutal behavior of Ranger Edds, as Canales intended. But the lengthy, aggressive questioning by Knight and Committee members elevated another theme that by this point in the hearings had gained prominence: Canales was untrustworthy. In this instance, according to the Ranger team, Canales was defending an individual of questionable loyalty: firstly, Farfán was a Mexican citizen and spoke no English, to boot; secondly, he may have favored leaders of the Mexican Revolution that Germany also favored; and thirdly, he was a fomenter of armed conflict, even if for the Hanson- and Ranger-preferred counterrevolutionary effort. Thus, Canales's association with this supposed shady character overshadowed Edds's misdeeds in the Hearings of the day.

The next witness called by Canales was J.J. Busby, a farmer from Hidalgo County, who only partially confirmed allegations by Canales regarding the Rangers' participation in the wounding of Arturo García, the basis for Charge 13.²²⁹ Knight and Committee members focused on the value of the Rangers and of Edds in particular in their cross-examination.²³⁰

Canales then called attorney D.F. Strickland of Mission to relate general and specific charges against the Rangers. Strickland stated that some "bad Rangers," such as Captain Fox's company with its drunkenness and Captain Ransom's company with its tactics of brutality and murder, had given the entire force a "very bad reputation" in his area.²³¹ His stories sounded similar to others heard by the committee. Prisoner Manuel Estapa died after Rangers took custody of him from others. Antonio Longorio, County Commissioner of Hidalgo County—"as good a [Border]Mexican as there was in the Rio Grande Valley," according to Strickland—died at the hands of

²²⁹ Testimony of J.J. Busby, *RFI*, 645-46.

²³⁰ Testimony of J.J. Busby, *RFI*, 647-49.

²³¹ Testimony of D.F. Strickland, *RFI*, 650, 652, and 655.

Ransom's gang.²³² Arturo Beban's head "looked like it had been shot with a cannon" it flew so far from its body, according to one Ranger's bragging that Strickland overheard.²³³

As did many of Canales's witnesses, Strickland called for higher pay to attract a "materially improved" Ranger Force. He also supported the bonding provision of HB5, noting that it would not "destroy their efficiency" as the Ranger team constantly argued.²³⁴

The Ranger defense team countered Strickland's testimony with its standard arguments. Knight challenged Strickland's veracity by trying to paint him as disloyal, in this case, by his having defended a client accused of "assisting a German lieutenant to escape to Mexico."²³⁵ Knight also dismissed the alleged incidents of brutality as irrelevant because they predated the Hobby regime, and, further, that Adjutant General Harley and Inspector Hanson had purged the force of any "bad man" who "occasionally joined the force."²³⁶ Further, Knight continued to float the idea that Canales had forced the investigation of the Rangers only to shield Senator Parr.

Dayton Moses of Ft. Worth, attorney for the Cattle Raisers Association of Texas, joined the Ranger defense team during Strickland's appearance.²³⁷ After an additional witness who testified about the Ranger mistreatment of a local man in Sweetwater, site of Representative Nolan's charges, the committee broke for lunch.²³⁸

The afternoon session opened with a chilling account of intimidation and the

²³² Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 655.

²³³ Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 655. Strickland claimed to have overheard Ranger Davenport in the office of Hidalgo Co. Tax Collector J.R. Alimeo.

²³⁴ Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 657.

²³⁵ In Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 658-59.

²³⁶ Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 656 and 661.

²³⁷ In Strickland Testimony, *RFI*, 651 and 656. Harley had telegraphed Moses the week before that he "must be here to defend" the Rangers; Harley to Moses and Wroe (teleg.), 4Feb19, AGGC. Moses frequently dealt with Harley regarding appointment of cattle inspectors as Special Rangers; see, e.g., Moses to Harley, 25Sept18, AGRR.

²³⁸ Testimony of W.A. Anderson, *RFI*, 664-67.

threat of lynching of Thomas A. Johnson, an African American porter working in San Angelo. Falsely accused by Rangers Hodges and Myers of being part of a ring stealing from the railroad, Johnson was shuttled to Sweetwater, where he was interrogated “awful roughly” by a parade of local law officers and railroad agents. Once Johnson’s employer, a local lawyer, and others established his innocence, he was returned to San Angelo, released, and never charged. No doubt he did not feel safe, however; the jailer in Sweetwater vowed to “come through [San Angelo] in a few days and bring my crowd over, and I am going to pick you up and [they] will never know what became of you.” Such was the omnipresent threat to a “darkey,” as Knight referred to him.²³⁹ No committee member raised objection to the threat of lynching or the racialized intimidation in Johnson’s experience.

South Texas political boss James B. Wells settled into the witness chair to dominate the afternoon session. Canales led Wells into a discussion about killings by Rangers in the Valley. To Canales’s question about the number of Border Mexicans “executed” by the Rangers in Cameron and Hidalgo counties in 1915-16, Wells replied that he estimated 250 to 300 killed “from the best information I have,” though he claimed that “things of that kind generally are exaggerated.” Canales asked him if he remembered any killings in Starr County at the time, to which Wells responded he did not. Canales then asked him whether any Rangers served in Starr at the time, and Wells answered he thought not.²⁴⁰ Canales asked Wells to relate some specific examples of killings from the Border War.

Wells often traveled the river road from Brownsville to Rio Grande City to attend to his legal matters. On several such trips he had noticed a “bad smell” and flocks of buzzards near Ebenezer, a train stop outside Donna. One afternoon, he and his traveling companions experienced car trouble near the station, and while some

²³⁹ Testimony of Thomas A. Johnson, *RFI*, 667-75.

²⁴⁰ Testimony of James B. Wells, *RFI*, 679.

individuals attended to the mechanical needs, one man wandered into the thick brush, but quickly returned, aghast, to plead with Wells to return there with him. Just a few yards into the *brasada*, Wells came across four dead Border Mexicans laid out in a row, fully dressed in plain work clothes. Buzzards had plucked the men's eyes and facial skin, and much of the rest of their flesh had rotted. The men had been executed, noted Wells: "[Y]ou could see bullet holes right above the eyes, great big holes you could stick your finger in." Wells then walked to an area marked by another gathering of buzzards just across the road, where he discovered seven more bodies in similar circumstances.²⁴¹

Wells provided additional examples from the Border War period. He elaborated on the demise of Antonio Longorio, Commissioner of Hidalgo County, about whom Strickland had commented in the morning session. Rangers had killed not only Longorio, whom Wells said held a reputation as a "very good man," but also his father-in-law just as a legal dispute over their ranch was coming to trial.²⁴² Two *vaqueros* named Longorio—any relation to Antonio not stated—died outside San Benito while in the custody of Deputy Sheriff Daniel Hinojosa, once and future Ranger. They had been arrested in the manhunt following a nearby clash with raiders, refused bond, never charged, removed from jail, then "turned over to [Hinojosa], taken out and hung, out in the woods," Wells reported.²⁴³

According to Wells, the Rangers committed lesser crimes, as well. Recently, Capt. Charles Stevens, a Hobby appointee, and his company had resumed illegal searches, seizures of weapons, and detentions. In a much-discussed case, two Rangers under order from Stevens kidnapped Eddie Edwards, a Cameron County

²⁴¹ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 677.

²⁴² Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 678. The stenographer erroneously recorded "Longerio." The best account of the murders of Antonio Longorio and Jesús Bagán, his father-in-law, are in Martínez, *Injustice*, 76-81, 96-98, and *passim*. For a first-hand account, see Warnock, *Cowboy*, *passim*.

²⁴³ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 684.

Commissioner, for three days at the time of the July 1918 primary. Moving Edwards across two counties, repeatedly denying his request for bail, refusing him legal counsel, and releasing him only when confronted by Sheriff Vann, the Rangers displayed not lonely a gross disregard for due process, but directly challenged Wells's political operation in his home county.²⁴⁴ Stevens's company also mixed illegal tactics with politics, in Wells's eyes, when they disarmed Border Mexican elected officials, including Deputy Sheriff Pedro Lerma, and broke into many residents' homes to search for weapons or other items.²⁴⁵

The intrusive and harsh behavior of the Rangers in Steven's company created a very unstable situation in the Valley that was just recovering from the excesses of the Border War, explained Wells. One direct result of the Rangers' tactics was an exodus of Border Mexicans across the river into Mexico. Ranger brutality, not draft evasion, constituted the principal motivation for Border Mexicans to flee the area: "[T]hey are scared to death," Wells observed.²⁴⁶ Wells insisted on a meeting with Stevens and Hanson—"who seems to have been authorized to take charge of that country"—to discuss the behavior of Stevens, who, though perhaps a "good man," had developed a "swelled head" and "got too big an idea of his little brief authority." At the meeting conducted in his own home, Wells related, he angrily declared that Stevens would not have ransacked *his* home and taken *his* weapons, an assessment with which Stevens concurred. Wells then told Stevens, "[I]f you will let me know when you want to come to search my house, I will shoot you between the eyes . . . when you come to the door, and if such men as Pedro Lerma had shot you, they

²⁴⁴ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 684-85. Stevens's company also "arrested Harry Jeffry [a local official] the same way and jerked him around without any warrant . . . and kept him in camp without any warrant"; *RFI*, 687.

²⁴⁵ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 684-85.

²⁴⁶ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 687.

would have been within their rights.” His offer ended the meeting, and soon Hanson and Harley transferred Stevens to West Texas.²⁴⁷

Canales made sure that the committee members knew the general context of Wells’s negative remarks about Ranger behavior since 1915. He asked Wells “whether or not you have represented and upheld the actions of the Rangers . . . in doing what they believe to be their duty?” The question allowed Wells to speak in broad terms: “I have always been a Ranger man from my boyhood [when] I scouted” with the storied Capt. Leander McNelly and others. Since then, he had provided legal counsel to any Ranger requesting it in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, or Nueces counties: “I thought it was my duty and I never took a cent of compensation.” While he was “in favor of Rangers” still, he called for a return to ranks filled with “controlled and responsible” men. He accepted the establishment of bonds for Rangers, at least for the captains, as a means to assure “accountability” for Rangers in their “power of life and death” over citizens. After all, Wells reasoned, all other law enforcement officers were bonded, and, thus, bonding Rangers would be a “salutary” move.²⁴⁸ In further support of Canales’s bonding proposal, Wells argued “it would be a poor commentary upon the State of Texas to say you could not get one hundred men who would be able to give bond as Rangers.” No, concluded Wells, reviewing a list of straw objections set up by Canales, “I like the bond feature.”²⁴⁹

Dayton Moses rose to engage the venerable witness and immediately played to Wells’s views of the Rangers, too. Two or three companies of Rangers, said Wells, were more effective than the 25,000 U.S. soldiers in the Valley who did not know the country, were undisciplined for the task, and made so much noise that they alerted

²⁴⁷ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 685-86, 689, and 695. Stevens and Co. G left for Sanderson in August 1918; *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General for 1917-18*, 60. For the political context of transferring Stevens to maintain a fragile political arrangement negotiated by Canales, see Chapter Four.

²⁴⁸ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 679-81.

²⁴⁹ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 690.

their enemies before they could find them.²⁵⁰ Dayton then elicited that armed, nervous Anglos prowled the country “night and day” on the lookout for “bandits.”²⁵¹ In such an atmosphere of “excitement,” Wells agreed, a “number” of innocent Tejano citizens “no doubt” were killed, but “I want to add that there were a lot more that should have been killed.”²⁵²

Moses then moved to undermine Canales’s credibility by questioning Canales’s motives for bringing the charges in 1919, not earlier.

Moses: These facts with regard to the improper killing, if I may term it that way, of Mexican citizens or Mexican persons were as well known in 1917 when the legislature convened as it is [sic] during 1919, was it not?

Wells: If it was not as well known, I do not see any reason why it should not have been known.

To make certain the committee members understood the point, Moses asked Wells whether Canales was serving as legislator in 1917, at which point Wells replied, turning to Canales, “I think so, wasn’t you, Joe?” Canales affirmed he had been.²⁵³

Moses then sought to establish a political motive for Canales’s reform bill under consideration in the House. Moses had Wells affirm that a “great deal” of criticism arose because “of the alleged activity” by the Rangers on behalf of Glasscock in the senatorial race in South Texas, the opponent of Archie Parr, favored by Canales and Wells.²⁵⁴ Moses clearly implied that political, not humanitarian, motives drove not just Wells’s testimony regarding Ranger misdeeds but the larger move to reform the Rangers by Canales, as well.

Canales rose to conduct the redirect examination of Wells, and immediately

²⁵⁰ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 691 and 704.

²⁵¹ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 692. “[N]o sane man that loved his family was going to leave them out at night under the circumstances,” he said in describing the tension at the time, one result of which was the emptying of the land; *RFI*, 693.

²⁵² Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 703.

²⁵³ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 703.

²⁵⁴ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 702.

asked, "Do you think Mr. Hanson is a very reliable man to give information as to who should be on the Ranger force?" Wells replied simply, "No, sir." Canales then moved to defend himself from the implication that he had not protested killings by Rangers when he first had the chance in 1917. Wells declared that Canales had been "very serious and diligent in doing everything you could."²⁵⁵ He asked Wells to recount the details of the "long interview" between Canales and then-Governor James Ferguson. Wells recalled that "you wanted to see the Mexican people and the Mexican interests protected." Ferguson promised to "correct" the Rangers' behavior in the Valley and to remove any Rangers that Canales showed to be "improper" in their performance of duty.²⁵⁶ Finally, Canales drew out from Wells the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Rangers Joe Shaw and Delbert Timberlake, deaths that the adjutant general claimed had resulted from the works of "bandits."²⁵⁷ In Wells's version, a *ranchero* shot Shaw as a trespasser who, in fact, had fired first. As for Timberlake, "I don't think today any source but God knows who did kill Timberlake or who shot anybody else."²⁵⁸

Both Canales and Moses received answers from Wells supporting his side—and the other's. In an attempt to gain confirmation of his own legal opinion regarding the culpability of Ranger Edds in the Muñoz slaying, Canales asked Wells, "Did you tell Hanson after reading [Edds's affidavit] that it was manslaughter?" Wells surprised Canales when he replied, "No, sir, I didn't tell him any such thing," negating Canales's move but also contradicting Hanson's report to Harley that Wells had voiced such an opinion.²⁵⁹ Seizing on the opening to chide Hanson, Wells continued, "If [Hanson] had listened to me he knows it. I think *he* made the statement." He then

²⁵⁵ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 707.

²⁵⁶ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 707-08.

²⁵⁷ *Biennial Report for 1917-18*, 61, lists the two men as "killed in the line of duty."

²⁵⁸ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 708 and 709.

²⁵⁹ See Hanson to Harley, 23Oct18, in *RFI*, 781.

affirmed that he was “very fond of Edds,” but found the affidavit incomprehensible. Looking at Edd’s s affidavit with forty years of defending Rangers as a guide, Wells had said to Hanson: “What goose or what fool went and got that boy to make that statement?” Wells questioned the competency of Edds’s supervisor Hanson, who allowed Edds “to go make such a thing and sign it.” Legal wheels spinning in his head, Wells confided that a prosecutor “could almost convict him of some grade of offense” with the statement alone. “In other words,” Wells summarized, “they have just got the boy.”²⁶⁰

Wells demonstrated to the audience and committee his considerable ability to split hairs for his own gain. He disappointed Canales only to upbraid Hanson. Wells managed to shift the blame to Hanson for not protecting his man while excusing Edds as a confused young officer of the law. Thus, Wells supported the Ranger Force in general, as it once was constituted and, perhaps, could be again under the reform legislation before the legislature, but also indicted the present Rangers for what he considered their outrages and inept leadership.²⁶¹ After his Janus-like performance regarding the Edds affair, Wells stepped down.

Canales then called three witnesses who gave accounts about Nalle and Bloxom’s shooting of Richberg in Ranger that challenged Hanson’s findings in the matter, the basis for Charge Six.²⁶² Knight presented two witnesses who contributed nothing new to the hearings, which earned him a warning from Chairman Bledsoe “not to introduce any further evidence on general conditions.”

Canales then called J.B. Dodson, stenographer of the Seventy-ninth District Court and witness to the confrontation between Thomas Hook and Captain J.J.

²⁶⁰ Wells Testimony, *RFI*, 717-18.

²⁶¹ Ironically, Wells defended Ozuna and Lopez, the cowboys who killed Salinas, the man whom Edds worried Wells would represent. Wells confounded many observers with his legal interests.

²⁶² Canales called Ed Bixby, G.M. Allsup, A.J. Wallendorff of Ranger; *RFI*, 722-38.

Sanders in the Falfurrias courthouse.²⁶³ Dodson testified that he arrived at the scene as Sanders was replacing his pistol in his holster and murmuring an apology to the unarmed Hook, who was telling Sanders to “Hold on, hold on!” Another Ranger stood nearby, and Deputy Sheriff Porter arrived at the same time as he did, Dodson stated.²⁶⁴ Two committee members, Senator Page and Representative Lackey questioned Dodson at length about the arm movements of Sanders, the exact location of the pistol when Dodson entered the area, and a threat that Hook made to Sanders once Sanders had holstered his weapon.²⁶⁵ When Page pressed Dodson to give Hook’s “reputation in the community,” Dodson replied that Hook was a “peaceable, law-abiding citizen,” if a bit pugnacious.²⁶⁶ Overall, despite the pointed questioning, Dodson confirmed the events regarding the pistol-whipping by Captain Sanders’ as Hook had presented them a few days before. Following Dodson’s testimony, the committee recessed until 7:30 that evening, when it reconvened to consider accepting evidence from Canales supporting his charges.

Canales filed dozens of documents from the Adjutant General’s files to bolster his cases.²⁶⁷ Canales assumed that the existence of these documents demonstrated that Adjutant General Harley knew about the incidents discussed in Canales’s charges, but chose not to act on them. Harley’s failure to discipline the Rangers responsible for alleged outrages and his general conduct as Ranger supervisor rendered him “wholly incompetent” as a public official.²⁶⁸ Harley’s record drew Canales’s attention in

²⁶³ Knight called, J.E. Leslie, and C.W. McCain; *RFI*, 738-46. Typical of this testimony was the exchange between Knight and San Benito farmer McCain: “Q.: Are [the Rangers] necessary to protect you? A.: Yes, I think they are. Q.: If they are done away with, what would you do? A.: I would have to get away myself or move, I expect”; *RFI*, 746.

²⁶⁴ Testimony of J.B. Dodson, *RFI*, 746-47 and 749.

²⁶⁵ In Dodson Testimony, *RFI*, 747-49. According to Dodson, Hook told Sanders that if Sanders would put away his pistol, they could step outside to finish the matter.

²⁶⁶ Dodson Testimony, *RFI*, 748.

²⁶⁷ See *RFI*, 751-855.

²⁶⁸ Charge Seventeen, *RFI*, 149.

Charges Six, Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen. Canales introduced a few documents from his own investigations, such as one statement relating to Charge Eight, which alleged that Ranger W.B. Bentley pistol-whipped a waiter in San Antonio. Canales told the committee that “The above statement was made by Mr. Aaron Frank, who refused to sign on account of him [sic] being a business man and didn’t want to get mixed up with it.”²⁶⁹ Canales suggested that his own experience with Hamer following statements he made to Harley supported the rationale for Franks’ decision.

The preponderance of the voluminous evidence that Canales filed that evening dealt with his charges that Hanson was “absolutely unfit” to serve as Inspector of the Rangers because he did not so much investigate Ranger outrages as justify them.²⁷⁰ Canales offered Ranger correspondence, affidavits, Army reports, and other information from the Adjutant General’s files regarding Charges Three, Four, Five, Seven, Nine, and Eleven. He highlighted Hanson’s investigation reports in an attempt to show that Hanson either covered-up outrages or justified them, regardless of the evidence. For example, he provided Hanson’s report on the killing of José María Gomez Salinas, Charge Four, in which Hanson assured Harley that Edds “acted as any officer would” though he allowed that there should be no future “occurrence” of handing off prisoners to ordinary citizens for transport. He further minimized the murder by stating Gomez was a “noted thief” and so “the Mexicans did a good job in killing” him.²⁷¹ Of particular importance to Canales were the mass killings in Porvenir, basis of Charge Eleven, which Canales termed an “unprovoked and wholesale murder by Texas Rangers” and Hanson’s “white-washed report” about it.²⁷²

The hearings finally closed late Saturday evening, and all involved anticipated

²⁶⁹ Canales. *RFI*, 754.

²⁷⁰ Canales, *RFI*, 759.

²⁷¹ Hanson to Harley, 16Sept18, in *RFI*, 761-62.

²⁷² Canales, *RFI*, 851. For more on the Porvenir massacre, see Muñoz, *Injustice*, esp. Ch. 3.

Monday's session, when Canales himself would take the stand. Word of events involving Rangers from the day before, however, complicated the day's meaning. Presented only sketchily in Austin's Friday afternoon newspaper, the incident erupted across the state with Sunday's papers.

Weekend Interlude: The Cunningham-Veale Fiasco

On Friday, four Rangers left the hearing room in the capitol for a day of drinking and shooting. Before the spree ended, Ranger Private Bert C. Veale lay dead, killed by Ranger Captain K.F. Cunningham in a furious shootout, according to two Ranger witnesses, Quartermaster Harry M. Johnston and Sergeant W.E. Mayberry.²⁷³ The initial newspaper article in the Austin *Statesman*, under the headline "Ranger Killed Yesterday in Pistol Duel," appeared Saturday and used information "secured by officers" the night before. The article reported that the four Rangers went to the outskirts of town "to engage in pistol practice" but that Veale and Cunningham quarreled, drew pistols, and shot each other. Cunningham received only a wound to his neck, though a second bullet passed through his hat and still another stopped at a gold watch in his vest pocket. Veale died from a single shot that entered his throat, breaking his neck. Harley discharged Cunningham and suspended Johnston and

²⁷³ The general account derives from *AS* 8&9Feb19, and "Captain Cunningham is Released on Bond," *DMN* 9Feb19, which contain eyewitness accounts of the testimony of Mayberry and Veale during the examining trial. At the time of his death, Veale had served a total of twenty-seven months as a regular Ranger, re-enlisting in October 1918 with Capt. J.L. Anders. Johnston, an Austin native and, at 5'7" one of the shortest Rangers, had received appointment as Quartermaster from Hobby on 5 November 1917. Cunningham, Captain of Co. M, had received appointment from Hobby on 10 December 1917. At the time of the incident, Mayberry served in Austin as Sergeant of the Headquarters Co., though Hanson's outfit operated out of San Antonio. Also, Mayberry served without pay, first as a "Regular Ranger without pay," according to an Enlistment Oath for 21Dec17, and later as a Special Ranger—the only one, apparently, who held the rank of Sergeant. Mayberry had served just over three years when the fracas occurred. For the four individuals' Ranger information, see Ranger Service Records, TSLA [hereafter, AGSR].

Mayberry, “pending the outcome of the case.” An examining trial held Saturday, moreover, provided extensive testimony detailing the violation of several laws.

While the Ranger hearings continued in the statehouse Saturday morning, Johnston, Mayberry, Travis County Sheriff George S. Mathews, defense counsel Wilcox, and Justice of the Peace M.M. Johnson—and at least two reporters— assembled at the county jail to hold an examining trial on a charge of murder for Cunningham, still bedridden with his injury. Rangers Johnston and Mayberry were the only witnesses examined during the proceeding.

According to their testimony, a few minutes before ten on Friday morning, Quartermaster Johnston strolled down Congress Avenue on his way to the hearings. As he neared the capitol, Private Veale hailed him, suggesting that they retire to Veale’s room for a drink of whiskey before settling in for the show at the statehouse. Unfazed by statewide prohibition, which had been in effect in Texas since July 1918, Johnston accepted the invitation, and the two men drove in Veale’s car to his room, swigged an eye opener, then left for the hearings. On their way through the capitol, the two Rangers stopped briefly at the adjutant general’s offices, where Johnston kept a desk, though he rarely used it, according to a fellow Ranger.²⁷⁴ By noon, when the hearings broke for lunch, the two observers were restless and decided to recruit Captain Cunningham and Private Mayberry to “take a ride” out of town. Mayberry joined the others, but they could not find Cunningham in the building. At this point in the goings on, Johnston’s and Mayberry’s stories diverged a bit.

Johnston testified that the three men continued their search for Cunningham by driving up and down Congress, without success, before Johnston personally checked Cunningham’s room at a downtown hotel, again unsuccessfully. When he

²⁷⁴ “From last November 1917 to September 1918, [Johnston] never even came in the office, only to get his salary”; P.A. Cardwell, Sergeant of Co. G, to Harley, n.d., AGGC. Cardwell sought the Quartermaster position after Johnston was discharged.

returned, Cunningham was sitting in the car, and the four Rangers went to lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Mayberry remembered that the three men who had left the hearings together—Mayberry, Veale, and Johnston—first stopped by Veale's room for a quick nip before searching for Cunningham. Veale brought a quart bottle of whiskey with them this time, assuring the men of drink for a while. Only the three of them took lunch, recalled Mayberry. Johnston admitted under cross-examination that he was "not sure" whether Cunningham dined with them after all, his memory perhaps already clouding after the second visit to Veale's room. At that point, Veale suggested, "Let's get Captain Cunningham and we will go out in the country and have a little party." Veale, not Johnston, then crossed the street to check Cunningham's hotel, but failed to find him, at which point the three Rangers checked the Driskill Hotel, still with no luck, before cruising Congress Avenue, where they finally located their target, Cunningham.

In both versions, the four Rangers soon crossed the Congress Avenue Bridge over the Colorado River, which marked Austin's core boundary to the south, then drove a short distance beyond Barton Springs, some two miles west, where they stopped. The men passed the whiskey bottle after stepping from the car. Veale selected a fence post across the road to serve as a target in an impromptu shooting match, and accurately fired a few rounds. He then loaned his Colt .45 "six shooter" to Mayberry, who had not strapped on a pistol to attend the hearings. After Mayberry proved his marksmanship, Johnston fired a few times, but failed to hit the post. Cunningham then entered the game, saying "Let me show you how I can shoot!", then fired his Colt .45 automatic, finding the target. Bottle empty and spirits high, the four Rangers piled into Veale's car for the ride back toward town, but turned south away from town at Congress Avenue. Mayberry voiced opposition to the change in

plans, claiming he “had some business to attend to,” but Veale announced, “We’re not going home, we’re going riding. I know where some women are!”

Veale wheeled the auto in a circuitous course, intent on fulfilling his plan for a party, even as Cunningham objected to bringing women into the situation, perhaps because he was “attacked with a vomiting spell.” He asked Veale to stop the car so he could clean up the running board, which he did, while the others shared a half-pint of whiskey that Veale had brought as back-up to the quart. The additional whiskey overcame Johnston, apparently, because he went to a nearby ravine and had no recollection of anything that happened after that.

Cunningham, functioning again, and Veale engaged in matching dollars, a gambling game, while Mayberry waited in the back seat of the car. Mayberry then heard a string of epithets leave Veale, punctuated with a loud “We’ll settle it here!”²⁷⁵ Veale pulled his pistol and fired two shots at Cunningham, at which point Mayberry bounded from the car and got between the duelists, facing Cunningham and pleading with him not to shoot Veale. Veale immediately pinned Mayberry’s arm behind his back, using him as a shield, and resumed fire on Cunningham, who now managed to gain a clear shot at Veale. Mayberry broke free, and the two Rangers backed away from one another, guns blazing, until Veale fell. “I walked to where he was lying,” testified Mayberry, “and saw that he was dead.” Cunningham lay under a cedar tree, bleeding from his neck, but shrugged off the wound as minor. The three surviving Rangers left Veale’s body, tried to find a phone nearby, could not, then finally gained a ride with the third vehicle that passed them, the drivers of the first two perhaps shocked by their appearance and demeanor. The obliging driver, General Stacy, a prominent local real estate developer, gave them a ride to the Driskill Hotel, where Mayberry phoned Sheriff Matthews. Matthews and a deputy retrieved Veale’s body

²⁷⁵ Veale and Cunningham had both worked as prison guards in Huntsville and may have had a background of one-upsmanship.

while the three Rangers licked their wounds, physical, emotional, and, perhaps, spiritual. Governor Hobby immediately discharged Cunningham for his part in the “duel” and suspended Johnston and Mayberry, pending an investigation.²⁷⁶

Newspaper coverage of the incident showed a marked contrast regarding the two dueling Rangers. For the deceased, only a single paragraph appeared in the *Austin Statesman*, with no mention of the date or site of his funeral. Veale, 28, had returned to Ranger service in October 1918 in Captain J.L. Anders's outfit, the paper reported.²⁷⁷ Coverage of Cunningham was more extensive, in part because he was “widely acquainted”—his uncle was Austin's police chief—and in part because he chose to kill a fellow Ranger at a time when the Rangers' behavior was under scrutiny.

Cunningham, 43, had served as captain since December 1917, much of the time in Austin. Hobby had lifted Cunningham from his position of manager of convict gangs at the state penitentiary, where he had served for several years.²⁷⁸ The headline of the first article referring to the shooting mentioned a “duel,” a term that probably evoked in some of the Austin readership, which included the legislators, a sense that Cunningham fought to protect his honor. The next day, the newspaper did not mention Veale, and introduced its article with the headline, “Cunningham Is Allowed Bail By Justice Johnson,” a statement that minimized the horrible chain of events leading to the killing and focused only on the freedom of Cunningham.²⁷⁹ With the legal charges still pending, the Austin paper continued its defense of Cunningham in its Sunday

²⁷⁶ AS 8Feb19, 4. See also, pencil notations on service records: Cunningham, “Discharged 2/7/19 Special Order #6a”; Mayberry “Suspended Feb 7th 1919”; TSLA.

²⁷⁷ AS, 8Feb19, 4. Actually, the *Statesman* incorrectly reported his age as 36; Veale's original Enlistment Oath from 31 July 1915 listed him as 25 at the time; Ranger Service Record, TSLA.

²⁷⁸ AS, 8Feb19, 4

²⁷⁹ AS, 9Feb19, 1. See Ranger Service Record, TSLA.

edition one week later, announcing in a headline that “Former Ranger Has Splendid Spanish War Record,” though the article, in fact, did not support the claim.²⁸⁰

The antics of Cunningham, Veale, and the other Rangers only increased anticipation surrounding the resumption of the Ranger investigation on Monday morning. The sole witness scheduled to appear was the individual most responsible for the hearings in the first place, Canales himself.

Day Nine: Monday, February 10

As the committee convened at 10 A.M., the House was considering two measures concerning the proceedings. The House was hearing arguments to rescind Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 13, passed the previous week, which called for printing a transcript of the hearings in the daily *Journals* of the House and Senate. Opponents of the order argued that printing the lengthy testimony would postpone the publication of the *Journals*, rendering them unavailable for legislators as a source for reading legislation and keeping abreast of matters. Bledsoe, for example, claimed that inclusion of the testimony in the *Journals* would render them “useless.” Furthermore, as Knight and other opponents of public disclosure argued, the state surely would print the proceedings at their conclusion.²⁸¹ The measure to rescind the order to print

²⁸⁰ AS, 16Feb19, 3. The article states that Cunningham, in his early twenties, recruited twenty-eight San Angelo men to serve as Company F, Fourth Texas Volunteer Infantry, for whom he served as sergeant. The company trained for five months at Camp Tom Ball outside Houston, then transferred to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, from where they were mustered out eight months later without leaving Texas. While the paper's claim of a “splendid record” received no textual support, one person did comment on Cunningham's Army experience. Pat Dooley, former quartermaster in F Company and then the manager of the San Angelo Sewer Company, remembered that “Cunningham was popular among the boys and made a splendid officer.” The newspapers could have presented their readers additional details of the sordid event had they chosen to report information that surfaced in the Ranger investigation a few days before the exonerating article, but chose not to do so, thus extending the protection of Cunningham before the public; see *RFI*, 1562-63.

²⁸¹ *RFI*, 854. The hearings have never been published, but are available online. See <https://tsl.access.preservica.com/tda/other-online-collections/> (accessed August 5, 2020).

the proceedings passed the House, ending the possibility of a full, contemporaneous public record.²⁸²

The second matter under consideration in the House called for moving the hearings from the Railroad Commission hearing room to the House chamber to accommodate the large crowds expected for the planned testimony of Canales, Hanson, and Harley. After a brief debate, the measure failed.²⁸³ With the sources of information about the investigation confined to the hearings themselves and newspaper articles, the committee reconvened in front of a large crowd that filled the hearing room and spilled into the hall outside, where many spectators viewed the proceedings through a window opening into the room. Composed and smiling, Canales settled into the witness chair, where for the next two and one-half hours he narrated events that had led to the presentation of House Bill 5 to reform the Rangers, several times bringing laughter to the room.²⁸⁴ He proceeded virtually without pause, at one point chastising Knight, "I hate to be interrupted."²⁸⁵

After presenting a brief sketch of his educational background and legislative career, Canales explained his long-standing relationship with a Ranger force that had "degenerate[d]" over time.

I was born and raised on a ranch and am thoroughly acquainted with the Ranger business. I have known the Rangers ever since I was born; in fact, my home, La Cabra Ranch, [which] belonged to my father, has been a haven for the Rangers. They stayed there, were stationed there, came there at all hours, got our horses, got meals there, and they got our services. I have known among the Ranger forces some of the noblest and best men that I know—Captain Hughes, Captain Rogers, who is now United States marshal, Captain Wright, who used to be Sergeant under Captain Hughes, and various

²⁸² Senate *Journal*, 288.

²⁸³ House *Journal*. 367.

²⁸⁴ "Canales Testifies In Ranger Inquiry," *DMN*, 11Feb19, 1. See also, "Canales Appears Before Board In Ranger Inquiry," *AS*, 10Feb19, 1&3, and "Canales Closes Prosecution of Ranger Force At Noon," *AS*, 11Feb19, 3.

²⁸⁵ *RFI*, 861.

other individuals. At that time they gave us protection. They were a capable set of men, and did not need any restriction because their own conscience was a self-restraint and law.²⁸⁶

Having established his credentials, as he saw them, Canales proceeded to discuss conditions in South Texas since 1915, “when the first general outrages perpetrated by the Rangers began.”²⁸⁷

Canales then outlined his theory of causality regarding the “bandit troubles”: German intrigue, spillover from the Mexican Revolution, and economic injustice created an unstable social situation by 1915. The precipitating factor in the explosion of violence, he argued, was the wanton killing by the Rangers.

Canales reiterated arguments he had presented when he questioned the first witness on the opening day of the proceedings, that is, that the actions of Daniel Hinojosa—who was between stints as a Ranger—and his sidekick Frank Carr had ignited the Border War. The two lawmen “in concert with certain . . . leading citizens” of San Benito and Harlingen, removed prisoner Rodolfo Muñoz from the San Benito jail near midnight and drove out to the brush, where the group shot him repeatedly before hanging the body. After that incident, Canales argued, Border Mexicans charged with crimes or pursued as suspects refused to submit to authorities “because they did not believe that the officers of the law would give them the protection guaranteed to them by the Constitution and the laws of the State.”²⁸⁸ The rule of law had ended, he declared.

Canales recounted that Governor Ferguson sent Capt. Henry Ransom to the Valley, who immediately “began to kill Mexicans” who later “proved” to be innocent. The suggestion of practically “any man” was enough for Ransom and his company to

²⁸⁶ *RFI*, 856-57.

²⁸⁷ *RFI*, 857.

²⁸⁸ *RFI*, 859.

“unceremoniously kill” the accused. After Border Mexicans had surrendered their arms, Canales explained, the Rangers “would go into their homes . . . and shoot them at night. Ten men were killed right near San Benito, right near the house of the father of Mrs. Janes, my own stenographer.”²⁸⁹

The brutal tactics of the Rangers and their allies were counterproductive to their avowed goal of suppressing violence, Canales claimed. He offered a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the brutality and local citizens' resistance: “practically” all Border Mexicans living or finding refuge on the Mexican side of the river were at “war” with Texas because so many men had been “wrongfully killed.”²⁹⁰ To demonstrate the process of creating not just sympathizers, but active *sediciosos* as well, Canales provided details of the raid on the Aniceto Pizaña ranch, Los Tulitos, by an armed gang that included Rangers.

The raid occurred, Canales argued, because neighbor Jeff Scrivener, who served as guide, “had it in for” Aniceto, not because of a legitimate suspicion of “bandit” activities there.²⁹¹ When the raid ended, Aniceto had escaped to launch a violent campaign to avenge his family's and fellow residents' sufferings at the hands of the vigilantes and authorities. Canales reminded the gathering that he had successfully defended Ramón Pizaña before the Court of Criminal Appeals, which found the Pizaña brothers to be “absolutely acting in self-defense” in returning fire on the raiders.²⁹²

Canales moved to restore the rule of law in several ways besides returning disputes to the legal arena from the battlefields. He established the Canales Scouts to work with the U.S. Army in intercepting raids from Mexico and called on Sheriff

²⁸⁹ *RFI*, 865.

²⁹⁰ *RFI*, 865.

²⁹¹ *RFI*, 855.

²⁹² *RFI*, 860 and 863. See Ribb, *Canales*, Chapter Four.

Vann to employ Tejanos as deputies to gather reliable information.²⁹³ Success was immediate and significant, he stated, with letters from the Army to support his conclusion. He also served as translator in meetings with President Carranza, whose removal of a pro-*sedicioso* commander in Matamoros brought an end to raids by *sediciosos*, Canales said. The Rangers, however, had established a “precedent” of executing prisoners and burning ranches. Canales wrote to Ferguson of the “nauseating” practices in South Texas that “was a shame and disgrace to my native state,” but received no reply to his call for help in 1915.²⁹⁴ He recounted his patriotic response to Ferguson’s request eighteen months later for his support of an expanded Ranger Force to protect against German intrigue along the border.²⁹⁵ He testified at length about various acts of “loyalty” to the war effort, notably the ferreting out of German agents and giving of assurances to Border Mexicans that Ferguson had addressed the Ranger problem.²⁹⁶ In explaining his motives in calling for HB 5 and the investigation, Canales discussed a longtime, changing relationship with the Rangers, one which by 1915 had led him to object strenuously to their behavior and to call for their reform.

Canales next asserted that the Rangers continued to act on their precedent of executions and harassment of Border Mexicans under the Hobby regime. Canales began his review of the current Rangers with an assessment of Inspector Hanson.

I know that Captain Hanson is a very smart man, he is a shrewd man. Comparisons are really odious, but I am going to tell you I really believe that Captain Hanson has more brains than the Adjutant General’s office put together. He is a man that has more brains than I have, but has not the same quality of brains that I have. That is the only difference.

²⁹³ *RFI*, 866-67.

²⁹⁴ *RFI*, 870.

²⁹⁵ *RFI*, 868-69.

²⁹⁶ *RFI*, 871-72.

When the laughter in the hearing room died down, Canales explained that he initially had hoped that Hanson could use his “intelligence and shrewdness” in “weeding out bad men.”²⁹⁷ Despite Hanson’s promises in February 1918 to clean up the Rangers, Canales soon witnessed the return of harassment, disarming of Tejano citizens, and murder.

Captain Stevens’s company carried out the majority of what Canales considered illegal searches and violations of due process in 1918.²⁹⁸ When Canales, among others, called for Stevens’s removal, some Anglo residents accused him of opposing any Ranger presence whatsoever. Canales maintained before the committee that he supported competent Rangers, and offered an account of a visit by Captain W.W. Taylor, Stevens’s replacement, to solicit his support in retaining Taylor’s company in the area. Harley, not Canales, disbanded Taylor’s company, but the Rangers and their supporters blamed Canales, and “seemed to wash their hands like Pilate” regarding participation in the decisions to remove Stevens or terminate Taylor.²⁹⁹

The resumption of violent and illegal tactics by the Rangers brought Canales to seek help from Hanson, Canales told the crowd, and he then related the pivotal meeting, initiated by a phone call to Canales by Hanson, between the two on the train north from Brownsville in October 1918. To Canales, the affidavits Hanson showed him regarding Edds constituted clear evidence for a charge of murder or manslaughter against Edds. Hanson, on the other hand, considered the killing a matter of simple self-defense. The lengthy discussion ended with Canales storming out after telling Hanson that the state would be better served by no Rangers than by the Rangers then

²⁹⁷ *RFI*, 878.

²⁹⁸ *RFI*, e.g., 873 and 878.

²⁹⁹ *RFI*, 898 and 876. Canales described Taylor as a “very fine officer and so far as I know an enforcer of the law, [who] had not meddled in local politics”; 898.

deployed in South Texas, Canales testified. By that time, he said, “my suspicions were strongly aroused as to the diligence” of Hanson as an impartial investigator.³⁰⁰

Canales transcended his severe disagreements with Stevens and Hanson, however, in applying his personal Christian belief that everybody was “good at heart” but that sometimes “bad associations” turned their thoughts.³⁰¹

Canales then brought the narrative to December 1918 and the confrontation with Ranger Sergeant Frank Hamer on the streets of Brownsville. He told of the verbal assault by the massive Hamer and Hamer’s repetition of accusations in front of a city councilman. “He looked at me in a very angry way, his eyes glisten[ing],” Canales testified, “and Gentlemen, I have been practicing law for twenty years and I know when men mean business.”³⁰² Instead of retaliating, as Sheriff Vann urged him to do, Canales testified that he turned the other cheek, then protested to Governor Hobby and Adjutant General Harley about the incident.³⁰³

Canales entered into the record his correspondence with the two Ranger leaders regarding the confrontation, six documents in all.³⁰⁴ The crux of the matter, as Canales had written Harley, was that “you have requested me to inform your department of any abuse and you will correct it,” yet now Hamer threatened him for doing so.³⁰⁵ He agreed to meet with Harley to work things out when he arrived in Austin January 12, and even offered to cut short a hunting trip if “you need me” earlier, he had written to Harley.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁰ *RFI*, 881.

³⁰¹ *RFI*, 878.

³⁰² *RFI*, 886.

³⁰³ *RFI*, 887.

³⁰⁴ *RFI*, 888-94. Canales also paraphrased a letter to Harley written on 23, 24, or 25 December; 897-98.

³⁰⁵ Canales to Harley, 21Dec18, in *RFI*, 894.

³⁰⁶ *RFI*, 895.

When he arrived in Austin on January 12, Canales still hoped to resolve his misgivings concerning the Rangers without calling hearings or filing legislation. "I swear to you under my oath," he told the committee, "that my intentions were simply to appeal to the Adjutant General to remove the objectionable men from the force without forcing me into a fight, either by introducing . . . the Canales Bill . . . or by demanding an investigation."

As he conversed with a fellow legislator in a hotel the next day, Canales continued, Sergeant Hamer passed by "as though he simply wanted me to know he was [in Austin] and [still] on the force." After Canales walked to another hotel on business, Hamer showed up there, as well. "I took his action as a challenge," said Canales. "that I would be intimidated if I would make any charges against these rangers or introduce any law attempting to regulate them." Canales met with Harley and Francisco Chapa in the capitol that evening to state his conviction that "Hanson's investigations were one-sided and made for the purpose of protecting the Rangers," not pursuing justice. Canales found Harley's response to the Hamer ordeal and to his charges against Hanson unsatisfactory—and told him so: "I said right then and there that General Harley wanted simply to gain time for the Legislature to adjourn and go home and [,thus,] the conditions that had heretofore existed would continue to exist." He explained that "I knew that this investigation would reflect necessarily on the good name of the administration of our present Governor."³⁰⁷ Despite his misgivings, he changed his tactics the following day. Quite familiar with delaying tactics by Ranger supporters, Canales drafted House Bill 5. Canales had completed his story: "Now, that is all I have to say."³⁰⁸ After two and one-half hours on the stand, Canales was ready for cross-examination.

³⁰⁷ *RFI*, 899.

³⁰⁸ *RFI*, 900.

Cross-examination and Conflict

Robert E. Lee Knight represented the adjutant general during most of the interrogation of Canales and directed his lines of questioning toward a single destination, though he often set a circuitous, if not baffling, route to it. The primary goal of Knight and the Ranger supporters was the discrediting of Canales as a witness by attacking him as an unstable individual, as a Border Mexican, and as a political opportunist. Knight attempted to shift the focus of the inquiry from the outrages of the Rangers to Canales's motives for making the charges: The reason for the investigation, therefore, rested not on the behavior of the Rangers, but of Canales.

Knight displayed his tactics with his opening line of questioning, which culminated with, "Now isn't it a fact, Mr. Canales, that you have become obsessed in a way with suspicion and hallucination regarding the seriousness of this [Hamer] matter?"³⁰⁹ Knight consistently attempted to construct for the committee a psychological profile of Canales as a deluded, self-absorbed individual.

Knight frequently sought to undercut Canales's charges by suggesting that the victims of Ranger abuses were *de facto* guilty, usually on the basis of ethnicity, and thus a rough justice had been served. Chairman Bledsoe, who occasionally reigned in Knight's more specious lines of questionings and outrageous non-sequiturs, stepped in regarding presumptions of innocence:

Knight: [Canales] said the [R]angers committed wholesale executions of innocent people, and I asked him to name a single one that was innocent.

Bledsoe: The presumption of law is that they were innocent.

Knight: If that's the ruling of the Committee, I yield.

Bledsoe: It's not only the ruling of the Committee, but it is the well[-]recognized law of the state.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ *RFI*, 901.

³¹⁰ In *RFI*, 907-8.

For 45 minutes or so, Knight proceeded charge by charge, trying to argue that Canales used hearsay and bias more than legal or adjutant general records to make his cases. The exchanges between the antagonists were spirited and highly emotional at times.

The Ranger attorneys repeatedly asked Canales for the precise date of “this big change [that] came over the spirit of your dreams,” that is, his disillusionment with Hanson.³¹¹ Canales consistently set the turning point at the train incident in mid-October 1918, three weeks before the general election and, thus, before the Ranger intervention on behalf of their preferred candidate Glasscock in his contest with Parr, which Knight repeatedly asserted was the true cause of Canales’s charges.³¹² The questioning strayed so far in these speculations that Chairman Bledsoe finally interrupted Knight by stating clearly regarding the use of Rangers in the Parr-Glasscock dispute, “We have an election context in the building, and I want them to try it; I don’t want us to go into it”—anymore, he should have added.³¹³

Knight particularly seized on what he constructed as duplicity on the part of Canales for working closely with Hanson on the Hobby campaign. If Hanson was such an unreliable, double-crossing individual, why had Canales continued to work with him? Canales, on the defensive and exasperated at times, replied that Hanson, in his commitment to Hobby and reform, may have had a “change of heart” and could be trusted. He acted, he testified, in cooperation with Hanson because it “was the best thing I could do. If I had told the Mexicans [sic] that Capt[ain] Hanson was a crooked politician” but now “intended to do right, I don’t see that any good would have been

³¹¹ *RFI*, 925.

³¹² *RFI*, 1017.

³¹³ In *RFI*, 960.

served,” and the effort to quell the Tejano fears of the Rangers undermined.³¹⁴ Knight seized on what he perceived as duplicity on Canales's part:

Knight: So that is your justification. You thought you had a right to mislead the people.

Canales: Discretion is the better part of valor, and I had to use discretion because I want[ed] to see if he would not do right in these matters, and I had no specific case against Capt. Hanson then.

Q: And still you say he was a crooked politician?

A: Most assuredly.

Q: And was a crooked politician when he came down there.

A: Yes, was and is.

Q: What is a crooked politician?

A: You ought to know it very well—I know you bear that name, I have heard it several times.

After Bledsoe threatened to report Canales to the House for his remark, the questioning continued.

Knight: Isn't a crooked politician a scoundrel who will preach one thing and practice another?

Canales: Perhaps you know, I don't know. . . .

Knight: You admit that you were telling those people there, *your own race and your own blood*, that he was a good man when you knew he was a bad man?

³¹⁵

Not content to argue the accusations, the Ranger team smeared the bearer.

Matters took another unexpected turn, however, when Canales revealed that he had “letters after letters” from residents in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr counties making “specific charges” of Ranger abuses. The writers “refused” to give their names, however, because they feared that they would be subjected to confrontations such as Canales had experienced with Hamer, or worse—that they would “have the devil to pay for it.” Canales paraphrased their sentiments: “Please don't reveal my

³¹⁴ *RFI*, 911-30.

³¹⁵ *RFI*, 929 and 930, emphasis added.

name, because I know what will happen to me.” Resisting Knight’s repeated attempts to have him reveal the names of the whistleblowers, Canales did offer the letters to the committee and the attorney general.³¹⁶

To counter further the specific charges of brutality Canales brought against the Rangers, Knight disputed the causes of the mass departures of Border Mexicans during and after the Border War. These residents fled South Texas, Knight argued, not because of Ranger brutality but because they were disloyal and sought to escape military service. Further, Knight argued, Canales used the Rangers to cover his own disloyal tendencies. He did not comment on Canales’s claim that the Army commander for the region forbade Rangers to come within ten miles of the border, and that Rangers who disobeyed would be put in the “guardhouse” to “stop this thing”—Ranger intimidation.³¹⁷

Rather, Knight tried to establish that a polarization between Anglos and Border Mexicans, as expressed in the *Plan de San Diego*, accounted for the movements across the river, not Rangers’ attacks and threats.³¹⁸ He then asked Canales what “occasioned” the exodus of 1915, the height of the Border War, and Canales again suggested that the cause was the “wholesale . . . and promiscuous slaughter” of “many” Border Mexicans carried out “mostly by the Rangers,” though private citizens also followed “the example done [sic] by the Rangers.”³¹⁹ Knight shifted to subsequent evacuations of the Valley and, more importantly, continued to attack Canales personally.

Knight continued to suggest that Canales acted not out of patriotism or justice but out of personal needs, notably his presumed overriding allegiance to “Mexicans.”

³¹⁶ *RFI*, 947-48.

³¹⁷ *RFI*, 951.

³¹⁸ *RFI*, 953-54.

³¹⁹ *RFI*, 955.

Knight suggested that Canales had not done all he might have done to combat the raids of *sediciosos*, or “banditti,” in Knight’s term, which evoked a harsh rejoinder from Canales: “I have done everything within my power—certainly more than you have done or more than anybody else in Dallas.”³²⁰ Undeterred, Knight analyzed Canales for the committee as one who “consciously or unconsciously” understood the banditti actions because he was, after all, “Mexican.” Because of a presumed, intrinsic hatred for Anglo authorities on the basis of his race, as constructed by Knight, Canales greatly “magnified” a few “casual mistakes” of the Rangers into a sweeping indictment of them.³²¹ Thus, reasoned Knight, Canales acted out of loyalty to his race, not to the rule of law or to his country.

Knight closed the afternoon session with his own example of racial polarization. “I will ask you to give the name of a single white citizen down there, American, that you assisted out of trouble,” he asked Canales, turning to the committee—“any white citizen that he ever concerned himself with down there during all this time.”³²² After three hours of cross-examination, making Canales’s testimony for the day at more than five hours, thus far, the committee broke for dinner.

After the dinner break, Congressman C.B. Hudspeth of West Texas testified briefly before he left town.³²³ In response to a question about the desirability of bonding the Rangers, the ex-Ranger answered that the state may as well abolish them because of the restrictions that would follow.³²⁴ Hudspeth told of a drunk Ranger assaulting him in El Paso. When he reported the incident, the adjutant general

³²⁰ *RFI*, 903 (quotation) and 904. Bledsoe warned Canales not to make “improper remarks,” and Canales apologized to the committee.

³²¹ *RFI*, 905.

³²² *RFI*, 963. Bledsoe called the question “immaterial,” and Knight withdrew it.

³²³ Testimony of C.B. Hudspeth, *RFI* 964-995. Hudspeth extolled the service of the Rangers in West Texas, especially regarding their operations on his goat ranch; 985; 992.

³²⁴ Hudspeth Testimony, *RFI*, 978-79.

immediately dismissed the man.³²⁵ Before he stepped down, Hudspeth succinctly stated his basic attitude for policing the border, one obviously shared by many committee members: "You have got to kill those Mexicans when you find them, or they will kill you."³²⁶

Canales returned to the stand for the remainder of the evening session. Dayton Moses joined Knight for the final hour of cross-examination. They continued to attack Canales's stated motive for his reform bill: "to reorganize the force on a higher-level; that is, [to] put in the men that are God-fearing and law-abiding and in position to execute the law."³²⁷

Concerning the exoduses of 1916, 1917, and 1918, Knight suggested repeatedly that the high number of slackers from Cameron County, Canales's home county, indicated the actual reason for the departures: disloyalty.³²⁸ During an intermission, Knight and the adjutant general compiled statistics regarding draft evaders in South Texas, and Knight hammered on Canales for having relatives who had fled the draft.

Knight: How many relatives have you that have deserted from this side?

Canales: I don't know.

Q: How many that you know of, whom you have disclaimed relationship with?

A: I don't know, I haven't made a study about those things.

Q: Why, didn't it concern you?

A: No, sir; or [knowing about] anybody else's relatives, that wasn't my business.

Q: You tell the Committee that you know you have some, but don't know the number?

A: No, sir, I don't know.

³²⁵ Hudspeth Testimony, *RFI*, 979-80.

³²⁶ Hudspeth Testimony, *RFI*, 992.

³²⁷ *RFI*, 998. In contrast to Knight's attacks, Moses expressed respect for Canales. He noted that Canales was "a man who is well-liked by his brethren in the House, who have confidence in him"; *RFI*, 1004.

³²⁸ *RFI*, 954-56.

Q: Is Adolfo Canales, son of Jesús Canales, a relative of yours?

A: Yes, sir.

Q: Is he a deserter?

A: I don't know. I think one of those boys is gone.

When Chairman Bledsoe interrupted the questioning, Knight explained that he was only trying to show the “motives” of Canales in bringing the charges. “There is a saying that blood is thicker than water,” Knight told the committee, and the presence of “clients and relatives” across the river influenced Canales “unconsciously.” With the large number of people that Canales “is interested in over there,” Knight continued, “if you put yourself in his place, you would [probably] be impelled to do . . . what he has done.”³²⁹ Thus, went the argument, the Rangers did not cause the exoduses, disloyalty did, and Canales simply criticized the Rangers to cover his economic and familial interests. Knight concluded that “there can't be a man on the Committee who believes” the Rangers caused the exoduses of 1917 and 1918.³³⁰

The Ranger attorneys stressed another reason, one alleged at length in the cross-examination, namely that Canales was acting out of political interests, specifically out of loyalty to James B. Wells. They focused on Canales's break with Hanson to make their case.

Knight and Moses elicited several instances of cooperation between Hanson and Canales, hoping to discredit Canales by showing that he had been one of the “political pets” he complained about in Charge Ten, even if no longer one. Hanson had provided his brother, Albino, with a Special Ranger commission at his request, Canales confirmed, and had also provided clarification of draft eligibility requirements, which greatly affected the retention of labor in the Valley, a key issue for Canales.³³¹ Canales also read an example of Hanson “joking and giving me taffy”:

³²⁹ *RFI*, 1011-12.

³³⁰ *RFI*, 1012.

³³¹ *RFI*, 1016-17.

“I want you to distinctly understand that I am your true friend,” wrote Hanson in July 1918,” and it will always give me pleasure to serve you when opportunity offers and, honestly, it will give me pleasure to support you for Governor at some time in the future.”³³² The reservations about Hanson that Canales insisted that he had held since Hanson’s appointment did not jibe with such cooperation and camaraderie, the Ranger attorneys argued. Knight and Moses argued that the relationship ended when the Rangers supported Glasscock in the senatorial contest against Parr, the candidate favored by Wells and Canales, and that Canales backdated his misgivings to justify his charges.

Asked whether he was alone in objecting to the actions of the Rangers, Canales produced a large bundle of complaints from constituents, he had alluded to in the afternoon, saying, “[I] will show them to the Committee, but in order to keep my trust, I will not disclose them to outside parties,” referring to the adjutant general and his counsel.³³³ Senator Page said, “I do not blame Mr. Canales for not wishing to divulge those names.” Bledsoe refused to consider them on the grounds that “evidence not available to the other side is not available to me.”³³⁴ With that rejection, the hearings ended for the day. Canales had testified for almost six hours. In often contentious questioning by the Ranger team and Committee members, Canales occasionally gave almost as much as he endured, then stood down confident he had bolstered his case for reasonable reform of the Ranger Force.

Canales’s Closing Arguments

Canales called his final four witnesses in support of his charges. E.M. Sorenson, farmer and mayor of Lyford, a small community near Raymondville, wanted most of all for the Rangers not to “stir up another stink” because “our

³³² *RFI*, 1016.

³³³ *RFI*, 1022.

³³⁴ *DMN*, 11Feb19, 7; *RFI*, 1022.

Mexicans [have been] law-abiding and peaceful since 1915.” He also provided a chronology for the movements of Octabiano Narveas, who followed him to the stand.³³⁵

Narveas, a naturalized citizen of thirty years who farmed several hundred acres near Lyford, recounted interrogation techniques of the Rangers. About 11 P.M. one night several months earlier, Rangers George Sattler, John Sittre, and Harry Wallis took him outside Harlingen, hands tied behind his back and eyes covered, where they asked about cattle thefts in the area. When he did not confess, one of the Rangers hoisted him by the rope they had placed around his neck. When he continued to deny his guilt, he was lifted a second time and remained suspended until he fainted. Though he had a glimpse of the men that night, he could not or would not identify them in the hearing room during his testimony.³³⁶ Though not afraid of the Rangers himself, he said, his family was “plenty afraid.”³³⁷ After a grueling cross-examination by Knight that consumed more than an hour, for what Representative McMillin thought should have taken “ten minutes,” Narveas stepped down.³³⁸

The final two witnesses represented the Mexican government of Venustiano Carranza. H.N. Gray, “special co-operator” for American affairs along the river, testified about his fact-finding reports concerning the disappearance of Florencio García, the flogging of José Hernandez, and the maltreatment of Arturo García.³³⁹ Moses returned to the type of questioning used against all Border Mexicans: He sought to discredit him according to a presumed greater loyalty to Mexico, even when

³³⁵ Testimony of E.M. Sorenson, *RFI*, 1032 and 1023-28..

³³⁶ Testimony of Octabiano Narveas, *RFI*, 1045-46 and 1054.

³³⁷ Testimony of Octabiano Narveas, *RFI*, 1050.

³³⁸ Testimony of Octabiano Narveas, *RFI*, 1055.

³³⁹ Testimony of H.N. Gray, *RFI*, 1056-58 and 1063.

he, as Narveas and others before him, were American citizens. When asked directly, Gray calmly replied, "I have never sold my patriotism to anybody."³⁴⁰

His immediate superior, J.Z. Garza, Consul in Brownsville, testified that Inspector Hanson had held "some office" under ousted President Díaz, but was "taken" out of Mexico as an "undesirable man" in accordance with Article 33 of the Mexican Constitution. He brought a list containing 250-300 "assassinations" in South Texas compiled by Frank C. Pierce, son of the American ex-Consul in Matamoros and a "good friend of Texas Mexicans," in Garza's estimation. The committee refused to accept the list of murders, however, because it constituted, in the words of Moses, "implied evidence" to "the reading public" that the Rangers alone were responsible, when, in fact, "a very large number of citizens" acted "the very same as the Rangers" in killing suspects.³⁴¹ Before letting go of Garza in cross-examination, Moses twice implied that Canales could have, or should have, requested the deportation of De La Rosa, Pizaña, or other "banditti," even with no extradition treaty in place, to demonstrate Canales's questionable fealty to the United States.³⁴² Canales closed his case against the Rangers, though he reserved the privilege of calling five additional individuals to the stand.³⁴³

Day Ten: Tuesday, February 11

The Rangers Respond

When the hearings resumed after lunch, the Adjutant General presented a "Supplemental Answer" to plead for committee assistance in forthcoming legislation

³⁴⁰ Testimony of H.N. Gray, *RFI*, 1067.

³⁴¹ Testimony of J.Z. Garza, *RFI*, 1070 and 1072.

³⁴² In testimony of J.Z. Garza, *RFI*, 1077-78.

³⁴³ He mentioned State Representatives Adrian Poole, M.E. Blackburn, and R.E. Thomason, Senator W.D. Sutor, and Ed C. Lasaster—none of whom he called; *RFI*, 1079 and *AS*, 11Feb19.

and to summarize his view of Canales's case. Harley had provided a Dallas newspaper with a copy of his long letter the day before.³⁴⁴

Harley argued at length for recognition of his efforts to sanitize the Ranger Force since gaining authority in the fall of 1917 and for the need for higher salaries and a more centralized chain of command. He and Hanson had “continuously endeavored to eliminate the bad element” in the Rangers, Harley wrote to the committee, and offered proof in the fact that he had discharged 108 Rangers during his tenure, a number equivalent to 100% of the current Ranger Force.³⁴⁵ Most of the alleged acts occurred before his regime, Harley noted, yet he would continue to purge “undesirables (if there are any)” from the force and to investigate complaints “whenever made by *well meaning and reliable citizens*.”³⁴⁶

The primary impediment to keeping a “high standard [of] personnel” was the “starvation wages” paid to the Rangers. Give him resources to provide a “sufficient salary” and to exert “complete control” of Ranger operations, Harley asked of the committee, and he would “make of it an organization that will be the pride and protection of the State and its best citizens.” He then contrasted Canales with his own witnesses, who “have had no mercenary or biased motive in appearing here,” but who simply wished to make sure that the “Ranger service that their forefathers organized was not destroyed by the enemies of good government,” i.e., Canales.³⁴⁷

Cameron County Sheriff Vann was recalled to the stand briefly, questioned by Committee members, and promptly established that still-Captain Anders had been

³⁴⁴ See *DMN*, 11Feb19, 7 (story filed on 2/10).

³⁴⁵ Harley to Bledsoe, et. al., 10Feb19, in *RFI*, 1086. Harley also referred to “95% [who] have resigned during my tenure”; 1087. Whether the 108 dismissals included this figure is not clear; the force never reached 200+ regular Rangers.

³⁴⁶ *RFI*, 1087 and 1086, emphasis added.

³⁴⁷ *RFI*, 1087.

present when Captain Ransom had executed the four victims after the raid at Las Norias.³⁴⁸

The Ranger defense team called C.L. Jessup to undermine Canales's credibility regarding the timing and nature of his objections to the Rangers and to provide evidence regarding the culpability of Florencio García for livestock missing from the huge Piper Plantation outside Brownsville, which Jessup managed. In answer to a direct question from Knight about whether Canales "endorsed or condemned" the Rangers in the Brownsville area, Jessup replied that Canales provided "good, effective work" in dispelling Border Mexicans' confusion regarding their draft status and in allaying fears about Captain Taylor's company. Together with Hanson and others, Canales explained to large gatherings of Border Mexican laborers in September 1918 that the Rangers would "protect all citizens," stated Jessup.³⁴⁹ He also provided circumstantial evidence suggesting that García had masterminded the systematic theft of cattle from the Piper Plantation.³⁵⁰

Ranger attorneys Knight and Moses then outlined a defense of Ranger atrocities based on reciprocity, that is, that the Rangers had committed outrages no worse than those committed by authorities operating in Mexico. Knight claimed that "Mexican soldiers did exactly what [Canales] condemns the Texas Rangers for doing," but then added a second criteria for assessing the violence in the area, the victims' race: "and it was not Mexicans they were fighting," but white U.S. soldiers. Moses extended the rationale for Anglos-Rangers, citizens, soldiers-brutalizing other groups. "We will agree that no prisoner *ought* to be killed," he began, and "that no officer *ought* to let a prisoner be killed." He continued the racial logic: "A negro [sic] who is charged with an outrage on a white woman *ought* not be mobbed, but they do

³⁴⁸ Testimony of Captain W. L. Vann, *RFI*, 1091.

³⁴⁹ Testimony of C.L. Jessup, *RFI*, 1097-98.

³⁵⁰ Testimony of C.L. Jessup, *RFI*, 1104-07.

it just the same,” though he did not specify whether “they” referred to officers or vigilantes, or both. To the Ranger defenders, Mexican soldiers executing white captives or African Americans raping white women were similar enough to provoke the “ill will and anger” that perhaps did not justify, but certainly did “palliate” vicious responses against the alleged offenders. In killing Border Mexican suspects, the logic held, Rangers acted “just like the people who mobbed that negro up at Hillsboro in broad, open daylight.”³⁵¹ While the initial alleged acts were not “justification” for the racial retribution, “yet you don’t feel in your heart that condemnation which you might feel” if the compensatory victim had been white.³⁵² According to this logic, the Rangers retaliated for not only to punish crimes committed against Americans, but to avenge the honor of a privileged white race.

The next major witness summoned by the defense was Lon C. Hill, longtime land developer, political figure, and Special Ranger.³⁵³ The colorful witness, known to many as “Big Chief” for his Cherokee heritage, consistently used humor to make his points. Refuting Canales’s contention that Ranger brutality had caused the exoduses from the Valley, Hill claimed that Rangers had no more to do with the migrations “than the twelve signs of the Zodiac.”³⁵⁴ Hill argued that violence perpetrated by adherents to the Plan de San Diego, “98%” of whom resided in Texas, occasioned the “evaporation of labor” in the area.³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ Moses referred to the 1918 spectacle lynching of Jesse Washington in Waco. See work of William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, especially.

³⁵² *RFI*, 1120 emphasis added. Moses was referring to the lynching of Bragg Williams allegedly by Pink Hightower and eleven others; see, e.g., *AAS*, 21Feb19, 1. A trial court had sentenced Williams to death, but he was awaiting appeal when he died. For additional commentary regarding the larger racial context of Ranger Force activity, see Ribb, *Canales*, Chapter Seven.

³⁵³ Preceding Hill were former legislator F.H. Burmeister of McMullen County and Sheriff Oscar Thompson of Jim Hogg County, attorney and principal, respectively, in a land dispute about which Virginia Yeager had alleged intimidation and harassment. Hill ran as Sheriff of Cameron County on the 1910 “Independent,” or non-Wells, slate with Canales.

³⁵⁴ Testimony of Lon C. Hill, *RFI*, 1147.

³⁵⁵ *RFI*, 1146-48.

Hill told the committee that he doubted charges against Rangers alleging brutal interrogation, such as in the case of Octabiano Navaez, “because there are other people to do that.”³⁵⁶ To a follow-up question from Chairman Bledsoe about the nature of this division of labor in law enforcement, Hill patiently explained, “[W]e shaped up our organization and we knew who we could call on [in] this place and that and the other place, and there were certain fellows that looked after those things.”

Bledsoe: In other words, anything an officer could not do he passed to the other fellows and they attended to it?

Hill: Well, I am just simply telling you about the organization. You would [have gone] into it and you would have packed your rag dolls, called the dogs, and done what we did.

Shifting from first to third person, Hill blurted out, “A lot of those citizens wouldn’t object to hanging a fellow to make him tell what he knows.” Hill then acknowledged that Rangers, who were “no better than anybody else,” would do the same.³⁵⁷

As to the reasons for a cessation of raiding, Hill asserted that “Mr. Canales’s scouts had nothing to do with it—nothing but a lot of bullets stopped it . . . the only thing that will ever stop it.”

Knight: Did you ever hear of those [Canales] Scouts capturing anybody?

Hill: What? (Laughter)

Q.: Ever capturing anybody?

A.: No, sir—nobody else [but me].

Bledsoe then warned “whoever that is clapping their hands back there” to stop or he would remove them from the room. “There will be no cheering and no demonstration” in the room, he warned the audience, except when done “properly.”³⁵⁸

Knight then directed Hill to the photograph of the Rangers with their lariats securing corpses to their saddlehorns, introduced earlier by Canales. By way of

³⁵⁶ *RFI*, 1157.

³⁵⁷ *RFI*, 1158.

³⁵⁸ *RFI*, 1222. Knight recalled Hill after three intervening witnesses.

background Hill related that he, anxious to assist the outnumbered group at the Norias section house of the King Ranch that included his son, Gordon, arrived on a special train from Brownsville near dark the evening of the battle, August 8, 1915. As he disembarked “near a pile of dead Mexicans,” the Rangers who had been deployed to Norias the day before were returning from a search they had undertaken just minutes before the battle began. The next morning, Hill recounted to the committee, another train from Brownsville brought “a young fellow with a kodak” who soon was photographing the buildings, people, and “everything else around there.” Because “there wasn’t a wagon there or a hearse in sixty miles,” the Rangers and others “got on the horses and put a rope on and dragged them” in order to bury them. “I know these men were drug up there on horseback,” Hill testified, because “I saw them drug.” At that point, Hill claimed, the photographer “set his instrument down and snapshot it.” Hill identified Captain Monroe Fox, on the left, and Tom Tate on the right. “That’s all I know about the picture,” he said.³⁵⁹

During cross-examination, Canales first tried to establish that one of the Canales Scouts had guided an Army incursion into Mexico that Hill claimed to have accompanied, but he was cut off by Bledsoe. Canales then asked Hill when he had “come to this story about taking that picture,” to which Moses objected as “insulting” the witness, and Bledsoe, agreeing, asked Canales to keep his remarks “confined.”

Canales: Lon, have you ever told that story about taking the picture before this time?

³⁵⁹ *RFI*, 1223-25. The “young fellow” was Robert Runyon of Brownsville, most prolific photographer of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, including the events of the Border War and Mexican Revolution. Most of his 12,000+ plates and papers are in the Robert Runyon Photograph Collection, Center for American History, U.T.-Austin. The Harry S. Ransom Humanities Research Center, U.T.-Austin, also houses an extensive collection of his material. Fox had served as Captain since 1911 and Tate had served as Special Ranger for the Cattle Raiser’s Association; AGSR. Ribb, *Canales*, Chapter Seven examines the photograph at length.

Hill: No, that's a fact. Everybody knew it. That is not a stage[d] picture. The people there had nothing to do with it. Ask all these people; they were there. You can buy a dozen other views of that [scene].

Canales did not show any of the "dozen" other images of the incident available as postcards, but simply sat down.³⁶⁰ Hill's answer that multiple views of the slain raiders somehow proved that the scene was not staged seemed self-evident.

Representative McMillin asked Hill why General Parker, commander of U.S. forces near Brownsville, had ordered Rangers to remain ten miles from the river, but Hill had no answer.³⁶¹

Henry Edds, uncle of Ranger John Edds, the focus of three charges, followed Hill to the stand. A rancher in the Hebronville area for twenty-seven years, Edds spoke from experience about the Rangers in South Texas. Asked by Knight whether he knew of any "outrages" committed by Rangers, specifically "shooting prisoners and imposing on citizens," Edds replied that "all that occurred lower down in the Valley," not in his home area.³⁶² Knight suggested that giving "greater power" to the adjutant general and the captains in selecting their men, then "placing them under military discipline" would "purge" undesirables from the Ranger Force.³⁶³ Echoing Knight, Edds agreed that a Ranger Force required to hold bonds would "be crippled to a degree that would render it practically impotent."³⁶⁴

Canales asked Edds if he had a "good sheriff" in his county, to which Edds replied, yes, a "fearless" one. Canales inquired whether the sheriff "executed the law," heard that he did, then asked, "Is he under bond?", and heard that he was. The hearings then broke for dinner before reconvening for another night session.

³⁶⁰ *RFI*, 1229-30.

³⁶¹ *RFI*, 1232.

³⁶² Testimony of Henry Edds, *RFI*, 1165.

³⁶³ *RFI*, 1166.

³⁶⁴ *RFI*, 1165.

Claude McGill, a rancher near Alice since 1904, opened the session with a long argument against the bonding provision of Canales's reform bill. McGill would not sign as guarantor of a Ranger bond and implied other cautious citizens would not risk financial liability, either. Bonding companies would not "follow" Rangers as they moved into uncertain regions with unfamiliar local officers and conditions, he reasoned. Finally, a Ranger often does not have "time to wait for a warrant," and if he makes a "mistake outside of the county where he had friends or where local conditions went against him," warned McGill, then "he would be up against it, I think."³⁶⁵

When asked by Moses about his opinion of Captain Sanders, who had served in Alice for a long time, McGill hesitated before responding, "Well, my own picture—my picture of Captain Sanders is kind of in—well, he is a kind of character all his own; I could not tell you just how to express it. I regard Captain Sanders [as]—well, one of the old time Western type." He concluded by suggesting that with South Texas in good shape, the Rangers should serve in other regions in Texas.³⁶⁶

After recalling Oscar Thompson for a quick appearance, Knight turned to J.M. Mothershead, City Attorney for San Benito for six years. Mothershead shared the view that Cameron County, in particular, was corrupt and ungovernable without the Rangers.³⁶⁷ After Lon Hill's brief return to the stand, the hearings concluded, twelve hours after they had begun that day.

Day Eleven: Wednesday, February 12

Both sides held great expectations for the first witness of the day, John H. Rogers, captain for nineteen of his twenty-nine years as a Ranger and currently the

³⁶⁵ Testimony of Claude McGill, *RFI*, 1181-82.

³⁶⁶ *RFI*, 1185-86.

³⁶⁷ Testimony of J.M. Mothershead, *RFI*, 1204 and 1206-10.

U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Texas. Canales, in fact, invoked Roger's name when pointing to the standards for the Rangers he believed possible with his reform measure.³⁶⁸ Knight used Rogers to provide an institutional history of the force that supported Adjutant General Harley's vision for a force with "stronger, military discipline."

For fifteen years, Rogers had been bothered by "divided authority" in the organization of the Rangers and imagined a "centralized" system in which a "generalissimo" would provide direct oversight of "squads" led by commissioned officers approved by the adjutant general and governor.³⁶⁹ While the present system made it "practically impossible" for the Adjutant General to keep in "close touch" with Rangers, the "right man" as Ranger head could improve the force, thereby fulfilling the goal of the bonding provision, according to Knight and Rogers.³⁷⁰ In fact, Rogers argued, a bonding provision would keep away captains such as himself: "I don't think you could get a captain who had any property himself to command a company of Rangers and give bond for their conduct."³⁷¹ Rogers clearly articulated the higher levels of risk and lower levels of accountability for Rangers vis-a-vis other law enforcement personnel.

Under questioning by Canales, Rogers, who had known the Canaleses for decades, said that his bond as federal marshal "makes me more careful." Though legally required to hold bond, Rogers declared, "I would do it anyway," when asked about its restrictions.³⁷² In contrast to Rogers's admission that once or twice in his years on the force a fellow Ranger committed the type of error that John Edds committed when he shot Lisandro Muñoz, Canales told him that once or twice a

³⁶⁸ See, e.g., *RFI*, 857 and 1569.

³⁶⁹ Testimony of J.H. Rogers, *RFI*, 1236-37.

³⁷⁰ *RFI*, 1238.

³⁷¹ *RFI*, 1246.

³⁷² *RFI*, 1244 and 1250.

month a family was left ruined by Ranger activity. Bonding of Rangers was necessary, Canales insisted, to give “relatives some manner of redress.”³⁷³

During Rogers's testimony, simmering contempt between the two sides again flared into open disgust. When Canales asked a hypothetical question based on the retention of Rangers Saddler, Sittre, and Lock, Moses objected that “We are not defending any Rangers for murdering prisoners.” Canales countered with “I didn't know you would be so touchy on the question. I understood that was what you and [attorney] Knight were being paid for.” Bledsoe ordered Canales not to “inject” such accusations because “no evidence” showed remuneration.³⁷⁴ A few minutes later, Knight referred to the “vaporous interrogations of counsel” and the “obsession or hallucination” driving Canales.³⁷⁵ When Knight accused him of wanting the Ranger Force “crippled” or “abolished,” Canales challenged that it was “absolutely a misstatement of the facts”—a lie. Saying “I might as well call his hand right now,” Knight produced a letter alleging a call by Canales to abolish the force, though the committee reminded the two men that a witness required their attention, and the letter could wait until Canales returned to the stand.³⁷⁶ Representative Tidwell asked whether Marshal Rogers had his deputies under bond, as Canales proposed for the Rangers, and Rogers replied that all of his deputies, even his stenographer, were bonded. Even without a federal requirement to do so, he pointed out, “I would do it anyhow.” He then stepped down as witness.³⁷⁷

Rancher J.D. Jackson of Alpine, former Ranger and President of the Texas Cattle Raisers Association, called for an additional one hundred Rangers to combat raiders who crossed into the U.S. “on account of there being no food supplies” on the

³⁷³ *RFI*, 1247.

³⁷⁴ *RFI*, 1242.

³⁷⁵ *RFI*, 1247.

³⁷⁶ *RFI*, 1248.

³⁷⁷ *RFI*, 1250.

Mexico side of the Big Bend region. He also suggested that bonding Rangers would leave them “under obligations” to a signatory, such as a “big cow man.” Canales badgered Jackson about Lon Hill’s standing in the association in an attempt to cast doubt on Hills’ character.³⁷⁸

Knight next called C.L. Breniman, District Chief for Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the federal Bureau of Investigation, to testify about the trustworthiness of Hanson, whom he had known for “four or five years,” and the Rangers, generally. Breniman, also headquartered in San Antonio, revealed that Hanson, prior to Ranger service, had provided the bureau with “inside information” about suspects along the border and conditions in revolutionary Mexico. Incredibly, Breniman did not know that Hanson had worked for the Díaz or subsequent regimes through at least 1911, nor that he had been involved with Francisco Chapa in the Reyes conspiracy of 1911. Further, Breniman denied any context for considering Hanson’s reports on Mexico.

Knight: You know Mr. Canales says that Capt. Hanson is a spy of the Mexican government. Well, officially or otherwise, have you any information of that kind?

A: Not the least thing, that I know of; no, sir.

In fact, Breniman came to promote a version of the expulsion story concocted by Hanson and his supporters, that he was just one of “many other Americans” who ran afoul of a vindictive revolutionary movement, and was “compelled to leave Mexico.” Nothing special, was the implication.³⁷⁹ That Hanson’s earlier reporting or later as Ranger Inspector—“daily” according to Breniman—was tainted by revenge and counterrevolutionary bias yet presented as fact never filtered into Breniman’s analysis

³⁷⁸ Testimony of J.D. Jackson, *RFI*, 1257-58.

³⁷⁹ C.L. Breniman to W.E. Allen, Acting Chief, Bureau of Investigation, March 4, 1919. In the letter, Breniman defends Hanson and his own testimony about Hanson without any indication that he learned of activities that made Hanson’s accounts suspect for bias. “William Hanson,” Bureau of Investigation Sectional Files #199189, Criminal File #232-3620.

as the chief investigator in the U.S. city most active in Mexican politics. He described Hanson's "judgment and discretion" as "[t]he best I have ever known...[b]oth in peril and non-peril."³⁸⁰ Hanson had found a willing conduit to federal policy.

Knight attempted to defuse the record of Hanson's expulsion from Mexico for spying by suggesting that the governor who sentenced him was an anti-Carrancista troublemaker—an ironic criticism from the Ranger team that favored the overthrow of Carranza and restoration of iron rule recalling Díaz. Further, he implied that Canales

Knight continued to question witnesses in ways that sought to impugn Canales's integrity, patriotism, and motivations for bringing charges. As he had done before frequently, he made points known to be struck down by the committee as inadmissible or objectionable.

Knight: In the operation of your department along the border have you come into contact with any lawyers, and others threatening to be lawyers, in the matter of expressing anxiety for their clients across the river, and interfering with the operation of your department in bringing criminals to justice?

Canales: I would like to understand the purpose of that—

Sen. Page: What is the purpose of that question?

Knight: That his department is interfered with by lawyers who have their client's interest at heart, and sometimes have a personal interest in the matter.

Sen. Page: The objection is sustained.

Knight: I believe the Chairman caught the point.³⁸¹

Breniman left the stand after a few more questions.

The Rangers attorneys prepared to call the two cowboys who shot the prisoner given them by Rangers Edds—"whatever his name was," said Moses, the basis for Charge Four. Canales provided the victim's name, José María Gómez Salinas, then objected to the use of C.E. Valle as translator because his work with a previous witness, Colonel Farfán, showed he was not "impartial." Canales also refused to

³⁸⁰ Testimony of C.L. Breniman, *RFI*, 1264.

³⁸¹ In testimony of C.L. Breniman, *RFI*, 1266.

accept for the position Starr County Attorney Oosterveen, whom Bledsoe agreed was “mixed up” in the affair. The lawyers finally agreed to recall Miss Buckley, a stenographer recommended by Canales who had performed satisfactory work earlier in the hearings.³⁸² Further delaying the proceedings was the crowd in the hearing room that had clogged the witness area. Bledsoe asked all the “spectators” to “push back a little” and retire to the rear of the room, which several did.³⁸³

Frederico López confirmed that he, along with Sabas Ozuna, shot Gómez in the back, where his hands were cuffed, when he failed to stop his attempted escape. López denied that Edds had ordered them to execute Gómez, a view seconded by Eduardo Izaguirre, his employer and Special Ranger at the time.³⁸⁴ The committee and counsel then met in executive session to settle on a plan for “a shortening of the hearing and the elimination of unnecessary testimony,” according to one newspaper report.³⁸⁵

Convening for a night session, the committee first heard from Royal Collins, Chief of U.S. Army Scouts, about his and Edds's alleged mistreatment of Jesús Villareal and passengers near Rio Grande City, the basis for Charge Two. Neither Collins nor Edds threatened Villareal or any of the passengers with words or weapons, Collins claimed. He denied placing his pistol in Villareal's mouth or to his stomach

³⁸² *RFI*, 1272-73.

³⁸³ *RFI*, 1274. Pat Haley, an Emigrant [sic] Inspector” from Rio Grande City and former Cameron County deputy sheriff, then testified at length about the Brownsville death of Toribio Rodriguez, prisoner in Captain Sanders's control; 1274-98. He stated that they first took the prisoner to jail and only later took him to the hospital for his wounds.

³⁸⁴ Testimony of Frederico López, *RFI*, 1298-1318, and of Eduardo Izaguirre, 1308-1320. In a brief appearance, San Benito resident W.B. Hinckly announced that he was “absolutely against” the Canales Bill and spoke about the need for additional Rangers in his area because of the recent thievery—the worst ever, he claimed. He admitted under cross-examination that a company of Rangers had been stationed in Harlingen, seven miles distant, during the period. He denied first-hand knowledge of Ranger brutality or of the lynching of prisoners of the San Benito jail; Testimony of W.B. Hinckly, *RFI*, 1320-21, 1337, and 1339.

³⁸⁵ *DMN*, 13Feb19, 4.

and insisted that Villareal was attempting to deliver the three passengers to the river to escape registration for the draft.³⁸⁶ The passengers voluntarily made statements to this effect at Fort Ringgold before Army witnesses, and only later did accusations of mistreatment arise, Collins averred. Ranger counsel Moses asked for the statements to be included in the record, reminding the committee that “this case is being tried before the entire reading public of Texas.”³⁸⁷ In cross-examination, Canales asked Collins how many men he had killed. Collins answered, “None that I know of,” but acknowledged that he was out on personal recognizance bond for the slaying of Juan Morales.³⁸⁸

Closing the session was Army Scout H.E. Barnes, who testified about Florencio García, whose disappearance while under Ranger control formed the basis for Charge Five. Barnes maintained that cows’ chewing, or “mashing”—not bullets—accounted for three silver dollar-sized holes in the jacket identified as Florencio’s by his father. Also, there was “no evidence of any bullet holes in that body,” that is, the scattered skeletal remains. Referring to a popular expression of the hearings, Senator Williford asked him, “Would you conclude that the man just evaporated?”³⁸⁹ Barnes’s testimony was interrupted several times by laughter from the meeting room overflowing with Rangers and their supporters. Canales, for his part, ridiculed Barnes’s forensic interpretations, goading him with the question, “In your opinion, you think [García] either committed suicide or died a natural death—which was it, Mr. Barnes?”, of which Barnes refused to choose.³⁹⁰ The

³⁸⁶ Testimony of Royal Collins, *RFI*, 1345-46

³⁸⁷ *RFI*, 1357.

³⁸⁸ *RFI*, 1341-62. Scout Lee Dickens then testified briefly about the Florencio García case, basis for Charge Five, stating that he did not believe the remains were García’s; *RFI*, 1362-64.

³⁸⁹ Testimony of H.E. Barnes, *RFI*, 1367 and 1379.

³⁹⁰ In testimony of H.E. Barnes, *RFI*, 1380.

committee adjourned until the following morning, when it would meet to hear the final day of testimony.

Day Twelve: Thursday, February 13

During the final day of the hearings, ten Rangers, including six captains, stepped to the witness stand. Opening the day's extensive testimony, which one newspaper called "some of the most important" of the hearings, was veteran John J. Sanders, with his eight years as Ranger captain crowning his thirty-two years in "law enforcement."³⁹¹ Sanders testified at length about his actions regarding his prisoner Toribio Rodriguez, who had claimed in a dying statement, entered into the record during earlier testimony by R.B. Creager, that he had been shot by a Ranger and denied medical care.

The hearing then moved to Captain Sanders's alleged pistol-whipping of attorney Thomas Hook in the Falfurrias courthouse, the basis for Charge Twenty filed by Hook. When a committee member introduced the Falfurrias incident, Knight interrupted—in great irony, intended or not—saying, "Glad you called attention to that, Mr. Lackey; I had forgotten that."³⁹²

Sanders testified that his appearance in the courthouse was prompted by Hook's presumed involvement in the production of newspaper articles and a petition criticizing "the brutality of the Rangers and the way they were treating the Mexicans." Further, Sanders charged, Hook organized a "bunch of outlaw Mexicans" in the effort to file the petition "accusing the Rangers and officers generally of being cut-throats

³⁹¹ Testimony of J.J. Sanders, *RFI*, 1382-83. For assessment, see *DMN*, "Testimony is Ended in Ranger Inquiry, Ranger Captains Heard," 14Feb19, 1.

³⁹² In *RFI*, 1396.

and murderers.” The final insult to Sanders was Hook’s “centering the whole thing on me,” he testified.³⁹³

Sanders admitted that he had no idea what information appeared in the newspaper articles or the petition because he had not read either.³⁹⁴

Senator Williford: Well, what articles had [Hook] published in the paper?

Captain Sanders: I was informed that it [the petition?] was in all the local papers of Kingsville.

Q: Had you read any of them?

A: No, sir.

Q: You did not read a single article he had [allegedly] published?

A: No, sir.

Q: Who told you he had published them?

A: I don’t know, it was general talk.³⁹⁵

Prompted, he admitted that “I probably could not think of a [particular] man I heard say it.”³⁹⁶

Sanders hunted for the producer of “damn lies” regarding reports of Ranger atrocities and found him in the courtroom at Falfurrias. When he swung his “six-shooter” at Hook, Sanders told the committee, he did so not as a Ranger Captain but as an “individual” acting out his “duty as a citizen to protect myself, my men and my people, from outrageous talk.”³⁹⁷ On the basis of pride—for self, colleagues, and an Anglo “people”—Sanders assaulted Hook. When asked by a committee member, “Don’t you think that [response] is rather an unusual way to act for a man supposed to be enforcing the law, and not provoking it [sic]?”, Sanders replied, a “man can be worked up to doing a heap of things he ought not to do.”³⁹⁸

³⁹³ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1396-97.

³⁹⁴ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1404-05.

³⁹⁵ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1404.

³⁹⁶ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1398.

³⁹⁷ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1398 and 1397.

³⁹⁸ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1404

Sanders corroborated Hook's account of the pistol whipping. His version differed only in the number of swings, Sanders claiming he swung twice, not four times, and in the use of curses to address Hook initially, Sanders suggesting he did not use an epithet towards Hook.³⁹⁹ Sanders claimed that he apologized to Hook when Hook informed him that he was not armed.⁴⁰⁰

Senator Williford of the investigating committee seized on the implications of Sanders's apology to Hooks. "Suppose he had been armed," asked Williford, "what would have happened?"

Sanders: Well, I don't know.

Williford: There would have been a killing there between you and him?

A: I don't know about that.

Q: Don't you think there would have [been] if you struck him with your pistol, if he had been armed?

A: I have seen men struck with pistols that there was not any killings over.

Q: So have I: you were in the courthouse and you were striking a man you presumed to be armed?

A: Yes, sir.

Q: Isn't it a usual result when you strike a man with a pistol and he had a pistol, isn't it the usual result of that bloodshed?

A: I don't know.

Q: I asked if it is not the usual result in Texas when you strike a man with a pistol and he had a pistol, if the usual result is not a killing or bloodshed? Isn't that your experience as an officer in Texas?

A: I would say yes, with the majority of men.⁴⁰¹

Tidwell and Knight changed the subject back to earlier accounts of Sanders's efforts to catch draft slackers and deserters. After several minutes of the presumed patriotism stories, Sanders, asked by Senator Page whether such incidents required notification

³⁹⁹ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1397 and 1404.

⁴⁰⁰ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1397.

⁴⁰¹ Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1398-99.

of the adjutant general, replied that they did, but that he had not reported the incident with Hook.⁴⁰²

Senator Williford asked rhetorically whether a Dallas police officer who, incensed by a newspaper article “on the crime of the police force,” struck the author with his pistol should “be retained” on the force. Williford then dismissed Sanders, saying “All right, Captain, that is all—I just wanted to get your side of it.” Knight interjected that “I understand the Captain to say there was a state of terror down there and it was during the time of this Plan de San Diego and war was in progress”—then was cut off mid-sentence. Senator Page explained that “This is a question of whether a man should be allowed to take the law in his own hands and enforce it.” When Knight objected with “I hardly believe it goes that far,” he was silenced by Williford’s “I think it does.”⁴⁰³

Failing to turn the proceedings from a look at Sanders to a look at the Border War, Knight called W.W. Sterling, a prominent rancher and Special Ranger (and future adjutant general), to comment on the character of Hook, whom Sterling had known for eight years. Knight opened his exchange with Sterling by positing a “reign of terror” described by “so many” witnesses the preceding days. He then asked Sterling to describe the “general reputation” of Hook, that is, “whether he was a sensible citizen, cooperating with the American citizens . . . against banditry [sic] trouble and threatened trouble with the criminal Mexican class?” Sterling answered that “we” called him a “religious fanatic” who, from the time of his arrival from New York “long before” the “bandit trouble,” had “objected” to the way “Mexicans were treated” in South Texas. Sterling and friends also saw Hook as an “agitator, agitating Mexicans against the American people there” by establishing and defending land

⁴⁰² Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1402-03.

⁴⁰³ In Sanders Testimony, *RFI*, 1406.

titles “of the old Mexican heirs and everything.”⁴⁰⁴ Further, declared Sterling, “when people were charged with anything,” Hook did not “look to see if they were guilty, but just defend[ed] them because they were Mexicans.” When asked by Knight whether Hook a was “an honorable, desirable citizen to *white* Americans” in the area, Sterling replied, “No.”⁴⁰⁵

Regarding Ranger Edds, Sterling vowed that he “was one of the best we have had there, because he understands the Mexicans,” having been “raised with them and understanding their ways and everything.” He presumably knew more about the “many Mexicans” who were “good citizens” than the “large number” of the “criminal class.”⁴⁰⁶

Hamer, too, joined the roster of Ranger all-stars as “one of the best.” To better understand Canales’s account of the threats by Hamer, corroborated before the Committee, Senator Page asked, “If he made a threat against your life...you would naturally believe he intended to carry it out?”, to which Sterling replied, “I think he is a man of his word, yes.”⁴⁰⁷

Two witnesses following Sterling testified that Edds and Frank Hamer were reliable Rangers. Knight, continuing his assault on Canales’s character, drew out from E.H. Parker, Special Agent of the Bureau of Investigation, that a cousin of Canales’s had been apprehended on suspicion of aiding smugglers.⁴⁰⁸ Frank Rabb, former Collector of Customs for the Laredo District, described Hamer as a “good officer” and Edds as “extra good.”⁴⁰⁹ Canales did not cross-examine either witness.

⁴⁰⁴ Testimony of W.W. Sterling, *RFI*, 1409 and 1404. A week before, Harley had wired W.W. and E.A. Sterling, W.W.’s father, to appear “on Monday without fail”; Harley to W. Sterling, 5Feb19, AGGC.

⁴⁰⁵ Sterling Testimony, *RFI*, 1404, emphasis added.

⁴⁰⁶ Sterling Testimony, *RFI*, 1410.

⁴⁰⁷ Sterling Testimony, *RFI*, 1413.

⁴⁰⁸ Testimony of E.H. Parker, *RFI*, 1418.

⁴⁰⁹ Testimony of Frank Rabb, *RFI*, 1425-26.

Knight then called Ranger Capt. Charles Stevens to testify about several of the charges brought by Canales. At the time of the hearings, Stevens served in West Texas after his transfer from the Valley six months earlier.

Stevens denied that his Rangers had shot at or harassed Arturo García or Pedro Tamez in Hidalgo County, the basis for Charge Thirteen. He countered that his Rangers arrested the actual perpetrators—local officers identified by the victims—then delivered them to the county jail.⁴¹⁰ Regarding Charge Five, he defended Rangers Sittre and Saddler's interrogation of Florencio García as appropriate and did not believe the remains under discussion were those of the former prisoner.⁴¹¹ Under examination by Chairman Bledsoe, Stevens first said he could not remember, then admitted that his company had disarmed “hundreds” of “suspicious” Mexicans.

Bledsoe: Was it your interpretation of the law that upon suspicion you or your men had a right to go to a private residence, search it, and take a man's arms away from it?

Stevens: Well, it was according to what circumstances . . .

Q: No, there is not but one answer to that: I want to know your interpretation of the law. Did you or did you not have that authority?

A: Well, in one way I think I have.⁴¹²

Stevens explained the procedure in his action against Tijerina, Canales's cousin: The Rangers “had suspected” that Tijerina and others were “connected with the bandits,” so they stopped all Border Mexicans “on this side” and took their arms away.⁴¹³

Stevens also stated that his inability to work with Sheriff Vann of Cameron County arose because he, Stevens, “would not do what Judge [James B.] Wells told” him to do.⁴¹⁴ Stevens stopped delivering prisoners to Vann's county jail because they “went in the front door and out the back. We'd arrest a man out in the country and

⁴¹⁰ Testimony of Chas. F. Stevens, *RFI*, 1429.

⁴¹¹ *RFI*, 1432.

⁴¹² *RFI*, 1441.

⁴¹³ *RFI*, 1447.

⁴¹⁴ *RFI*, 1443.

he'd be back [home] before the Rangers."⁴¹⁵ Stevens's continued criticizing of Wells, especially an accusation that Wells harbored pro-German sentiments, antagonized the committee and drew sharp rebukes.⁴¹⁶ Canales did not cross-examine Captain Stevens. Following Stevens to the stand was Customs Inspector Joe Taylor, an ex-Ranger, who had led the raid on the Pizaña ranch in 1915. Knight elicited testimony from Taylor seeking to minimize the significance of the photograph showing Rangers dragging corpses that Canales had introduced earlier. A Customs officer at the time of his participation in the fight at Norias, site of the photos, Taylor dismissed them as "just a few snap-shots," nothing more.⁴¹⁷ Senator McMillin did not accept Taylor's opinion, however, and asked him whether "It is customary in that country, when a man on horseback is dragging something at the end of a rope, to walk the horse backwards?" After hearing, "No, sir," McMillin continued: "Doesn't it look like the horses were turned around and posed for that photograph?" According to the *Dallas Morning News*, "The witness did not reply and the examination proceeded along other lines."⁴¹⁸ No cross-examination took place.

Other captains testified briefly. Capt. L.L. Willis presented evidence that he had discharged Ranger W.B. Bentley before Bentley attacked a waiter in San Antonio, the basis for Charge Eight, though the date of the discharge remained contested.⁴¹⁹

Canales, with permission from the Ranger team to call a witness out of order, introduced veteran South Texan John J. Kleiber as a witness. Kleiber, who for twenty-five years had served as District Attorney for the 28th Judicial District, which included Cameron, Willacy, Kleberg, and Nueces Counties, described criminal justice South Texas-style. He stated that juries there "would average up" with juries

⁴¹⁵ *DMN*, 14Feb19, 4; *RFI*, 1447.

⁴¹⁶ *RFI*, 1444.

⁴¹⁷ *RFI*, 1452.

⁴¹⁸ *DMN*, 2Feb19, 4; *RFI*, 1452.

⁴¹⁹ Testimony of Captain L.L. Willis, *RFI*, 1453-59.

anywhere in Texas in conviction rates. He insisted that a “modicum of thieving” always had and always would exist in his area because of the “refuge” that Mexico represented to outlaws.⁴²⁰ Under questioning by Canales, Kleiber stated that since the Border War days, “nine-tenths” of the thefts had come at the expense of Tejanos, even while the Rangers roamed the area, violating constitutional protections of citizens.⁴²¹ Under re-direct examination, Kleiber confirmed that the Canales--or “Mexican Scouts”--had provided services of “considerable” value along the border, according to the U.S. military commander.⁴²² Moses, in an effort to justify Captain Stevens’s and others Rangers’ disarming of Tejanos, asked whether there wasn’t a federal order to prohibit the sales or possession of weapons or ammunition to “Mexicans.” Kleiber replied that he understood the orders to apply to all citizens.⁴²³

Senator Page, who frequently challenged witnesses in ways that promoted Canales’s views, then undertook a lengthy questioning of Kleiber regarding Toribio Rodriguez. Testimony revealed that Kleiber was unaware of the dying confession implicating Captain Sanders, nor had he questioned witnesses or done much of anything besides listen to the evidence of the grand jury looking into the matter. As district attorney, Kleiber had not conducted an “impartial” investigation and had not provided to the grand jury any prosecutorial findings whatsoever.⁴²⁴ Who killed Rodriguez remained a mystery before the committee.

The defense of the Rangers resumed with testimony from a parade of Rangers. Knight called to the stand rancher and former Special Rangers “Captain” E.A. Sterling, father of W.W., who had testified earlier. Sterling boasted that he travelled to Austin in 1915 to encourage his “friend” then-Gov. Ferguson to keep Capt. Henry

⁴²⁰ Testimony of John I. Kleiber, *RFI*, 1487 and 1489.

⁴²¹ Testimony of John I. Kleiber, *RFI*, 1490 and 1486-87.

⁴²² Testimony of John I. Kleiber, *RFI*, 1490-91. He cites Colonel Bloxom, stationed in Brownsville.

⁴²³ Testimony of John I. Kleiber, *RFI*, 1494.

⁴²⁴ Testimony of John I. Kleiber, *RFI*, 1496-1501.

Ransom in South Texas because of the “good work he was doing.”⁴²⁵ According to Sterling, Ferguson said he had sent Captain Ransom to clean up “that nest down there” or he would “put a man down there that would.”⁴²⁶ Ferguson was prepared for Ransom “to kill every damned man connected with” the trouble, testified Sterling. Ferguson promised to end the violence using any means at hand and to pardon Ransom and others if necessary.⁴²⁷ Under cross-examination, Sterling also confirmed that Frank Hamer had a reputation for carrying out his word, even though he was riddled with 26 bullet fragments for the “bandits and thieves and desperadoes” he had encountered.⁴²⁸ When prodded by Senator Page, Sterling replied that “I should hate to have [the threat] made against me.”⁴²⁹

At Knight's request, Capt. R.W. Aldrich, who had served as the Inspector of the State Draft Boards, presented statistics concerning deserters and slackers from the border counties, emphasizing Canales's home district.⁴³⁰ The document was assembled during breaks while he was sworn in, because, he claimed, the Ranger team “put me right on the stand” while he was in the capitol “on other business.”⁴³¹

Capt. Will Wright stated that he, unlike Captain Stevens, did not disarm residents of the Valley. Wright confirmed that he had known Edds since Edds was a child, and had employed him for years. He told of the efforts by Adjutant General Harley to encourage his company “to protect the Mexican people as well as the white people” and to keep his men from drinking.⁴³² While admitting that Border Mexicans had hid under beds when his company first rode into towns in its district, Wright

⁴²⁵ Testimony of Capt. [sic] E.A. Sterling, *RFI*, 1502. The official transcript listed E.A. as “Captain,” though he held no such position at the time, and had never been a regular Ranger captain.

⁴²⁶ Testimony of Capt. [sic] E.A. Sterling, *RFI*, 1502-03.

⁴²⁷ Testimony of Capt. [sic] E.A. Sterling, *RFI*, 1502-04.

⁴²⁸ Testimony of Capt. [sic] E.A. Sterling, *RFI*, 1506 and 1504.

⁴²⁹ Testimony of Capt. [sic] E.A. Sterling, *RFI*, 1506.

⁴³⁰ Testimony of Capt. R.W. Aldrich, *RFI*, 1507-16.

⁴³¹ Testimony of Capt. R.W. Aldrich, *RFI*, 1516.

⁴³² Testimony of Capt. W.W. Wright, *RFI*, 1517-18 and 1526.

denied telling Canales that they did so because Rangers customarily had shot at them.⁴³³

The last major defense witnesses in the Ranger Investigation were ex-Ranger George Saddler and Ranger John Sittre, two of the three men mentioned in Canales's Charge Five that alleged their murder of prisoner Florencio García near Brownsville. Saddler recounted that he and Ranger A.P. Lock arrested García on suspicion of cattle theft from a Brownsville-area ranch where he served as foreman, though Saddler admitted they had insufficient evidence to "hold" him.⁴³⁴ Since the two men spoke no Spanish, they drove to Port Isabel, some thirty miles distant, to collect Ranger Sittre, who spoke enough Spanish to conduct an interrogation, they believed, and placed García in the county jail there overnight. They soon removed him from the county jail, deciding that they could "loosen his lips" during a ride into the countryside. The three Rangers and three soldiers departed Point Isabel on the Harlingen road west, all mounted. After the soldiers veered south towards Brownsville, the Rangers forced García to walk. After a few minutes of questioning, Sadler claimed they left him on foot to get back to Brownsville, and rode off.⁴³⁵

Senator Page, incredulous of the account, asked if anyone in Brownsville—just 4 ½ miles from where Sitter had apprehended García—spoke Spanish. Sitter acknowledged, "I suppose there is." Sitter "just thought it" necessary to remove him from the area to be able to do what he intended with him. Pursuing the suspicious explanation, Page asked why he didn't question him in the jail overnight, with interpreters, including Sitter, present. Sitter responded that "We wanted to talk to him by ourselves." Page, with growing disbelief, asked, "You had him in your charge

⁴³³ Testimony of Capt. W.W. Wright, *RFI*, 1523.

⁴³⁴ Testimony of George Saddler, *RFI*, 1531-36.

⁴³⁵ Testimony of George Saddler, *RFI*, 1535-41. The final witness was Frank B. Clark of Duval County who questioned the veracity of earlier witness Ventura Sanchez; See Testimony of Frank B. Clark, *RFI*, 1557-59.

right there in Point Isabel, why didn't you take him to one side, with such men as you wanted to, and talked to him, why did you take him out in the country five miles?" Sitter had no answer.⁴³⁶

Next up to testify about García was John Sittre, the presumed translator in García's ordeal. He explained to the committee that the Rangers were conducting a *de facto* hearing: "If he said he did anything, we would take him to jail and if he didn't, we would turn him loose." Sittre learned that García had not been informed of any charge against him, but little else. He stated that he could have interrogated Garcia in the Point Isabel jail. García, testified Sittre, "didn't say what we wanted him to say," namely, that he had stolen the missing livestock. Sittre stated that "when we left him," García "told us he would go back and try" to get the names of the guilty parties. Neither man recalled seeing García again.⁴³⁷

The hearings then focused on whether or not to call Ranger Inspector Hanson and Adjutant General Harley to testify. Only days before, the Committee had considered whether to hold their testimony, along with that of Canales, in the House chamber, the better to provide for a larger general audience as well as to allow House members to be present. In an about-face, Knight now claimed that it would be "unnecessary" for Hanson and Harley to take the stand because "nothing had been shown against them of any serious moment." To save time by eliminating needless testimony, Knight suggested, he was trying to save the Committee the "burden" of prolonged testimony—unless Canales or the Committee wanted to call them.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Testimony of George Saddler, *RFI*, 1538-39.

⁴³⁷ Testimony of John Sittre, 1541-57, *passim* and *DMN*, 14Feb19, 4. According to service records, Sittre had served as a Ranger in Stevens's Co. G since 18Dec17. At thirty-seven, eight years Sittre's elder, George Saddler had joined Stevens's outfit when it formed, too. By the time he testified, however, George had resigned the force, writing Stevens that, as a newly married man, "I cannot live" on the \$50 monthly salary; see Saddler to Stevens, 7Jan19, in AGSR. Perhaps George also was responding to the "accidental" death in October 1918 of brother L.T., who, along with brothers Tom, John, and William, had also joined Co. G in 1918; see *Biennial Report for 1918*.

⁴³⁸ *RFI*, 1561.

Chairman Bledsoe indicated he didn't "care" to ask them to the stand, and turned to Canales. He, too, didn't "care" to question them, except through cross-examination, because he believed he had submitted enough evidence "upon which to make a record" of favoritism and the lack of oversight by the two Ranger leaders. Canales, knowing that seating a hostile witness would not further his cases, concluded, "I am willing to stand against Captain Hanson, and for that reason I don't care to put him on the stand." Speaking for the Committee, Senator Page stated there was no "desire" for Hanson or Harley to testify.⁴³⁹

The Cunningham-Veale Fiasco Enters the Record

Before settling final matters, Chairman Bledsoe, protesting that he was doing so only because Canales, among others, had already introduced the Cunningham-Veale affair into the record, reluctantly asked for an "explanation" of the "unfortunate occurrence" from Harley, Moses, or Knight.⁴⁴⁰ Moses, the most eloquent of the Ranger defense team, attempted to provide a smooth recapitulation of the incident based on reading newspaper accounts and "talking with people on the street," who remained unidentified.⁴⁴¹ He mentioned that the men "were more or less under the influence of intoxicating liquor," to which Bledsoe retorted, "Just use a common English term, they got pretty well drunk." Moses acknowledged the possibility but, ever the lawyer, allowed that "I don't know to what extent they were drunk."⁴⁴² The only factual addition to the common story was that Cunningham and Veale had argued over Veale's brother, not about the matching of dollars.

Harley interjected that he had discharged Mayberry and Johnston after he had "had time to verify the press statements." When asked for a copy of an investigation

⁴³⁹ *RFI*, 1566.

⁴⁴⁰ In *RFI*, 1562.

⁴⁴¹ *RFI*, 1562-63.

⁴⁴² *RFI*, 1562.

into the matter, Harley replied he had had not time to prepare one, but that he had been “interviewing witnesses,” presumably only Mayberry and Johnston.⁴⁴³ Having verified the newspaper accounts, Harley discharged the two men “either yesterday of the day before,” that is, Tuesday or Wednesday, yet the official discharge order dated from February 13, the day he made the statement to the committee.⁴⁴⁴

Canales wanted to share additional findings, as well. According to his own “reliable source,” who was “connected with” a Grand Jury investigating the killing of Veale, Mayberry testified to the Grand Jury about a scene that was not simply a “drunken brawl,” but actually lived up to Veale’s notion of a party. The Rangers had picked up two women during their circumnavigation of South Austin and had commenced to enjoy a game of poker, as well. The women, who had already appeared before the Grand Jury, were “available” to speak to the investigating committee also. No one on the committee or the defense team chose to subpoena the two women or Mayberry to hear about a party of drinking, gambling, womanizing Rangers. Though he offered Canales the chance to pursue the matter before the committee, which Canales declined, Bledsoe, relieved, declared, “As far as I am concerned, we will not carry this investigation further” and “we will leave it to the courts.”⁴⁴⁵ Canales, no doubt assuming that the case was a clear example of the need for purification of the Ranger Force that was the object of his HB 5, chose to keep the more salacious details from the public. He revealed an unfounded belief that the Veale-Cunningham fiasco was self-evident--conclusive proof of gun men of the old type still employed by the

⁴⁴³ *RFI*, 1563.

⁴⁴⁴ See Special Order No. 13, 13Feb19, signed by Governor Hobby; AGGC. Harley may have considered an order he gave earlier to represent the legal discharge of the two men; with all the publicity surrounding the incident, Harley and Hobby would have wanted to address the matter publicly as soon as possible. Possibly, Harley waited to dismiss the two men until the committee made known its view. Harley did not mention the episode or the dismissal in his *Biennial Report; Biennial Report for the Year Ending 31Dec20*.

⁴⁴⁵ *RFI*, 1564-65.

Harley regime who brazenly flouted the authority of the Hearings to drink and carouse—and undeniable grounds for a favorable verdict for reform. Together with his mistaken stance that Hanson's perfidy had been shown beyond doubt, he showed both an exalted sense of his prosecutorial performance and wasted opportunities to press his advantages.

Canales Recalled to the Stand

The final effort by the Ranger defense team sought to discredit Canales's stated motives of reforming the Ranger Force. Knight had declared that "it is the judgment of this defense" team that Canales wanted to "destroy absolutely the efficiency of this force, even to the extent of its abolition."⁴⁴⁶ Knight finally produced a copy of a letter from Canales to Cameron County Sheriff W.T. Vann dated January 17, 1919—two weeks before the beginning of the hearings—and emphasized that it appeared on House of Representatives letterhead. Knight concluded that the letter represented Canales's ulterior motive in filing House Bill 5, and thus all his testimony and arguments had "taxed to the limit" the "patience and forbearance" of the committee and the adjutant general's office. Knight particularly objected to the opening sentence, which read, in part, that "I thank you for . . . the interest that you are taking in the matter of abolishing the Ranger Force, especially when we have had such a sad experience with them in the past three years." Canales asked Vann to intercede with the local Grand Juries to indict Saddler in the Florencio García case and in others. Noting that his original bill called for "regulating" the Rangers by providing for their removal at the request of county officials, Canales wanted either to

⁴⁴⁶ *RFI*, 1248. This accusation occurred one day before he produced the letter in question.

place the Rangers under “civil authorities” or “to abolish the Ranger Force entirely as a menace to our democratic idea of self-government.”⁴⁴⁷

Canales immediately tried to place the letter in context of his correspondence with Vann and the political maneuverings surrounding his reform bill. He produced a copy of a letter from Vann to Sheriff Hollingsworth sent him by Vann, to which his own letter had responded. In the letter, Vann explains that he was writing to Hollingsworth, as President of the Sheriff's Association, to call for “the Sheriffs of Texas” to support “abolishing the appropriation” for the Ranger Force during the legislative session. As a sheriff previously in North Texas—“God's country,” he terms it—he knows that Rangers are not necessary there, and “the time has come when we do not need them on the Border,” either. Since becoming sheriff in South Texas, he has seen the Rangers “make more trouble than peace” and do it at state expense. “[I] have come to the conclusion, after due considerations,” Vann writes, “that we do not need the Rangers any more.”⁴⁴⁸

Canales then interpreted his own message to Vann as an attempt to quash the “fool” idea of abolishing the Rangers. Citing Vann's “very determined character,” Canales cast himself as a compromiser between a San Benito faction that wanted Rangers “even though they were the worst kind” and another faction, led by Vann, that wanted to abolish the Rangers even when they “were angels.” “I was between the factions,” explained Canales: “I know that we need Rangers, but we don't need the kind of Rangers we have had [recently] and the class of Rangers we mostly are getting now.” As he had since arriving in Austin in early January, Canales insisted that “I want to purify the Rangers” so “I took the middle course of introducing that bill for the purpose of cleaning up the Ranger Force.” He had written Vann to notify him of

⁴⁴⁷ In *RFI*, 1560-61 and also 578/13, AGGC. The identity of the provider of the letter to the Adjutant General's office remains a mystery.

⁴⁴⁸ In *RFI*, 1568.

the local overseer provision: He included it in the original bill “for the purpose of catching Captain Vann and getting his support.”⁴⁴⁹

Canales argued that his efforts in achieving a compromise succeeded, as established by Vanns' reply on January 27. “Canales,” wrote Vann, “I want to withdraw my application to abolish the Ranger service and join hands with you, teeth and toenails on securing an appropriation for the payment of Rangers which will justify good men becoming Rangers, also [of placing] every mother's son of them under bond.” The following day, Vann telegraphed Canales, “Am with you for better wages, full investigation, and bond. Think your bill a good one.” Canales confidently told the committee, “Now, that speaks for my work and in explanation of my letter.” Knight had a final question: “[Y]ou were intending again to be as wise as the serpent and as harmless as the dove?”, a reference to Canales's earlier depiction of his interaction with Inspector Hanson. Canales answered, he was.⁴⁵⁰

The transcript closes with the inclusion of several documents offered by Knight that sought to bolster alibis and other exculpatory evidence regarding various charges. More significantly, the record included, at Canales's insistence, several sworn statements regarding the massacre at Porvenir, the basis for Charge Eleven. The witnesses provided chilling accounts of the slaughter of fifteen residents at the hands of Rangers, soldiers, and cowboys.

The final words in the transcript were the written statement of survivor Juan Mendez regarding the men “assassinated” and the women and children orphaned in Porvenir:

“For himself, and for the balance of the people, survivors of victims of Porvenir, Texas.

This is a simple copy for Mr. W.M. Hanson,

⁴⁴⁹ Canales, *RFI*, 1569-70.

⁴⁵⁰ *RFI*, 1571-72.

Captain of the State Rangers.”⁴⁵¹

With the filings of the documents pertaining to the charges and countercharges, the hearings closed at 6 P.M., Thursday, February 13.

Canales had conducted the “prosecution” of the Rangers by himself. He occasionally resorted to innuendo and *ad hominem* arguments to discredit witnesses and to defend himself. He did not call available witnesses to corroborate some charges, notably hostile witnesses Hamer and Hanson, but may have presumed their testimony would further burden the hearings with extended monologues on the patriotic and effective tactics of the Rangers. In the end, he may have been a bit overconfident in believing that the committee would render a finding on the basis of evidence and not politics and tradition.

The Ranger defense team, consisting of first Harley, then Moses and Knight, consistently attacked Canales as a delusional, hypocritical shill for “larger interests” and as an unpatriotic Mexican, with all the negative connotations the term held at the time. By harping on the slacker issues and Prohibition, the Rangers’ counselors shamelessly pounced on popular issues to attack Canales, whose religious and moral standards exceeded those of most in the Capitol. The lawyers wanted to turn the committee’s decision into a referendum on Governor Hobby, patriotism, and the continuation of the Ranger Force itself. Their chances of escaping censure depended on the extent they to which they succeeded in shifting the investigation from Ranger misdeeds, atrocities, and the need for reform to the trustworthiness of Canales and the retention of a legendary Texas tradition.

⁴⁵¹ *RFI*, 1605.