



**Last spring, University Police detectives working undercover caught an auto theft suspect in a stakeout of one of the university's parking lots. Information from this case led to the breakup of an auto theft ring working out of Houston. One of University Police Director Bob Wiatt's goals on arriving at A&M was to upgrade the detective division so that it would be able to handle the kind of specialized police techniques required for operations such as undercover work and stakeouts.**

"Hey, sorry about that but you were illegal," Wiatt says. "So there's an understanding that I'm very, very firm. They are aware that when I say something, I do not bluff.

"I've heard that I have been called some horrible names by others, but when they meet me, I think anybody, even though they disagree with me, will walk away with a grudging respect (and know) that I am being fair.

"We've got a volatile job where you're never going to please everybody. As I'm fond of saying, 'Enforcement is not an endearing act.'"

In a way, Wiatt is a Rodney Dangerfield who instead of pulling on his tie and saying, "I don't get no respect," pulls on your tie and says, "I will have your respect."

"I could back off," Wiatt says, "and put my feet up on this desk and this would be a super thing because I've got some super people now.

"But I insist on getting right in the middle of it. I am the light-

ning rod and I'll go before any group. I've appeared before the august Faculty Senate and deans. My whole predication is that, 'You, in your particular field may be and obviously are an expert — an expert in chemistry — a Nobel laureate — fine, I accept that. On the other hand, I am an expert in my field and that's law enforcement. There's nobody on this campus who knows more about law enforcement than me.'"

For all of Wiatt's toughness, he does temper enforcement with a healthy attitude toward that staple of college life — the prank — but it better fit *his* idea of a prank.

"First of all," Wiatt says, "We don't get involved unless we get a call or happen upon something. We happen upon some things that are called pranks. For example, you have arms on some of these parking lot gates that are broken. We've had many of them. We have officers on stakeout who see kids going up and standing around and

then just breaking one off. It's considerable expense to repair and when we catch them they say 'But it was just a prank!'

"Well, we have a little difficulty, at that point, saying that equates with our definition of a prank. It's criminal mischief and they're usually filed upon.

"At the other extreme is guys horsing around. We understand that and we are very liberal in saying, 'Hey guys, you can't do this. Somebody could get into trouble.' They're judgement decisions based on the specific instance."

Wiatt says he's never shocked by what people will do — good or bad. He does stay amused with some of the lame excuses people have for their violations of campus rules and the attitude that persists among some frequenters to the campus that A&M is a place where some rules just don't apply.

"I'm appalled," Wiatt says, "at people who would never think of going over to Skaggs or Post Oak Mall, whipping into a

handicapped spot, jumping out and running a hundred yard dash. And yet they'll do it here at A&M on the assumption that, 'You don't enforce handicapped parking beyond 4:00 in the afternoon, do you?'

"What! Are you crazy? Why do you think that?'

"Well, it's the campus.'

"I am fond of saying that Texas A&M is part of the planet Earth and the laws of the universe, the state of Texas and Brazos County will apply here just as they do everywhere else. Consider it no different."

On the wall behind Wiatt's desk is a framed picture of him taken for a newspaper article that depicts him with two fingers up to his mouth. The original caption has been cut off and in its place somebody has written, "Ex-FBI man eats parking offenders for lunch."

Wiatt still doesn't know who sent it to him. Maybe it was Frank. Maybe it was Jackie.

Wiatt grins.