

# Siller receives FBI award, reflects on progress

Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice

While Americans become more and more enamored with the XFiles-brand of FBI work seen Sunday nights on Fox — and in reruns on other channels — Bobby Siller warns not to take too much stock in the adventures of agents Mulder and Scully.

"Those cases don't mirror reality," said Siller, special agent in charge at the Las Vegas FBI. "They depict some things accurately, like the office and work spaces, but those cases miss the mark."

Siller, appointed head of Nevada's FBI division four years ago, didn't win one of nine Presidential Rank awards — his for being a Meritorious Executive — by chasing down netherworld criminals or hauling space creatures off to some nebulous jail.

He earned the honor for



Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

**Bobby Siller receives congratulations from a fellow FBI agent for his appointment to the Nevada Gaming Board.**

his effective management skills. He's thrilled about the award, but don't expect him to launch an assault on leading the national FBI anytime soon. In fact, Siller plans to retire on December 31 as he's been appointed to the Nevada Gaming Board.

Until then, Siller will resume his normal schedule.

On a typical day, he gets morning briefs on civil rights, domestic and international terrorism, foreign counter-intelligence, organized crime, violent crime and white collar crime cases, handles budget

issues and talks to the Carson City, Elko and Reno bureaus.

After rounding the bases with Nevada offices, he phones FBI headquarters in Washington D.C. for more talks. He spends the remainder of his day in meetings, involved in community activities and with administrative duties.

One of his goals is to dispel the myths about the FBI.

"Our primary responsibility is to protect the community," he said, adding that law enforcement must always maintain rapport with people. "It's not enough to be African-American or Asian or Hispanic or whatever. You have to have relationships with people."

Part of ensuring a healthy relationship between citizens and law enforcement involves dispelling media-hyped glamorization.

"The climax of movies or TV shows are the dramatic

arrest with the shoot-out between the criminal and us," he said.

Arresting someone is the last step in a lengthy investigative process, Siller said. A tremendous amount of planning goes into making an arrest such as when, where and how to make the situation as safe as possible for all parties.

"The art of this (arresting people) is to avoid the conflict," he said.

Training is essential in defusing crises big and small. Local FBI trains SWAT teams and weapons of mass destruction units at what is known as Area 51.

"They don't let me know what's going on there," Siller said, describing the desert area behind Nellis Air Force Base as half the size of New York. "It's military."

Siller entered law enforcement in 1973 after two black FBI agents sparked his

interest.

"I grew up during the Civil Rights era .... I was very suspect of the police and the intelligence community."

He credits Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with changing his opinion of law enforcement. "To make change, you've got to be part of change," Siller said.

"We're not so much denied anymore. Now, we have to go after things. We've got to make change from within."

To that end, Siller said the FBI heavily recruits traditionally under-represented ethnic groups. And though he's aware the FBI has a negative history concerning certain ethnic groups, he's never experienced discrimination.

The FBI has "grown up," he said. "You can't even count the number of us in important positions and in the ranks."

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