

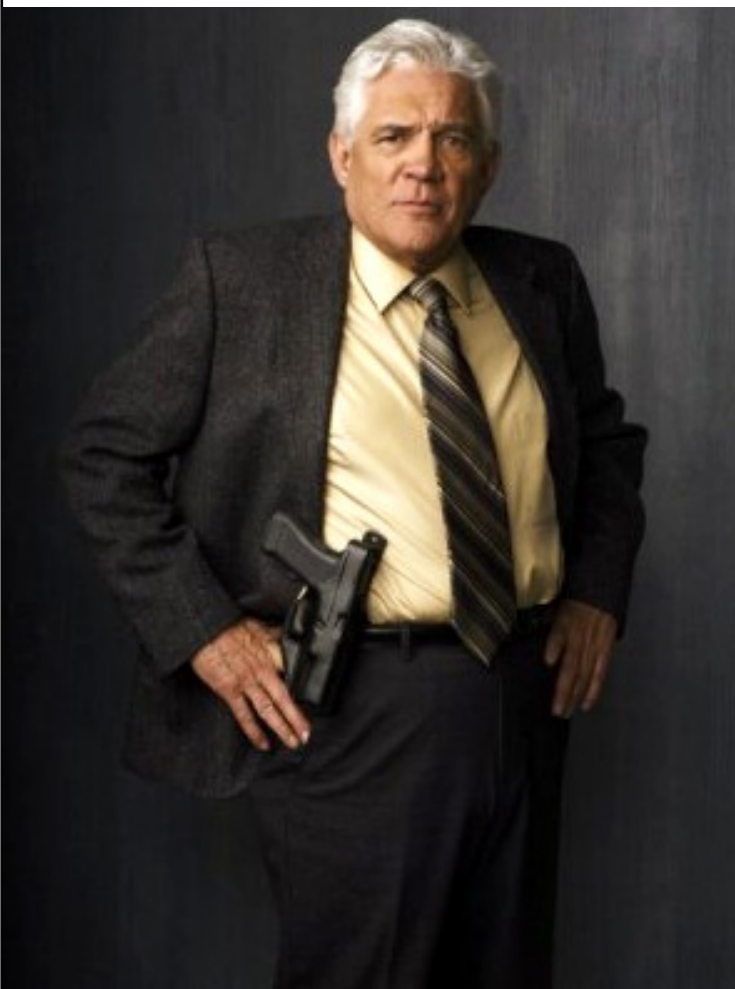
Interview: After Three Decades of Acting, G.W. Bailey Finds Home in Kyra Sedgwick's 'The Closer' on TNT

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on July 14, 2008 - 9:49pm

- [Adam Fendelman](#) [2]
- [Doublecrossed](#) [3]
- [G.W. Bailey](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Interview](#) [6]
- [J.K. Simmons](#) [7]
- [James Duff](#) [8]
- [Jennifer's Body](#) [9]
- [Juno](#) [10]
- [Kyra Sedgwick](#) [11]
- [M.A.S.H.](#) [12]
- [Michael Paul Chan](#) [13]
- [Police Academy](#) [14]
- [Raymond Cruz](#) [15]
- [Short Circuit](#) [16]
- [Television](#) [17]
- [The Closer](#) [18]
- [TNT](#) [19]

CHICAGO – After being born and bred in Texas, G.W. Bailey scoffs at the notion of “humidity” in Chicago.

Bailey – who has a renowned career in film, TV and the stage that spans three decades – has been seen in seminal roles in “M.A.S.H.,” “Police Academy,” “Short Circuit,” “Laverne & Shirley,” “St. Elsewhere,” “The Jeff Foxworthy Show,” “Murder, She Wrote,” “Mannequin,” “Happy Days,” “CHiPs,” “Newhart,” “Benson” and many more.



G.W. Bailey in “The Closer” on TNT.
Photo credit: TNT

He recently spoke with HollywoodChicago.com about his “three families”. Bailey was in Chicago on July 9, 2008 for a [VIP party](#) [20] where the first episode of season four for acclaimed TV show “The Closer,” which stars Golden Globe winner Kyra Sedgwick, was broadcast early to Chicagoans. The inaugural episode of the new season of “The Closer” aired tonight.

Following the party, Bailey described in our interview how his personal family comes first, his non-profit work for children with cancer comes second and his “The Closer” family rounds out the trio. The show is Bailey’s longest-running TV appearance. He is currently credited with 43 episodes as Det. Lt. Provenza.

In “The Closer,” Sedgwick plays a deputy police chief who runs the Priority Homicide Division of the Los Angeles Police Department with an “unorthodox style”. The series says: “Her ability to read people and obtain confessions helps her and her team solve the city’s toughest, most sensitive cases.”

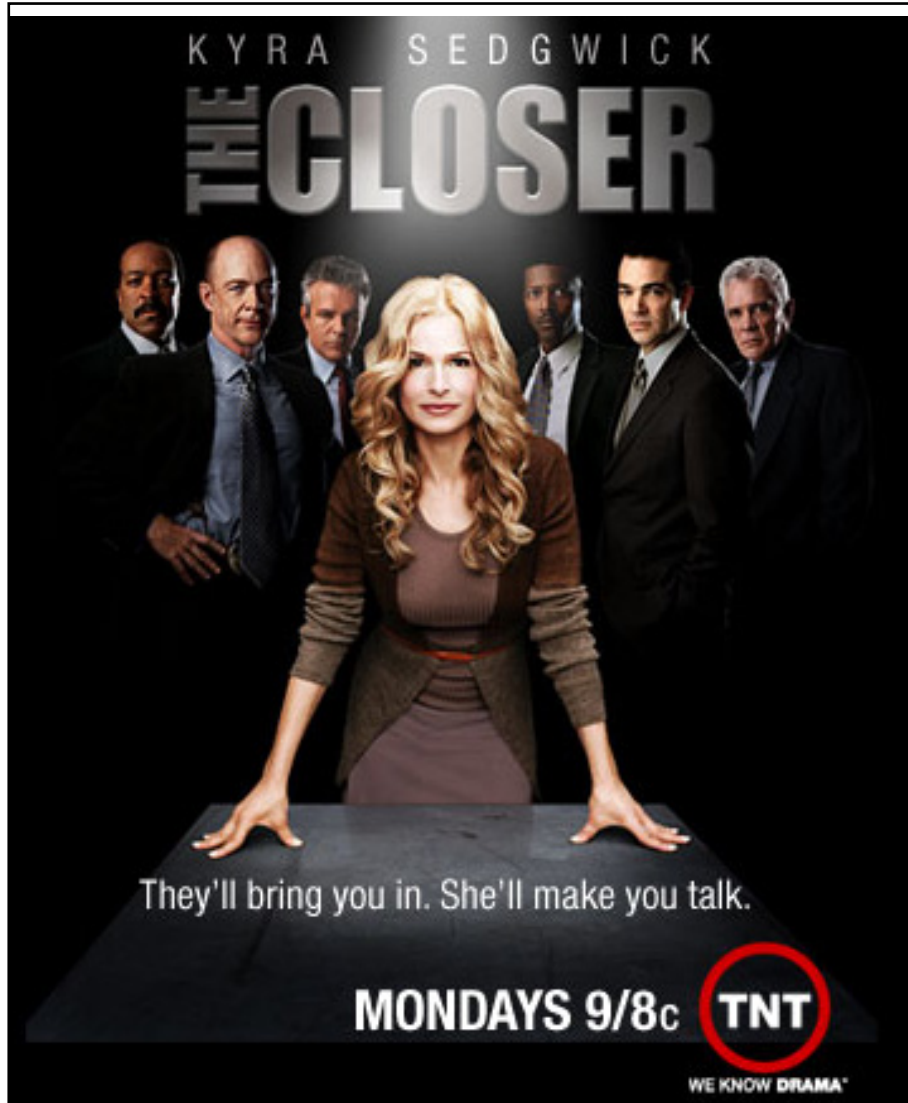
"The Closer" is currently in its fourth season. Bailey describes what we will see in the fourth season in contrast to the third.

"James Duff (the creator and runner of the writing room) likes to have a theme or arc of some concept. It's not always that obvious. When the writers are working on a script or scene, it's not that they have to that word in mind. Last season was 'family,' but that takes a lot of guises. Kyra's effort to save my hide a couple times was ultimately to make sure the family stayed together. The family happened to be our squad.

"This season, the overall word they're working with is 'power'. Again, that takes on many guises. For the opening episode [of season four], there's a villain who has returned and exercises a power over her that's very interesting. There's a lot of tension."

Bailey also describes his theory of why "The Closer" – and shows like it today – are addictive and made for TV.

"It's ultimately about writing, but people love mysteries. There's an interesting murder or secret that she's after. People like to follow that trail. It's also because it's character driven. These people come off as real people. They're very diverse racially in their experiences and in their ages. The writers go to great lengths to give us people and not just cop No. 6 or cop No. 3.



The poster for "The Closer" on TNT.
Image credit: TNT

"I could mention some very famous shows where you can interchange one cast from another and you wouldn't know the difference. Our folks are very specific and interesting people.

"There's the brilliance and brain of Det. Lt. Mike Tau (Michael Paul Chan), the violence of Det. Julio Sanchez (Raymond Cruz) and the curmudgeon of Det. Lt. Provenza (Bailey) who has seen it and done it all."

But even though Bailey has seemingly done it all over an illustrious career in acting, he's still humbled by one person in particular on "The Closer": J.K. Simmons ("Juno," "Burn After Reading," "Jennifer's Body," "Rendition," "Postal," "Spider-Man 3," "Thank You For Smoking," "Law & Order," "Spider-Man 2," "Oz," "Spider-Man").

"With J.K., your confidence level goes up. He's like playing tennis with somebody. If you want to get better at tennis, you play with better tennis players.

"[Working with] J.K. is like playing with a better tennis player. You really have to be prepared and focused because he is. He doesn't fumble through his lines. He has done his work. When he walks on that stage, he's ready to go. Some of the best work I've done on 'The Closer' in 3.5 years I did the other day because I was in a scene with him. There's no question about it."

While Bailey currently calls "The Closer" home, though, he still keeps the stage close to his heart. He doesn't often find time for it, though, and when he does he is reminded of its double-edged sword.

"I have the attention span of about a 9-year-old. I love doing different things. I love the diversity. When it has been a long time since I've been on the stage, I miss it *desperately*. If I find the time to do it, then after one week I think: 'What in the hell did I miss about this? This is so hard and the money is so little.' But I still miss it. There's really nothing like it."

Bailey describes the benefits afforded by TV work and why Sedgwick is the star of this show.

"I enjoy working for the camera. I love TV because it's fast. You tell your story and you're out. But I could never do what Kyra does. I've never, ever seen a human being do what she does on this show – just the sheer volume of work every day and on every scene. It ain't called 'The Provenza Show'. It's called 'The Closer' and she's the closer."



J.K. Simmons (left), Kyra Sedgwick (second from left) and G.W. Bailey (front) in "The Closer" on TNT.
Image credit: TNT

"There's the volume of lines and not only learning them but being prepared with what to do with them."

Bailey added: "It's about having the confidence to arrive at 5:30 a.m. and still bring energy and focus and excitement and truth in a scene at 7 p.m. That's enormous. If I show up at 5:30 a.m., I'm about done by lunch. But I love my guy. I get to say a few funny lines and then go to my trailer. I get to get in and get out."

Beyond Bailey's professional life, his non-profit work stands on its own with incomparable importance.

"I've been doing work with kids for cancer for 23 years. It's certainly the important part of my life – not that entertaining people isn't important. It is. I'm very proud of my profession. I always have have been. It's just important in a different way.

"I have three areas of my life. The most important is my family, then there's The Sunshine Kids family for kids with cancer and then there's my professional family." Bailey concluded about 'The Closer' by jesting: "You know, we call Kyra 'mama' as a nickname. I like having a good-looking, younger mama."

Prior to his work with "The Closer," Bailey names two particular projects as those standing the test of time with the most professional pride.

"One of the major products in TV used to be TV movies and the mini-series programs. For all practical purposes, though, those are dead now. They just don't exist. But when they were flourishing, I was lucky enough to get to do a bunch of them. Out of those, I did one called "Doublecrossed" for HBO with Dennis Hopper. I'm certainly proud of that entire film.

"In terms of being part of creating a recurring character, though, that would be Army Sgt. Luther Rizzo in 'M.A.S.H.'. I love that guy. I wasn't a regular, but even as a recurring character, I loved being in arguably the greatest show in the history of television."

"The Closer," which stars Kyra Sedgwick, J.K. Simmons, G.W. Bailey, Corey Reynolds, Robert Gossett, Jon Tenney, Anthony John Denison, Phillip P. Keene, Michael Paul Chan, Raymond Cruz and Gina Ravera, aired episode one of its fourth season on July 14, 2008 on TNT.

["The Closer" \[21\]](#) airs on Mondays at 8 p.m. CST.



[22]

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