

TAPE # BL-003, 1 of 3
BRIAN LYONS
08.26.02
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

03.00.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: So uh, let's start at the beginning. Where, where were you born?

03.00.34 BRIAN LYONS: Yonkers, New York.

JW: What kind of, where were you born, what kind of household did you live in?

03.00.39 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, I lived in uh, my, my parents are from uh, from Ireland, immigrants from Ireland. I was (~JW~)

JW: First generation?

03.00.46 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, first generation. I was born, he was a carpenter in New York City and my mother was a housewife. Uh, there's four boys in the family. We grew up in a five story walk up in an Irish neighborhood in Yonkers. And uh, you know, we all went to, to Catholic school from uh, up to 8th grade.

03.01.04 You know, and (CLEAR S THROAT) then we went to uh, I went to the local high school, like a technical school. And uh, I mean, you want me just to tell you a little bit (~JW~)

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: Let's stay in the early part of your life. For example. Uh, you know, I grew up in Bethesda, Maryland. I can remember riding my Big Wheel down the street with three of my friends and thought we were bad ass.

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

03.01.31 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, we used to play, I just explained this to Patricia and Elizabeth the other night, we used to play Ring A Levio around the block. There was like maybe 15 buildings that all looked the same on Lawrence Street. And everyone of them had like 6, 7 (?) Irish families all with 4 boys and 3 girls. Big amount of kids. Could be, I don't know, ten, twenty, thirty, forty kids on the corner at one time. You know, so uh, and then you had generations.

03.01.59 You had my older brother and his friends, and then me and my friends, and then my other younger brother and his friends, and then my youngest brother, Michael, and his friends. So there was a lot of you know, you wanted to hang out with the other bigger boys and the bigger boys would beat up the younger boys, and you know, that kind of stuff, you know, so. Typical stick ball you know, city neighborhood. Everyone works in the local deli, you know, stocking shelves and stealing beers out the back door (LAUGHS).

03.02.29 All right.

JW: I uh, I am the youngest of 5 boys. Catholic family as well, so we can, I can relate. (?) we had, we grew up in the kind of neighborhood that was sort of like that, too. There weren't as many probably kids, but there was kind of like a generational (break?) you talked about Michael and his friends and you and your friends (?) that kind of stratification. (?)

03.02.56 BRIAN LYONS: I don't know if it's so true nowadays, it is, but I don't think the neighborhoods are as, as close knit as that, you know, now them, in the city, you know I mean, from what I know. Obviously this, the neighborhood we grew up is no longer like that. We live in rural areas so there's no real neighborhoods per se as like in the city, city neighborhoods.

JW: And what about your mom and dad? First generation meaning that they came from what town?

03.03.22 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, one came from Leetrim uh, Clune in, in Southern Ireland, and then my mother is from County Tyrone in Northern Ireland. They're passed away now, but they uh, you know, they came over like in '57, and my brother was born, or '56, my oldest brother was born in '57, I was born in '60. Sean was born in '63 and Michael was born in '69.

JW: And uh, interesting. Uh, if you were to, because I can do this in, for myself, let me put it this way, I would describe myself and my family. I'd say the youngest, yeah, I got beat up a lot, but I was also kind of, I learned a lot from my older brothers and I was kind of a bit of a peacemaker. (?) How would you describe yourself in your family?

03.04.12 BRIAN LYONS: Uh, well, I was the one that always repaired things and fixed things, and, you know, got a lot of stuff for the family. You know, uh, and my father went to work and was like the provider, but you know (CLEARS THROAT) I always worked hard, and I worked at the neighborhood church and the school.

03.04.32 So you know, I was always getting paint and come home and paint my brothers' bedroom or fix their lights or uh, you know, I wasn't really the smartest kid in, in the whole uh, family, you know, as far as schoolwork and stuff was concerned, but I could get a uh, you know, build things for them and you know, get them stuff and you know, stuff like that, I guess.

JW: That's interesting. So is it kind of like uh, were you the one that your parents recruited to do the Christmas presents (LAUGHS)

03.04.59 BRIAN LYONS: No, almost. Right, yeah, you know, you would, I would get the tree every year and you know, build the stand and you know, make sure we had a tree and all that kind of stuff, you know. (~JW~) So uh, it's hard to remember back then (LAUGHS) to be honest with you. And we used to live, I uh, sometimes I drive by the old neighborhood uh, try to think it back. You can just, I can't remember what it was like when we lived upstairs, you know, up on the 5th floor. The neighborhood you can see a little better 'cos you're driving

around and you know, drive down the old blocks, used to play Ringalievo or stickball on and uh, you know, you can remember a little bit about that.

03.05.35 But can't remember too much.

JW: You say the 5th floor, you mean you guys had one floor or you had the whole house?

03.05.41 BRIAN LYONS: No, no, no, it's an apartment building, 5th floor walkup, so you're on the 5th floor. Any other higher than five floors you're getting an elevator, so it was a lot of buildings that were build with only five floors, five story apartment buildings.

JW: And were you (STOPS) (At a young age?) were uh, at a young age, did you, did you was (CLEARS THROAT) I guess I would ask the question, why a building? What, did it come naturally to you?

03.06.09 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, yeah, probably. My father was a carpenter, you know, plus uh, you know, in the neighborhood if somebody's building something which was a lot, and you could help out, you would get money to carry water, pick up the garbage and stuff like that, so. Uh, I went to high school and took uh, you know, I went to trade school, which is hard to get into you know, so there was one trade school in Yonkers, there's 5 public high schools and one trade school and it was real hard to get in there.

03.06.35 So I applied and uh, uh, like I was the only one of my four brothers that went there, and uh, you know, it was real, it's uh, it was like a uh, uh, you know, a special thing if you got it you know, accepted to the trade school in Yonkers. It was hard to get into, so, uh, you know, and then you could have took architecture, plumbing, heating, mechanics, whatever you wanted to. You know, I took uh, mechanical engineering.

03.07.01 They had a, they had a pre-college mechanical engineering course there. So I took that uh, and I thought that was very interesting. I guess that's the way, you know, I don't know how you decide, but I guess if you're very you know, uh, uh, creative or you want to build stuff or fix things or however you want to you know, crafty, you know, it kind of led me that way, I guess.

JW: Well, I think when people find what they want to do, they're lucky. If they find (?)

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: That they sort of recognize that this, they get the opportunity to recognize that it's something that they will not only like but they.

BRIAN LYONS: Oh, sure, sure.

JW: A (?) it's great. How would you describe your other uh, the rest of your family? If you kind of did a, you know, my oldest brother was this?

03.07.45 BRIAN LYONS: My oldest brother, he was always the smart one and did really good in school. You know, I, I was always the one that could fix things. You know, Sean was very good uh, at that stuff, too, coordinating stuff and uh, he's the next one uh, younger than me. Uh, you know, and Michael, Michael the youngest, he was, he was we all wanted to make him what we weren't, you know what I mean?

03.08.07 Make sure that he got you know uh, good school you know, if you know, uh, you know, good college-ing and stuff like that uh, you know? And uh, he was a good, he was good in sports. We all had to play sports. It was almost like peer pressure, you know? Start off with stickball. If you weren't any good, you know, people would yell at you and call you names. So you like to had to almost be good or something, you know what I mean? (LAUGHS)

03.08.29 So as you, you know, went, you know, went down from your older brother down all the way down to the bottom, you know what I mean, it would you know, tell the coach to pick him, 'cos you know, you knew him and you know, so. You would just, you know, trying to help your youngest brothers, you know, get, you know, you know, ahead where you had messed up or missed out on different things when you're growing up.

JW: Well, I can relate to that (?)

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: You know, how you either look up and kind of see where things like wow, if you do that, Dad will get really mad at you (LAUGHS)

03.09.01 BRIAN LYONS: (LAUGHS) You had that, at least that little bit of precaution there, you know? (LAUGHS) I remember what happened to him when that happened (LAUGHS). That's funny.

JW: And I think also I had the same thing, I had an older brother who was above me who we kind of uh, sort of took care of each other. (?) he had some difficulties in some areas and I would make up for that. Uh, and then he would beat up people that were making (LAUGHS)

BRIAN LYONS: (LAUGHS). Yeah, sure, sure, that's the way it used to happen, right? You know?

JW: Uh, uh, and, and Michael you mentioned, so as you created some opportunities for him, what did he do?

03.09.39 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, he went to Catholic high school and then he went to Manhattan College, graduated as an engineer, you know? So I could see him being you know, that's exactly you know, what I would have liked to do, but you know, I couldn't go to college and you know, and I went in the service instead. So you know, you were looking at yeah, you know, he's your youngest brother and you know, he's, you know, but he's learned from all our mistakes.

03.10.03 And uh, you know, he has a good head on his shoulders, so he, you know, he was you know, doing good.

JW: And, and you went to school, became did you, can you take me (?)

03.10.14 BRIAN LYONS: Well, I went, I went to high school and then uh, (~JW~) there was really no money in my family at the time to go do college or anything, so I joined the service out of high school. So I went in the Coast Guard (CLEARS THROAT) and I let them, they paid for my schooling.

03.10.28 You know, I went to engineering school in the Coast Guard. I became a chief engineer there. I went to a lot of different schools and got a (?) really a broad band of knowledge and uh, educational certificates from the Coast Guard. You know, so when I got out I did my college in the service, you know? So you know, when I got out I had my degrees. And I wasn't a PE, professional engineer, but that's one of the things me and my brother, Michael, were gonna work on. He, he graduated from Manhattan and I had my military experience.

03.10.58 So we were gonna study for our PE's together and stuff here in New York uh, you know, New York State.

JW: Interesting. And how was it, tell me about the (?) that period?

03.11.08 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, the Coast Guard? Yeah, that, that was good. I mean, you know, you're a kid from the street and you go uh, I went to boot camp, you know, and that was you know, like any other boot camp. You don't like it too much, they, you know, do everything bad to you (COUGHS) And then uh, I got, I wanted, you could pick different places to get stationed, so I picked Alaska.

03.11.28 So I got stationed in Alaska for a year and a half, which was nice. When I was shipped up there, went all in through the Aleutian Islands, so. I was 19, 20 years old, I was like sailing all around the North Pacific. So it was really, really good.

JW: Alaska?

BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, beautiful.

JW: Why Alaska?

- 03.11.46 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, I don't know. It's like a wilderness and you want to get away from the city streets and you know, you know, you grow up on the city streets, there's people like the older guys are picking on you, you get beat up, you know, there wasn't a lot of work around.
- 03.12.00 So, you know, if anywhere, you know, why would you want to go to Massachusetts or Connecticut? It's, uh, you know, you're figuring you know, the government's gonna pay for it, so you figure you know, if, if you could get stationed somewhere that would be where you probably would never get to go again, which turned out to be (LAUGHS) pretty true, you know? So I picked Alaska and, uh, you know, I went uh, you know, so I'm going to Alaska, so I like leave all my shorts and sandals home and I take extra underwear and long socks and coats and I get all the way to Alaska.
- 03.12.35 I take three planes and a scuttle bus into like a little island to get on my ship and I get on the ship and the guy goes, we're sailing to Hawaii tomorrow. So I get on the ship (LAUGHS) and it's like sail to Hawaii, I get there like I have like a sweater and like long pants on Waikiki Beach. I have no money, I just got out of boot camp, so it was like here's my first chance to get to Alaska and I get, you know, uh, here I get to go to Hawaii. (~JW~)
- 03.13.02 Oh, Hawaii was great. You know, you're there, we went for uh, naval training. The Coast Guard ship I was on they, they used to go there like very, every year an a half they would go for six weeks to, to train with the Navy, so. Oh, yeah, here I am right out of high school, about 4 months. I'm you know, already been to Alaska and now I'm in Hawaii. You know, you go into training but you get to get off at night time so that was, that was good, you know? (~JW~)
- 03.13.28 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Drinking and uh, you know, partying and you know, hanging out on the beaches and stuff. It was good, yeah, very good. And then we went back to Alaska and you know, we did uh, you know, fishery patrols. We would board Russian vessels, Polish ships. Uh, and uh, at this time the Cold War was kind of still going on, so you're boarding Russian vessels to check uh, if they have any, if, if they were fishing in United States water, they caught any illegal fish, if they took too much fish.
- 03.13.58 You know, we actually seized a Russian vessel because they took too much, too much fish one time, so that was a big thing. You know, we put a prize crew on it, and you know, put

them under arrest and towed the ship back into port. And yeah, yeah, you know, it was very interesting. I, I had a really good time in the Coast Guard, very good.

JW: And you said, yesterday you mentioned, too, it was quite a long time.

03.14.21 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, I was in about 9 years, 9 years. I got (?) purely because of, uh, you know, economical reasons. You know, the military doesn't pay you very much (CLEARS THROAT)

03.14.30 You know, when you want to settle down with, get a family and stuff, the military's really not the place for that. They want to ship you all around, you know, you don't get paid a lot of money and uh, so I had made chief and I finished my duty station here at Governor's Island here in New York. You know, so then, you know, I got out after that, you know.

JW: That's a big accomplishment, though.

03.14.51 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah, it was really uh, it was a goal to make chief petty officer, and I did that and uh, you know, I miss it. I still miss it, I think. You know? You know, actually on September 11th, I had 3 of my Coast Guard buddies call me on my cell phone.

03.15.04 When I, when I did get service back there was like 3, you know, voice mails. They were like one of the first people to call me. (~JW~) Yep.

JW: So you came back, you were 29, 30?

03.15.17 BRIAN LYONS: No, I was like 28 then, I think. (?) I went in like when I was 19, I think. So uh, uh, I got a job at a marina in the Bronx (LAUGHS) for a few months.

03.15.30 And uh, I met a girl which was actually my wife who turned out her father had a boat at the same marine. So then I, I would like see her there all the time and uh, I worked there for like six months. But it, you know, it wasn't, they didn't have insurance or anything, you know, medical benefits. So you know, I got a couple of odd jobs, and I started my own company of uh, heating and air conditioning company in Yonkers. I did the tri-state area. I had a shop

for a couple of years. Michael was my youngest brother, he was in college at the time learning mechanical engineering.

03.16.00 So when in the summers he would help me. Couple of summers, he was like an intern. And I had a couple of other guys. (CLEARS THROAT) And then uh, that was like in '80. By this time it's like '89. The economy was getting really bad. And I was gonna get married. So uh, you know, I did away with that company and got a real job with a, with a company that lives up, works up that has a uh, you know, a plant up by me. It was like, it was a concrete plant, actually, they make paving stones.

03.16.31 So uh, I became their project manager there, the plant manager there. I was there for like 6 years (CLEARS THROAT). Helped them build the plant. You know, we was to make uh, all different design paving stones that you put in your driveway. And it was like two miles from my house. It's like right up by where I live. So you know, they gave me good benefits, a company truck. And uh, we were starting, it was a Canadian company. This, they were coming into New York, so uh, you know, I got hired all the crews and got it all running for like 5 years.

03.17.02 And then you know, they didn't, they didn't pay the money that they promised you after you started it off real small and got it (LAUGHS) going big. So, you know, I left that company. And uh, you know, I got another job with uh, a dairy construction company that built milk dairies all around the United States. So I did that for about six years. And then Elizabeth was, was born, and I didn't want to travel so much, 'cos, you know, we were gonna have Patricia and the babies were very young, and I, I didn't want to travel around the United States.

03.17.34 So the economy was like booming. This was like in '95, '96. No, no, not '96. Ninety-six, ninety-eight, ninety-nine the city here was like booming. They couldn't get help anywhere. And my brother, Michael, at the time was, not only was he a fireman, he was uh, working for an engineer part time out of Greenwich, Connecticut.

03.17.57 And uh, (CLEARS THROAT) he was like you know, you need to go down to the city and try to get a job. They like, you know, they can't find people and this and that, so you know, I took his advice and went down and got a job with a big company down there, and big construction management firm and uh, no, that's where I was until just before September 11th, you know?

JW: Take me back a second if you would. Uh, uh, can you tell me if you remember, I'm sure you remember, meeting Laurie?

03.18.28 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, sure, sure. Well, she actually came uh, when I was in the Coast Guard on a ship uh, in Governor's Island. We had like a family day, we came by the Intrepid like on uh, uh, Armed Forces' Day, it's like May 22 something, just before Memorial Day. And uh, a friend of mine uh, the actual, the uh, head janitor at the church I grew up with, he had a bunch of daughters and stuff, and one of her friends was Laurie. And I, I gave them tickets to come down.

03.18.57 They could ride the ship from Governor's Island up to the Intrepid. They have a barbeque on there and stuff. So she had brought Laurie with her. But they also lived, that was uh, Gerolyn. Gerolyn uh, was Laurie's best friend. They lived across the street from my mother uh, in Yonkers. And uh, you know, I would see them around. So when (CLEARS THROAT) uh, uh, Gerolyn brought Laurie with her to the ship, I met her there one day. And uh, and then after, after we met on the ship, you know, I gave the uh, Laurie uh, an autographed picture of the ship from the captain.

03.19.31 And Gerolyn and my friend, George and stuff. (CLEARS THROAT) and then uh, you know, when we got back to the neighborhood, you know, then when I seen them I could go over and talk to Laurie and Gerolyn. I knew Gerolyn since I was little, but you know, Laurie. And then I got invited to a wedding and uh, I asked her to come with me. And it was pretty much love at first sight kind of thing. You know, so uh, about two years later, you know, we got married (LAUGHS).

03.19.57 So you know, yeah, it was really, it was pretty good.

JW: And then uh, and then uh, Elizabeth?

03.20.07 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, well, Laurie actually had a daughter from her first marriage, Linda. She was like 2 or 3 at the time. Like two. And uh, so then (CLEARS THROAT) you know, (?) we moved in together, and I kind of raised Linda from when she was a baby. But what

happened was, we tried, after we got married, we got married in 1990. Uh, we tried to have a baby and it just wasn't working. The plumbing was clogged.

- 03.20.30 So it took like 6 years before she could get pregnant. So she really didn't get pregnant 'til late '95. Of course then Elizabeth was born. Uh, and then uh, you know, then there was no problem. Patricia was born like a couple, right after Elizabeth got older and Laurie got all you know, back to normal (LAUGHS) type of thing, you know, you know, then she got pregnant again, and then Patricia was born. You know, but uh, you know, it took like 5 or 6 years to get pregnant. It was a lot of tries, a couple of miscarriages, I think.
- 03.21.02 So it's like really is a miracle to have a baby, you know what I mean? That's the way I, I see it.

JW: Uh, and your, and your other brothers at the time, what kinds of things were they doing during that like the '90's?

- 03.21.15 BRIAN LYONS: Well, uh, Cairn was a CFO down here in Manhattan. You know, he was always smart, went to college, got a job in accounting. Hooked up a couple of firms right away and you know, was CFO. Sean actually went in, he was my, he was the second youngest, he went in the Coast Guard, too.
- 03.21.34 You know, and uh, was, he went on an icebreaker up in Alaska. Kind of followed in (?) my shoes, seen what I had done. He wanted to get out of the city environment and uh, he joined the Coast Guard. And by the '90's, or early '90's he got stationed in Cape Cod and actually got out and met a girl up there and got out and got married up there. He got married like a month after I did.
- 03.21.58 And Michael, he graduated from Manhattan and it (coincidentally?) there was no work but he had taken the test for the fire department and got on the fire department and you know, he was going out with Elaine for a long time, so he was really just working in the fire department and doing some odd job type of things, side jobs with different, different things he was doing before, like working in a deli. He worked in a deli since he was like 15. (CLEARS THROAT) like uh, a head deli man.
- 03.22.27 So he was a fireman and working as a head deli man for a while at, at a place in Yonkers, you know, so. And doing some engineering things on the side type of thing, you know?

JW: When the (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What year did Michael become a fireman?

03.23.15 BRIAN LYONS: Uh, I think like probably '95, I think, '94. It was like '94.

JW: Part time first?

BRIAN LYONS: No, no, no. New York City fireman you have to be like full time.

JW: Ok, so well (?)

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: So he was doing like several, he was working full time and then he was doing stuff like, I mean, he was (?)

03.23.42 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, he uh, you know, he, he graduated from Manhattan. He (?) got an internship with a defense contractor that uh, at that time he was there like a month and then the defense budget got cut, so there wasn't really a lot of work for him, or whatever. So he got a job with a, some, some company as a young engineer down in Manhattan, maybe for a month. And then he got called from the fire department.

03.24.06 So you know, he called me up and he asked me if he, you know, if it was a good idea to go in it and stuff. And I said, yeah, you know, they got, you know, in the Coast Guard, you know, we are trained, you know, a lot in firefighting and rescue. So uh, you know, it was a big part of my life then of uh, you know, the whole process of rescuing people and stuff. So, you know, and then obviously, I actually myself had taken the fire department test.

- 03.24.33 You're trying to get on, it's a very good job. You know, you get good benefits, you retire after 20 years. So you know, I told him, yeah, it was a good idea to you know, to take the test and follow up with the whole thing. So, uh, basically he had taken the test and then you know, this is like uh, you know, 'cos in, he, he graduated from high school like, say '87. Uh, so like five years of college, it took him 5 years to get his degree.
- 03.25.02 So like '94, she got out and graduated and you know, he had some internships for a year and then he got called for the fire department, so he took on that job. Meantime, you know, while you're a fireman, he was working part time as a deli guy. You know, trying to get some engineer jobs on the side. You know, all the way up until like uh, he was on like 8 or 9 years by the time this thing happened, and he was working with an engineering firm for like a year.
- 03.25.30 You know, doing drawings like a full time type of you know, a full time job but doing it like part time. Not just like, you know, sharpening pencils and going to get drawings and stuff like that. So.

JW: (?)

BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah, right.

JW: How much of an influence was your father when you were kind of, it seems like all of your uh, brothers have a, a kind of at least you and Michael and Sean it sounds like maybe a little bit, too, kind of like building is a, did that come from your dad?

- 03.26.02 BRIAN LYONS: Maybe. It might be like of a Lyon's trait or we don't know, I don't know. He, he was a carpenter, you know. From (?) he's from a farm in Ireland, southern Ireland. He has like 8 brothers (CLEARS THROAT). And uh, you know, they were all farmers, work, hard workers and uh, you know, probably innovative of some type. And uh, you know, he had us at, at a very late age, so like by the time I was a teenager, he was in his 60's so.
- 03.26.30 And he died like when he was 65, just like when I was going in the service he died. So you know, it, I, I just remember he used to take me to some jobs down here in the city. You know, he was a carpenter and uh, you know, that type of thing. So (CLEARS THROAT)

you know, we lived in an apartment. It wasn't like we had a house where we would build in a shed out in the back or fix stuff up in the garage type of thing. And, you know, he was an Irish immigrant, and I, and I know sometimes it was hard for him to get work.

03.26.58 You know, he uh, you know, there was signs, Irish don't apply. And you know, you would hear him come home and complain about that. You know, Michael was the real youngest. He don't have any memory of that at all. You know, 'cos he was probably really young. He was like 11 when my father died. So uh, you know, I see him going out to look for work and stuff like that, Michael was probably 8 or 9 years old, even younger than that. He don't recall uh, excuse me any of those issues like (?) but uh.

03.27.29 You know, obviously I guess, you know, you must get something from your father. It's hard to remember like exactly what happened there, but I always remember like he would take me, I would use his tools, you know, type of thing.

JW: Yeah. It's just interesting 'cos it's uh, you know, for example, I, I don't have the capability to go just go and be drawing and doing engineering stuff or (?)

03.27.51 BRIAN LYONS: I mean, look at my daughters. They, they are, it just, I'm always doing something, now they want to be there. So you, they want to help and build things all the time. And then I got Patricia coming in there, look at the, uh, I live in a log house. I built a log house. She sits there and she says, that's a pretty damn big log (LAUGHS) you got up there. How did you get it up there? Like, you know, how, how? She wants like explain the like the whole thing to her. You know, and then I tell her, and then this is like the truth, a lot of them I had no help. I had to put a ladder here, and then like I would put the log on like a couple of things that go over here (LAUGHS) put the log over there.

03.28.30 And then you know, and then I explained the whole thing. Then she looked at the next piece of wood and then (LAUGHS) she'd say, well, what about that one? How did you get that one there? (LAUGHS) She wanted to know like, and it's very interesting a lot of times. She just wants to know exactly. You know, and I try to pretty best, and I can remember a lot of them, you know, how I did them all. 'Cos there is some pretty big timbers in different areas that were hard to get up. Uh, and uh, you know, it was no crane or nothing, you know, to put them up. It was a lot of, 'cos I live, I moved upstate.

03.28.57 When you lived in the city like you could always like call, there's always people around you, call them, people come over to help you for a few minutes and then they leave. But when you live upstate, no one wants to come up there. Like if they go north of the Bronx for five minutes, there was, it's like they're going out of town. They don't want to go nowhere, what are you talking about? You know, you live like in Oshkosh. So it was like basically I was like you know, on it, on it by myself, on my own (LAUGHS). But they, you know, get very crafty, like they want to know, you know, and they you know, want to help me with the wrenches and stuff.

03.29.29 So you know, must be that's the way it is, right, when you're watching your parents or whatever.

JW: Uh, I lived in Nova Scotia (?) and one of my, probably my best friend at the time his father was you know, I was just describe him sort of like, and the grandfather's a little bit like this, too, you know, uh, he actually shot the deer that no one else shot, or got the fish that got away from everybody else (?) (LAUGHS) He was just one of these incredible kind of person (?)

03.30.00 BRIAN LYONS: Wilderness man.

JW: Absolutely, absolutely. But uh, during the time when I was there, he built a log cabin, and I can tell you, I mean, I'm, I'm, that is no easy feat.

BRIAN LYONS: No, no, right, right.

JW: How'd you do that?

03.30.11 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah, it's harder than (?) it was a kit, but it's believe me it's harder than building a regular house. Oh we were just talking about it last night 'cos we got home at like 9 o'clock. And you know, even though you're in a camper and stuff it's nice to come home to your house, you know what I mean? We're all just, they were half asleep but then we sat down in the living room and then uh, we were all like yeah, it's nice to come home to

a nice house with a regular bathroom, and Elizabeth's like yeah, yeah, yeah, let me go to the bathroom (LAUGHS).

03.30.37 But uh, (CLEARS THROAT) you know, and what happens is even when you leave for two days, when you come back the whole house smells like fresh wood again. 'Cos I guess when there's no movement, the wood must breathe, and then you know, you get the same odor of fresh wood in the house, so that, that's nice, you know? Uh, no, it was very hard, oh, forget about it. Did the whole thing myself. It's a long, long story.

03.31.00 But like we bought the property for ten dollars from the town. It was like I found it through old taxes. I couldn't afford to buy a house. You know, uh, no one ever gave me any money or, you know, or I had like \$2 when I went in the service, and uh, my parents you know, were poor immigrants. They, you know, when they passed away they have no money or anything. So like no one has any money. Or anything. And (CLEARS THROAT) to some of the jobs I had, I wasn't even making enough to get a mortgage to buy a house. Like the minimal house you can buy around here in the tri-state area, \$100,000 or, or more.

03.31.36 You know, if it's \$99,000, the banks are looking at you like oh, oh, I don't know maybe it's gonna fall down or you know, so. You know, I couldn't, I couldn't get a mortgage 'cos I didn't make enough money. So I, I like had to resort to (?) build my own house. I had to find my own land, 'cos they don't, don't want to lend you money to get regular land. You have to buy land first, own the land, then the bank'll lend you money to build the house on it after you own the land. Outright.

03.32.03 Can't have a loan on the land, they won't (?) lend you the money. These are all rules people don't even realize, so. It's a long, make a long story short, I own (~JW~)

JW: How did you (?) how in this day and age do you get (?)

03.32.15 BRIAN LYONS: I own like blocks and blocks (?) around my house, and I got all the land for ten dollars a lot. Because it was all, it was all, what happened was like, and it happens here, too, is people forfeit their, their vacant property because they don't pay their taxes.

03.32.33 And up in Lake Carmel, there was people that bought it back in the '30's, and then it passed on a generation and people did build houses on it, and then there was vacant lots. This lot that I happen to be on was a house that was built, and most of the houses in Lake Carmel,

there wasn't highways then, back in the early '20's and '30's, people would ride up by horse or car. There might be one road. That was like the Catskill Mountains to go away.

03.23.59 So there was a house built there, and, and actually I did talk to the, the one of the grandsons, that there was a house built on here that this guy's grandfather built in like 1932, and most of the wood came from the lower west side over here, where when they were taking stuff down. Kind of (LAUGHS) like what I do now, is like on demolition projects if they like pull out like tons of plywood, I like take it home and like build a garage (LAUGHS) out of it. Because they're gonna throw it in a dumpster anyway, you know?

03.33.28 Take a couple of nails out of it and, you know, you got a hundred, two hundred dollars' worth of plywood, so. This guy brought stuff up by like horse, horse and wagon up to build this house. So I guess it was all built like by the end of the '30's, and people would go up on the weekends. The Lake Carmel was there, you go swimming in the lake, it was like for the weekend resort. Big timbers out of like you know, big townhouses or whatever they, big, you know oak and maple, you know, timbers and stuff.

03.33.58 Well, in like 1950, uh, he (?) the grandfather was there, he was retired, now he was living up there full time uh, a Christmas Eve there was a fire. He must have feel asleep with a cigarette in his hand or the fireplace got a, the whole thing burned to the ground. Him and his dog got out. So the guy just like packed it up and went to Florida or something. Now this thing grew, so nothing's left but like a piece of a foundation, and the thing overgrew and it, all sorts of stuff. So, and now we're looking for land, right?

03.34.32 So uh, the town decides to put in, stuff, all these little pieces of land to try to sell them for like \$10 and this stuff. You, and you can't build on them. It's just, they want to try to see if the neighbor next door will buy some of the land so now you can pay the \$400 a year tax on it. And they weren't so successful at first. And then, so I said, gee, you know, it's like, I'm from the city, I was like \$10 for land? Let's go, you know, and we're like looking up through everything.

03.35.00 And you know, and then it's like you can't build there because it's next to a reservoir and it's like all these things. So, but I did extensive searching, like every single piece I would walk it, look at a map. Call engineers, ask millions of questions. So I find this one and I walked down into the woods and I trip over like a rock, which turned out to be an old foundation. So

I was like, you know what? This, this if I could prove that this was a house here before, I could probably get a building permit.

03.35.30 And what happened was 2 ½ years late I (LAUGHS) finally got a building permit. But I, I had to prove, basically you know what I had to find out? If there was a toilet there that worked, because there's this, has to be a septic system that was in, a working septic system. So there was a pipe in the ground with a small trench of gravel that was a basic septic system back in the '30's. And I got them to approve that and grandfather me that. And then I put a new system in. So it was a long story, but I got that for \$10 and then I got the building permit.

03.36.02 So then now, right (?) away, as soon as I got the building permit, the property's worth \$35,000. because you could buy a building lot for \$35,000. So now you could sell it because approval to build. So the lots that were next to it, they were the same thing. One was like \$10, one was like \$100. I got from uh, the grandson that lived in Florida just to get it off the taxes. Then I bought the land across the street, so I got like a whole bunch of land now, you know what I mean? I got too much.

03.36.31 If you want to buy it, let me know, 'cos I don't want to cut the grass (LAUGHS). But we, we and eventually we want to like sell the lots, you know, or build like houses for the kids uh, if we can get building permits for it. But so now I'm down there with my machete to start building my own house, and this is true. I'm (fucking?) down there whacking, one day I just fucking threw it and quit for a day. And I was like oh, forget this, I'm out of here, man. Like a trip. I was cutting in vines, I was stuck on vines, I fell over in the wet vines. There's no one to help you. I quit, I was like oh, forget this, man. I left.

03.37.03 I came back like a few days later and you know, cleaned up some more. You know, little at a time. I used to go over there, clean the whole property by hand, you know. 'til then when it was time for (?) it was a whole 'nother project to get a loan for the logs and, you know. Had to like.

JW: How many years did it take you?

03.37.21 BRIAN LYONS: It took, it took from '93, I think the beginning of '93 to uh, it took like 3 years, probably, 3 ½ years. Three and a half, four years, by the time like we started looking

for the, all those vacant lots. 'Til we moved in. You know, so. (~JW~) and it's like, everything, like here was my house that I rented in Lake Carmel, and there's a road with a little bridge, and then my lot. So the day I get my building permit I can build, the town decides to tear down that little bridge, they're gonna build a new one.

03.38.00 Now I got to drive all the way around town like this to get to the house, ok? The day I move in, they open the bridge up, so now I can just, the day after I move. Ok? Not the day before, but I already moved, then they open the bridge up. So the thing was like I could throw it, a rock and hit like where I'm gonna build. I'm figuring this is great. I can shoot back and forth to the house and stuff. And yeah, that's, that was my luck. That's my luck you know what I mean? That's, that's what happens. (LAUGHS)

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

BRIAN LYONS: My wife would say, oh, he's telling that story again (LAUGHS).

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: Uh, so, well, that's pretty, that's a lot of ingenuity you got there.

03.38.48 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah (?) Oh, boy. And see, and Michael and them, they came up a couple of times to help, but it's so far away they're like no one wanted to drive up there to like involved in the city work, they're going from here to hop on a train and they're home in ten minutes.

03.39.04 Uh, no one wants to get in a car and drive an hour and five minutes to help me put up a log (LAUGHS) you know what I mean? Uh, and then that's, that's the way it worked out, you know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.39.23 END OF TAPE # BL-003, 1 of 3

TAPE # BL-004, 2 of 3
BRIAN LYONS
08.26.02
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

03.39.34 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.39.45 BRIAN LYONS: If I have to get to the site by like 5 to 7, I have to take the 5 o'clock train. So now if I drive, I got, I can (?) leave like a quarter, a quarter to 6. I get like another 45 minutes' sleep, you know?

03.40.01 But Fridays, man, traffic has been killing them. (~JW~) During the wintertime wasn't so bad. The summertime is like, forget about it, man.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.40.38 BRIAN LYONS: (MID-STATEMENT) The, the only thing is, after September 11th I made a promise to myself that I would never work Saturday and Sundays again. I don't care if it's for less money. Because your life is ruined. My whole life I work like 7 days a week for millions of years. (?) I'm almost dead. Build my own house, working 7 days a week since I'm a kid.

03.40.59 So after this, I was like no way, man. I'm gonna get to be like a regular Joe (LAUGHS). And I'm gonna work, you know, not work Saturday or Sundays. 'Cos you know, everybody doesn't have to work, everyone doesn't work Saturday s and Sundays down here in the city. You know, and the job I had before it was like, oh, you don't got to work weekends. But every once in a while you've got to work a Saturday. You know, and I end up working every Saturday, all day. They tell you, oh, come in for a few hours. Soon as you get in, you don't get home until 5 o'clock. So it was like you're gonna have to get someone else to do that now, I work Monday to Friday like uh, and so and, in a way I work my (?) position up now, I

don't have to, I'm a project manager on this project, I really don't have to work on a Saturday.

- 03.41.40 If there was an extreme emergency, I wouldn't even (?) you know, I don't mind coming down. It's my (CLEARS THROAT) you know, it's my instinct to, to do that. But you know, the rest of the world, built the world in 5 days (LAUGHS). You know, so uh, that's what I'm gonna try to do, you know? I got a phone I can solve, solve many things over the phone, you know?
- 03.41.59 So many jobs that when I was plant manager at that Unilock place, I worked 6, 7 days a week. Day shift and night shift and then you would, you're (?) working day shift and then you're in charge of the night shift at home, and they're calling you all hours of the night with problems. You're up all night. And basically the bosses don't care anyway. You know what I mean? You're just doing it out of your own, if, if you don't get the job done they yell at you. If you get the job done they yell at you. So it (?) didn't matter anyway (LAUGHS).
- 03.42.30 You know? So it's. It's my new rule, no Saturdays and Sundays until I'm broke, you know and whatever, my log cabin burns down or something, I don't know, knock on wood. And the insurance guy ran off with all my money then I might have to work Saturday and Sunday.

JW: Uh, but, but since September 11th because you said you (?)

- 03.42.53 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, no, yeah, because you, you know, you reevaluate your whole life. You know, that's it, you know, you just got to, you know what's important and uh, you know, I was already on that track. I stopped traveling 'cos I wanted to spend time with my kids. You know? Uh, you know, after September 11th you realize that you know, there's a lot of important things in life to do, and you know, you only get one chance to drop your kid off at kindergarten the first day of kindergarten. If you go there the third day you weren't really, the you only get the chance to drop her off for the first day, you know? You know, you, you the day that she starts gymnastics on Saturday, you only get that first chance to bring her for the first day of gymnastics first, you know, the first part of the year.
- 03.43.36 You know, it's like you know, you just realize that you miss all those times and days and. It's, you know, why, 'cos (CLEARS THROAT) I'm the type of guy now it's like I'm not out to be a kazillionaire or a millionaire of whatever. You know, you, you, you know, will work

to earn some money to support yourself and it's like, no matter how much money you have, one is you always has problems.

03.44.03 You got millionaires, they still have the same problems. They got to go do the doctor and get bad news, you know? Their kids' got to go to the same, you know, college like somebody else. It's not, just 'cos you're rich doesn't make all your problems go away. So it's like you know, I feel that, you know, the value of life and the things, time that you spend that the people you want to spend with it, is more important than making dollars, you know?

03.44.28 It's not like we've always ever been rich or not rich or have a lot of money or the more money you have you would spend money anyway. You always kind of have the same amount of dollars, so it's like you make a decision. Look, let me just work this much and whatever dollars I get we will just use that to you know, make the best of it. And, and that's the way I, I'm living my life now about like that. So. You know, it's you're a little older and you realize that you know, you know, time is of the essence and uh, you should make you know valuable time of, of what you want, you know, what you want to do with your time.
(~JW~)

03.45.07 No, not just me, everyone has been thinking about that since this tragedy, but it was like. You know, I wanted to do that before and uh, I really didn't have the opportunity to. And then down here I work like 7 days a week, you know, 18 hours a day, for the last like 10 months.

03.45.29 And uh, you know, you got money for that, too, but it was like yeah, so, so what? You got money. You're missing, missed my daughter's recital. I missed my daughter's 3rd birthday, it was a whole bunch of things. What the heck is that? You know, it's not worth it to me, I don't think.

JW: Uh, can you, can you uh, describe September 11th for you, your earliest memories of the day and, and uh, kind of how that event (?) how it (?)

03.45.57 BRIAN LYONS: We uh, I was working at a project on Madison Avenue and 23rd Street. And uh, we're having a meeting in the office and someone got a page over their pager saying, the twin towers, the tower's been hit (CLEARS THROAT). So we just went upstairs to like the 30th floor, we were on the like the 15th floor at the time. And you could look out

the window, sure enough, we, we seen the north face of the, of the north tower, big flames coming out of it, black smoke. At first, when we were downstairs, she said a plane hit it, I'm thinking a Cessna must have just ran into it or something, a small plane.

- 03.46.31 You know, then when we looked at this huge hole, we knew it was a uh, big plane. So you know, everyone's mumbling like it was a terrorist attack right away. And uh, you know, a few minutes later, well, what happened was we went up to look at it, and then one of my friends was also working down there at the time. He worked at the same company I did, and he, we just finished a project together. He was just with the, at the project I was just at.
- 03.47.00 I was staying on to finish some odds and ends and he moved on to start a new project in the south tower on the 102nd floor. So I called him right away on the cell phone, I'm like what the heck is going on? He's like yeah, the other tower just got hit, man, but he can't really see it because he's on the south tower. 'Cos we see a lot of smoke and flames, they're telling us to stay put right now. And I'm like, I think you should get out of there. He's like no, everybody, they came over the PA that we're, you know, everything's under control, you know, stay, stay where you are.
- 03.47.33 And uh, you know, then I hung up and then like five minutes later the south tower got hit by a plane. You know, I tried to call him back but I, you know, I just got his voice mail. And I, I didn't leave a voice mail. I didn't leave any message 'cos I (?) just didn't want to leave a message, I guess. I just tried to get him a few times, and uh. So now both buildings are burning, obviously. Now I knew my brother was working. He, he worked at Squad 41, he was a rescue unit in South Bronx.
- 03.48.03 So I knew he was working that day 'cos I talked to him earlier in the day.

JW: Did you talk to him regularly?

- 03.48.09 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah. You know, a few times a week, you know, if not every day. We were just work, we just were working on his house. I spoke to him probably a couple of times a day, for the last 4 and 5 months. 'Cos I just helped him uh, remodel his house. His basement and his kitchen and, and stuff like that. We rewired a whole bunch of stuff, so. You know, I, I talked to him pretty frequently just prior to that.

- 03.48.32 So uh, I knew he was working. So I'm thinking, oh, the squads and rescue's got to be all right there right away. So I think I tried to call the fire house and there was no answer. Now (CLEARS THROAT) we're all pretty much in, you know, there's a lot of chaos happening. Uh, we're in a major office building that's about you know, 60 stories tall. With a tower in midtown also.
- 03.49.00 So I'm thinking right away in our building, you know, we got to start telling people to get down off the lower floors. So I went down to security the head of security which I knew him at the time, 'cos I was one of the you know, project managers in the building at the time to uh, forgot the guy's name now, Benny or something. You know, I think you should start getting people down off the lower floors. 'Cos they just ran two planes, someone just ran two planes into the trade center, they might try to take out some of these other taller buildings. So I don't think they (?) he didn't, they didn't respond right away, but within a half an hour, they started evacuating the top floors, tell people come down to the lobby.
- 03.49.37 So uh, at that time, the towers didn't fall yet. So we were all just wondering, you know, can we go home, should we stay? You know, now we're getting reports that the subways are closed right away. They're kind of locking down the city. Now I call my wife, she's like get the fuck out of there. Swim across the East River, I don't care how you get home, get home, get out of the city.
- 03.510.01 Uh, so I'm saying uh, hold on, we can't leave yet. I'll call you back. You know, now I guess the towers fall, all right? 'Cos we could see them from, no one would go up, we were like on the 8th floor now. No one went up higher than the 10th floor.

JW: Right now, you're, what about your friend on the 102nd floor?

- 03.50.21 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, we can't get a hold of him. So we know the towers fall we're like oh, fuck, you know, can't get a hold of him. There were actually two other guys from our company there, so, someone else uh, I was working with had this guy, Brendan Lange's phone number, he was trying call him, someone was trying to call the other guy. They were trying to get a hold of uh, the people that were down there. Also, people were trying to get a hold of everyone that worked for the company. For our company. Like they put pages out.

Everyone, call the office. They wanted to get like a roll call I think. A lot of companies probably did that around, around the city.

03.50.57 You know, find out, you know, where everybody is. Then everyone's trying to call their family members to see if everyone was home. No one knows if Joe Blow went down for an appointment downtown or to get his hair cut or, you know, now, now people are trying to you know, like the girl in the office, she's trying to call her aunt and her niece that work in the city to see if they're all right. So people are doing some kind of like uh, you know, quality control checking, you know? Soon as the tower fell, I saw, I said right to this guy, I remember saying, they're gonna need help down there.

03.51.30 There's no way if those towers fell, that people the emergency people, can handle that. So right away I just knew from my military experience probably that uh, that uh, they would, they would need help, you know what I mean? (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.54.24 BRIAN LYONS: So what happened was, when the towers fell, right? Uh, you know, I knew that we needed to get help down there, right? So I tried to get a hold of my, my brother's fire house uh, no one answered there. My friend that was down there, he wasn't answering his cell phone. So I actually, now it's, it's a couple of hours later. The towers have already fell. And I call my wife, I told her, I'm trying to get home, I'm gonna start walking. I called Michael's wife, Elaine, and I said, listen, have you heard from Michael? And she's like no, I said, well, I think I'm, I'm gonna start walking, even if I got to walk home, I'll walk by the firehouse to see what I can find and I'll call you.

03.55.04 You know, first of all, my phone uh, that was the day that my battery went dead in my phone. So that was like you know, just the luck of that. And then every payphone in the city nothing worked. Phone lines, everything must have went blackie. So I pretty much walked from midtown up to the south Bronx. You know, the whole city now is evacuating, right, through uh, tunnels, bridges, you know, everybody's walking.

03.55.30 So you're walking up like 3rd avenue, there's thousands of people like walking ahead of you, behind you.

JW: You're going against the grain? Are you?

- 03.55.39 BRIAN LYONS: No, no, I'm going with everybody (~JW~) Everyone is trying to (?) get over these river crossings. All the way there, everyone's, we don't know if they're opened. Everyone's hearing rumors that the city is in lockdown and won't let anyone in or out. So you don't even know when you get there what's gonna happen. No one wanted to drive there, you couldn't take a subway 'cos they were shut down.
- 03.56.00 Uh, so you know, everyone is trying to abandon the city. So you know, it's, it was just like, it was like a movie (LAUGHS), man it was like, you know, people are walking and walking it real fast. People ain't just wandering down the street. Everyone's at a very fast pace, just walking, in the road, traffic's blocked up. No one's, the traffic can't go nowhere. People are cutting in front of everybody. So if you're like in a car you're in big trouble. You're like almost at a standstill.
- 03.56.30 You know, it turns out I guess they were letting cars over the bridge and out, but not uh, anybody in. So I end up walking, I didn't know exactly how to get to the firehouse, you know, on foot like that, so I ended up walking, I don't even know how long it took me to get there, but, however long it would take you to walk from midtown to the South Bronx. So I get there and it's locked, obviously, there's nobody there. And then a car pulls up and it's one of the firemen that's in the fire, that goes to the fire house that works there.
- 03.57.00 And they're being recalled in now, so he went there to get some of his gear. So it was this guy, Gibby, and I'm like I'm Michael's brother, Brian. You know, I tell him the story, I'm coming to see if, if Squad 41 was responded down there. We don't even know if he went there or not. People would get, you'd get relocated, you'd get you know, they could have got called somewhere else. So as far as he knew, because now, no one even knows where any units are themselves.
- 03.57.28 He knows that they got relocated to another unit, but he doesn't know if they (?) got sent to the trade center. So we go in, he tries to make a couple of calls. He goes, he thinks they got relocated to another firehouse, but he doesn't know for sure. So from the firehouse I call Michael's wife and I tell them listen, I'm at the fire house, they're not here, have you heard from Michael? She's like, no. I go well, he thinks they got relocated. We don't know if they got sent to the trade center. All right? So it was like fine.

- 03.58.00 So now I'm, I walk to the edge of the Bronx by the Yonkers line and Metro North is working out of the city going north. So I waited for a train, actually just like on the side of the train tracks. And these trains were coming, coming north packed full. They couldn't even get on them, people were heading out of, out of the city, you know? The train's just like stopping on the side of the train tracks to pick people up, and I was one of them (LAUGHS) Yeah. Just as you could get to a train track and see a train, they were just pulling over to let you on.
- 03.58.34 And just take you, you know, up and they were stopping like north of White Plains. So, so I, I get, I go home to tell my wife. You know, this is what the story is and then I call Elaine's house again. And they didn't hear from Michael. And then a couple of hours go by and then Elaine's sister called me and said, listen we got word that Michael's missing. Michael's unit's missing. So I said, I'll, I'll be right down to your house. So time frame, I don't know how many hours, but it's just hours from the planes hit.
- 03.59.03 So it could be just getting dark now, all right? So I'm like ok, uh, I'll be down at the house. So I told Laurie and them, you wait here, I'll go and, and see what's happened. So I get to Elaine's house and we call some emergency rooms, try and call the fire house, we can't get nobody. I'm like, you know what? Let me go get some of Michael's gear and I'll go down. You know, I'll get some of his ID or something, his old badge or something, and, and that's what I did.
- 03.59.31 I got a bunch of his gear, I took uh, one of his badges he had. I got in her car. 'Cos I had an old Dodge Dart at the time, wouldn't even probably make down in the city. And uh, drove down to uh, you know, the FDR Drive, you know, I had to go through some stop points, you know, to, to get. I figured that FDR Drive would be the best way to go. So south of 14th street there was like no traffic allowed, pretty much and you could tell why. When I went down the FDR, when you got to 14th Street on the FDR Drive, it was like thick like that of smoke.
- 04.00.08 You couldn't even see. Just dust, it was like you could smell it, you were just going right into the war zone. And now you're the only one like on the FDR Drive, just me, 'til I got to the end and there's another state trouper blockade. So I show the ID, I get through there, and I just kind of like drove up on side walks to Wall Street, you know, I parked on like Pine and Church street.

- 04.00.3.4 Her car like up on the sidewalk. And I remember getting out, I put all my crap on and I went to like right exactly coincidentally where my office is right now. Right on the corner of Church and Liberty. And you could just see, you know, fire was still going. There was massive piles of uh, steel. There was a couple of you know, heavy machineries pulling some things away to make way for some of the firemen to get in there, you know?
- 04.01.02 And uh, I just remember saying to myself, you know, (CLEARS THROAT) I got to evaluate the situation and I'll just see where I can help. You know? Every sand, every grain of sand in the bucket, you know, will make the bucket full. That's all uh, that's the first thing I said to myself. I don't know one person down there. I'm just like I have (LAUGHS) you know, nobody. It's like building my house again. Here I am, uh, it's just me. I don't have any other units, I don't know no one, I don't know anyone from my brother's fire house, 'cos he had just gotten there like the year before.
- 04.01.34 He was at another firehouse for like 8 years. That I knew a bunch of guys from there 'cos I went to Christmas parties. So you know, some of his guys could walk right past me. I wouldn't even know who they are. From his squad. So uh, you know, I went, I went there and that's all I, you know, I started. Uh, the first thing I did, I walked (~JW~)

JW: Who was the first person you met?

- 04.01.56 BRIAN LYONS: Well, I walked around the entire site. All right? It took a while. I said, let me, let me circumvent the entire thing. Just to (~JW~) just to see, evaluate the whole situation. So I walked around, you could see what was fell, where it was fell, all the way around. You had to go around maybe four or five extra blocks to get to this area and then go you know, around and around and around and around. So you know, then I said, you know, let me see, you know, what I'm gonna do. So I circumvented the whole site, and then I seen a couple of uh, guys that I was working in a building with in midtown.
- 04.02.31 Uh, they were like uh, structural engineers. And they were walking by and I was like hey, where you guys going uh, you know, I forgot the guy's name. His name was uh, Mike. I forgot his last name. I just worked on a project with him in midtown. They were, uh, they were, already had connections with the city doing work and they were called in as structural engineers. His company, which is a, they actually like built part of the trade center, and the

city had probably got them, they worked with OEM anyway, Office of Emergency Management.

- 04.03.04 When big items fell down or something, they would call these structural guys in right away. They would be on the scene, so. They had a presence there. They had like them two and five or six other guys. They're like oh, we're here with what's his name, we're supposed to look at a couple of these buildings. We don't want them to fall down either. So I'm like, you know what? And they're like, but we don't know how to get in here, this fireman gave us a hard time, and I'm like, I'll get you in there, no problem, come with me, where you want to go?
- 04.03.33 Well, we got to get up there. Well, come on, we'll, we'll go I'll get you in there. And it was actually 130 Liberty. That was the building that Tower 2 hit. The whole middle of it was gone. They were afraid it was gonna fall down. Here we are, three of us, up like on the 35th floor looking at structural (LAUGHS) beams and stuff. You know, I got them in there, we went up the right way, we had flashlights, I told the chief we were going up there. You know, and, and we evaluated that building, and then you know, we came down and we went to another building.
- 04.04.02 And I kind of got started with them doing that, you know? You know, then by that time I was, whenever there was, if there was a chief or something I would just ask him, what do you need? Do you need a machine, I'll get it for you. I just kind of jumped right in, used some of my, you know, construction experience or, you know, it was chaos. No one knew, you know, what to get. You got a guy driving a machine, he don't care, he's just gonna keep pulling these things away and then you would ask the chief, listen? You want to get over there, I'll go get the guy and have him come over here and take that out of your way.
- 04.04.32 You know, 'cos now, there, there was fire, you think there might be people over there, more than over here. Just by the way the steel was, or, you know, that type of thing. So. You know, I did that for the first like 24 hours, 36 hours. Just freelanced myself to chiefs, to fire department chiefs who were in charge of the site, in case they needed help doing something or getting people or you know, doing what. You know, and it was just like it wasn't like there was (?) other people doing it.

04.05.02 You know, people were there, but you know, it wasn't like there was people giving direction that I was doing, so I just felt comfortable doing that, so I went ahead and did that anyway. Then (~JW~)

JW: I mean, were, were people dazed or were they focused or were they?

BRIAN LYONS: No, no, not too many people were focused. It was uh, and it's hard to remember right now, I think. (~JW~)

JW: Do you think you put that out of your memory?

04.05.28 BRIAN LYONS: I don't know, I don't know. It's a kind of a blur a little bit, you know, but it was like. I don't, I don't think it was uh, people were dazed. A lot of people wanted to help, but it's just like building this project down there now. Everyone wants to help, but you know, everyone says, no, I wouldn't take that mold off, no, you know what, you should nail it over that way. No you should put it over here, no, you know what let's do it. You got ten people wanting to do the same thing. No one and nothing gets done. Like 2 hours go by and thing's still there.

04.06.00 And that's the same process that was happening down there. You know, it was like you know what let's move these cars, and you've got this guy saying, no, you know what we should move these first. And then this guy says, no, you know what, we should move both of them at the same time, get another machine. Hold him up. So it was all different people that would uh, you know, say things. And try to get things done. And then but, just like normal in regular day life, a guy would say let's do this, and he would disappear, like go have a coffee break or I don't know what he would do.

04.06.33 And then (?) and then that would just be sitting there, no one would actually stay like, that, so like for me, I stayed on the corner by 90 West for like 30 hours straight, just to get that thing done. Whatever I, whatever we, if (?) the goal was to move all that out of the way, I stayed there 'til the whole thing was done. Never leave. Sleep in the truck right there 'til that's done. Because if you just did a little bit and walked away and when you come back nothing would happen.

04.06.59 Which happened. I had to sleep sometimes, so you would say all right, you continue, I've got to sleep. You wake up 5 hours later, it's like the same way it was when you fell asleep. 'cos soon as you went away, that guy went away and something else happened, and you know, that's what was happening in the beginning. You know, plus a lot of people were all exhausted from you know, working for 24 hours or 30 hour straight, you know? So.

JW: Did you take a moment to think about your friend?

04.07.26 BRIAN LYONS: No, then, no, no, I don't think so. The first days it was 'til uh, so that happened on Tuesday. Oh, a good 5, 6 days went by before, you even stopped. I don't even think, I was trying to think like a month ago like where I actually slept those first couple of days or did I sleep or didn't I? And I don't remember, I don't, I don't think I remember that. I don't think I remember sleeping. I think adrenaline kicked and you stayed awake for like 40 hours. Which wasn't uncommon for me.

04.08.00 I was, I was on a job a few years back that we would work from Friday at 3 o'clock at a project at a dairy until Monday morning, 8 o'clock. And like, you know, maybe get 4 hours' sleep. So you worked like, you know, 24 or 30 hour straight without falling asleep. And uh, so my metabolism was probably a little bit different than a lot of other people uh, I could see that happening. You know, how, how that affected that, but.

04.08.29 Uh, I, I don't remember you know, where I slept or exactly each area that I was working in. but you know, after the first couple of days (CLEARS THROAT) you had to get ID tags, so I approached like the deputy commissioner of uh, of DDC, which was the controlling agent of the construction down at Ground Zero. I just asked a million questions, so I found out through the guy who was in charge and just followed him around for like an hour and a half until he finally would talk to me.

04.09.01 So I wanted to go back out, but I said, you know what, I have to stay by this guy until he, you know, agrees to what I want (LAUGHS) him to agree to. I wasn't gonna take no for an answer, pretty much. So you know, I, I, you know, I kind of cornered him and told him my whole story real quick and what I wanted to do. And so he told me to stay with him. So I ended up helping him for the first three or four weeks. And he worked a lot at nighttime, so I, I didn't go home for the first like 3 weeks, I stayed down there for the first 3 weeks.

04.09.30 I stayed with him, you know, and he, I would still go around to each site and help the chiefs, whatever they wanted, and then help whatever he needed. He was getting some of his guys, new guys in and set up in different quadrants, so I would set them up for him, you know what I mean? So then after about a month, you know, he asked me if I wanted to work with them full time, I could have got a job with the city at that time, but I didn't really want to do that. Economically it's, it's not good, you know?

04.10.00 Uh, you know, like I told you the story, the owner, Peter Tully, I did a lot of work up in the Tully section, so that was an area that I knew very, was very familiar with, all the players up there, and I wanted to stay down there. So you know, I resigned from the company I was with, and took a job on with Tully, the people I'm with now, to stay on to organize, you know, all the operations that were going on, you know, continuously there, plus I still worked with that deputy commissioner.

04.10.28 So you knew a lot of the players and the fire department chiefs at that time. And you know, and so on. So that's kind of like the evolution of the first day 'til like now of how you, I got involved with that company, you know?

JW: Right. Uh. Did you call your wife?

BRIAN LYONS: What's that?

JW: Did you call your wife?

04.10.50 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, I would call her (LAUGHS). I'd call her, I'm Ok, but I got to go, and basically that, that was it. She was going to my sister-in-law's house a lot to help with the kids, and you know, stay there plus see, the first and we believed like the first two weeks we, we believed in life to be (?) sustained down there, somewhere in a void or something. You know, because there was, it was still search and rescue. Until whatever day that was, I don't know the exact day that was, that I can't remember the exact day that it was switched to search and recover, but.

04.11.29 We were still calling search and rescue, so we were just, I was constantly calling up and giving reports. We don't find nothing, we haven't found anyone today. 'Cos they were

getting media reports and then they would get a report from me (?) actually what happened, you know what I mean,? Plus it was, and I would get information from them, because if you're over on this part of the site it was hard to get to another part. Sometimes you would be there, almost a whole day would go by like that, something would happen over there. You know, they would say hey, they found someone in a van.

04.12.01 You know where that is? I'm like oh, I don't know uh, it's not by me. And then you would try to find out what had happened. 'Cos they would get a report maybe on uh, on the news that they found somebody. You know, but then it would be false, you know what I mean (LAUGHS). It's 'cos we really didn't find anybody. So uh, you know, I would call my wife and let her know, you know, what happened and this and that. And so it was basically when we knew no one was alive and you know, we kind of like mobilized into another mode, then I went home.

04.12.31 You know, when it was really into the recovery mode. No more search and rescue. And I was comfortable to believe that no one was alive. You know, so then we, I went home and, and the one of the purposes was to talk to Elaine, Michael's wife, and tell them you know, listen. If he is alive or was alive, he's not alive now. Because uh, so many days went by without water or food or uh, or whatever it might have been (CLEARS THROAT). You know, and that wasn't 48, 72 hours.

04.13.00 That was a substantial amount of time. Like two weeks or 24 days or whatever it was, you know.

JW: That must have been a hard conversation no, maybe?

BRIAN LYONS: Sure, sure it was. (~JW~)

JW: At what point did you, come I mean, I assumed you have to come to your own terms as well?

04.13.19 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, well, I think (?) and I'm trying to remember that day. It was like we all were at a very good pace. That everyone was at that same pace, search and rescue, we were at that pace. And then whatever night I went to sleep at 3 AM, I woke up, took a

shower and when I went back out (CLEARS THROAT) to the site, you know, I took a shower at the Red Cross thing or whatever. When I walked back out at the site, I just remember it was 8 o'clock and the sun was out, it was a nice, sunny day. And you could just tell the whole, the whole site was at a different pace. It was at one notch down, much slower.

04.13.57 Like everyone just knew there really isn't no one alive, now, you know, it's just we're, we're at a slower pace now. We're still working hard, but it wasn't the intensity, intense pace of working we're trying to save someone that's trapped under a piece of steel. It was really (CLEARS THROAT) it was just one step down. And then I just knew that that, that was the moment, I remember it was like I looked at my watch, it was like 8:01. On whatever day that was, it was just.

04.14.30 I knew that you know, we weren't gonna find him alive or anybody else alive at that time. You know, it was just (CLEARS THROAT) I think it was a general consensus of every, thousands of people that were there, you just knew that at that time.

JW: And uh, obviously Michael was, was driving obviously a lot. I mean, you're driven anyway, it's your nature. But it seems to me. I mean. (?) But uh, you stayed on, you more than stayed on, you've been there since.

BRIAN LYONS: Oh, right, right, yeah.

JW: Do you want to tell me about the kind of stages of your (?)

04.15.06 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, I guess uh, well first of all, then you know they aren't alive. Then you have a, well, I felt I had a responsibility, number one, to bring his remains home. Some of my personal from, from my family point of view, and being my little brother, to his family. He's got a wife and children now, and you know, you know.

04.15.33 Someone would have to you know, look after to see if really we can find his remains and send it home. So you know, I felt an obligation uh, to do that. Secondly, I just because of my nature and the nature of the beast that was down there, of you know, some organized chaos if you will, that, you know, I really felt that they needed someone of my, of my stature to help organize some of these things.

- 04.16.03 It was like I couldn't leave and (?) and get a good night's sleep knowing that these people were organizing this thing and screwing it all up, because my brother's body's in there. I don't need you screwing things up you know what I mean? I mean, this is it's not gonna take forever, I know that. It's not gonna take 500 years. It's gonna take a certain amount of time, and you know, I'm gonna be here to do that, you know, just to uh, I don't care if I got to quit my job, what I got to do, I'm gonna be here to, to make that happen.
- 04.16.34 If we're gonna take every piece of steel, one at a time. We will, we will find everyone and hopefully find my brother's remains there. And that's, that was a, a total goal focus you know, from, from the day I was there. And then you could feel it, because what happened, what's happening is, this, this it's a huge process. It's a huge project and when you were away you were getting a, I was getting a withdraw from not being there.
- 04.17.00 Like uh, you had to be there. Because there's so many tasks happening. Like here's a task, like we got to remove all this steel and jack this up and get a crane in there and cut these things out and hold these things up. And that might take 3 weeks to do what I just said. So, you're away for a day and you're thinking, are they putting that up the right way? Because if they don't, we're gonna lose three days and, and so you're, felt an obligation to be there, to control or help situate those situations that type of thing, you know?
- 04.17.35 So it was really, you had a withdrawal of being away from there. I, I really did, you know? And you know, 'cos I didn't want people just to scoop stuff and throw things away that could be someone's remains. You just really, you know, uh, I didn't have that in me that to, to leave people with, that didn't have the dedication. Everyone was dedicated, but they weren't as focused as I was, I don't believe.
- 04.18.00 To, to make sure that (?) would happen. You know, that's why I, I wanted to stay there, I wanted to look for a job to stay there. You know, it actually worked out that I met some good people and we're you know, accepted by companies that you know, wanted your help and needed your help at that time, so everything kind of fell into place, you know, a little bit there, so.

JW: And uh, can you tell me about St. Patrick's Day?

BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, sure now. (CLEARS THROAT) Uh, (~JW~)

JW: Actually I'm gonna, I want to actually if you could uh, just tell me uh, one, one story 'cos I know about it from Danielle on uh, which is sort of along the lines of fate and (?) thing having its place in the Universe. But uh, the first day you left Ground Zero uh, 3 weeks afterwards (?)

- 04.18.54 BRIAN LYONS: Yep, that's the day I went home. I went home and uh, you know, we went home to, to tell my brother's wife and so on. And then uh, I uh, what happened was when I left Ground Zero, I got on Number 4 train and I went uh, to Grand Central and took Metro North home. And then I think my wife might have picked me up I went home, all right, to stay with her. She was glad to see me and so on, and then I uh, got up early in the morning, like 4:30, to take the next train down in, into uh, back down here.
- 04.19.30 So I went to Brewster North, I'm standing on the train station, it's like I'm waiting on that early train, that 5 o'clock train, so it's like 10 to 5. it's a foggy morning type of thing. It's in October, I guess now, the beginning of October. (CLEARS THROAT) there's no one on the platform except this guy like he's like in his 50's or 60's, an older guy and me. So I, you know, I, we're like a little ways apart, so I kind of, we kind of (?) walked up there a little bit or we got closer together, how you doing, how you doing. So we, we start having some small talk. And he doesn't know who I am or where I came from or what I just been doing or nothing.
- 04.20.05 But in general, the whole world knows what happened like three, three weeks ago. So you know, some of our conversation is, doesn't approach that event, but you know, we're just like you know, it's kind of raining out, he's like yeah, yeah. Then he starts saying, you know, you know, don't worry, everything will, will come out all right and you know, things work out for the best. And I'm thinking to myself, (well, right away?) think?
- 04.20.30 Well, I didn't say nothing. I mean, what's he talking about, really? I said to myself. I didn't ask him specifically. I go, oh, yeah, because the generality of the whole events of, of the last month, I'm thinking, I'm like yeah, you know things have screwed up but you know, I guess you know, things will work out, you know, we shouldn't be worried about stuff and blahblahblah. (I mean?) I don't know exactly the conversation we had, but we didn't really

mention Ground Zero and we didn't mention what I was you know, happened to me or my loss.

04.21.00 But in general, I'm thinking, this guy is pretty consoling. Nice guy, friendly, you don't meet so many people. I've been on this train (?) uh, station a lot and I don't meet too many people I have a nice conversation with. So then I look out and the train's coming. So then I say to him, well, it's nice talking to you. My name's Brian. I'm gonna get going. Oh, nice to meet you, my name's Michael Lyons. And I'm like holy mackerel. Same name's my brother. Soon as the train pulls up, the doors open, he gets in one car, I got in the other car.

04.21.30 I was like, oh, ok. So I just, I said that was like a moment and I was just like let me go to work. It didn't really dawn on me too much. I mean, when I got to work I said, man you wouldn't believe it. I met this guy (LAUGHS) he was Michael Lyons on the train tracks this morning. Unbelievable. So that was like the beginning of October. So then Thanksgiving morning, I was working late like 2 in the morning on Thanksgiving morning, and we were digging by Tower 2 and the machine dug up like all these ID cards.

04.22.02 All right? They just scattered all up in the air. So a laborer walks up and picks all these ID cards up and he comes over to me and he's like (?) what do we do with these things? And like one flipped out, right, so like I grabbed that one. And the one I grab, I keep it in my wallet now. The one I grabbed was uh, Michael Lyons.

04.22.30 It had a picture of this guy, I don't know who he is, but uh, the odds of that thing, it flipped up like that. I was like, I grabbed it, looked at it, it was like Michael Lyons. Now that turned out to be the same area. It was like, almost identically ten or 15 feet vertically above the area where we found the guys from Squad 41. 'Cos it was like over Tower 2 we had a roadway there we were building down it that actually went (?) into the pit.

04.23.00 Now that was early, that was at the end of November. So that was a road that we used to dig out the rest of the whole pit area, and then by the time we got to St. Patrick's Day we only had the area of Tower 2 footprint left. And we were gonna take that road out because we had built a mechanical bridge to go into the pit. That the truck traffic was now going in and out of. So now we were excavating the actual footprint of Tower 2. So it turned out it was like 10 feet, 15 feet lower we found the remains of Squad 41.

04.23.32 And what happened was, when we knew that we were, we were getting a lot of firemen in that area, so I would stay down there now, this is in March. Around St. Patrick's day. I was

sleeping at the church every night. Uh, if we found any firemen, people would uh, you know, you have connections now, your foreman, other fireman down there calling you on your cell phone. You know, saying, look we got, we got some tools over here, we got this guy over here. You know, and then you would go down and see you know, you know, if you found a guy from Ladder 4 you might find two guys from Ladder 4 there.

04.24.02 So (CLEARS THROAT) though then I went down, you know, I would take turn, help guys from my brother's firehouse. They would come down on a regular basis. They would call me, listen I'm coming down, where are you? And I would hang out with them just to have someone to talk to. And you know, we'd have kind of like a (?) trying to make a plan in a chaotic situation. But, you know, so someone was covering something, you know? (~JW~)

JW: You mean you were coordinating with his fellow firemen?

04.24.28 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, a few of them from the firehouse would come down regularly. To, to on their own time to uh, you know, dig and look at different areas, 'cos all along we tried to coordinate where we found their rig at, where they might be at. Where we didn't find them yet, you know? There was areas that were cleaned up we didn't find them. (CLEARS THROAT) So basically this was almost like the last area that we would find any remains of anybody 'cos a lot of most of it was cleaned up already.

JW: So the site was pretty much (?)

04.25.00 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, there was areas that weren't totally clean but we knew that probably there wasn't a lot of people there, like up against Building 6. And this was the footprint of Tower 2, we're figuring it was a lot of casualties lost in Tower 2 that we might find a lot of people there. So you know, at that time, you know, mid-march (CLEARS THROAT) I was staying down there pretty much every day. I would call my wife. Listen we, looks like we're finding a lot of people today. I think I'm gonna stay.

04.25.28 You know, and sure enough, I'm out there with them and the machine digs up (CLEARS THROAT) and here comes this Halligan out, that's a crow bar that the fireman use. Has Squad 41 written on it. And I knew my brother was carrying the, his Halligan that day. So

that was the one he was carrying. So I took that and we dug, I dug with that thing for like 12 hours. That was around 5 o'clock. Four o'clock uh, St. Patrick's Day.

04.25.56 So uh, just before midnight, you know, we found a bunch of remains that had just metal devices (CLEARS THROAT) very hot area, stuff was all ashes and bones. So we found a special tool Michael had in his pocket. Uh, we found some you know, uh, a kind of a knife that one guy had. Some devices that we knew and tools from Squad 41, so we knew that we had some guys from Squad 41 there. Then later on that day about 10 feet away, we found another guy with his helmet, you know, his helmet was there.

04.26.30 So within 2 or 3 days we found pretty much all the remains and tools from the Squad 41 guys. You know, starting on St. Patrick's Day, so.

JW: How about that?

04.26.43 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah. And that (CLEARS THROAT) that was like a major closure for me. It didn't hit me for a while, but you know, we found just about all their stuff. The guys from the firehouse you know, and we kept all the tools. You put it in buckets and all this stuff. They brought everything back for the firehouse and laid everything out .

04.27.02 Just about every tool they had was, was there. Except for the head of one axe. So we pretty much were confident we had like everything we could get there, you know what I mean? So and that was huge closure. That was like, you know, I went down there the first day and on St Patrick's Day and right after we found the Halligan and Michael's stuff, it started snowing and stuff. It was a very uh, you know, very intense moment. You know? It was just like unbelievable.

04.27.30 It was freezing cold that day, it was raining. Then right when we found this stuff, the rain turned to snow. And it's snowing. There's a couple of us from Squad 41. We're sitting there on top of this pile, it was snowing and we're like yeah, you know, this is, this is the moment right here, man. Unbelievable.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.27.50 END OF TAPE # BL-004

TAPE # BK-005, 3 of 3
BRIAN LYONS
08.26.02
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

05.00.00 PICTURE UP

05.00.00 BRIAN LYONS: (MID-STATEMENT) I knew that, when I found that card, that was in November, I said, I know they're here, that'd be right here. That was a sign. (Guarantee you?) That was a sign right there.

JW: Had you believed that before?

BRIAN LYONS: Well, I believe that I would find stuff.

JW: No, but I mean the sign?

05.00.21 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, I, I think so, a little bit. Not, not totally but, you know. I've always had premonitions of some type of something like that I don't know. Or you just have the will to make it work (LAUGHS) You know what I mean? You know, I don't know if it's that or, or what but. (CLEARS THROAT) You know, it wasn't like I believe in uh, you know, ESP or whatever, UFO's or anything like that, but. You know, you know, like my wife. I met her, it was love at first sight. You know, boom, that was it. We knew that it was gonna happen. She was just something universal that worked right away. Bink. It was from the first moment.

05.01.00 And uh, it was you know, it was, it's the same like that happened that day. Was just like when I found that ID card, I just knew that they were in that area. That's why we knew whenever we were gonna work over there. I, I (?) paid special attention to that area, 'cos I knew I found that card like 3, 4, 5 months prior to that, you know, so. I knew I was always

watching that area, when we were gonna work over there and dig over there, took very you know, precautions in that area.

JW: But again, that wasn't Michael's card?

05.01.32 BRIAN LYONS: No, right, right, exactly. It wasn't (CLEARS THROAT). You know, so it was very, very you know, weird things that happened down there, you know?

JW: Tell me about what you do now. I mean, tell me about post St. Patrick's Day. I would say if there's anything you want to tell me about then until the final load, or let's say last load, if you want to.

BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, right, well, you know, then after that we also uh, you know, I also stayed (~JW~)

JW: Well, let me ask you actually ask you a question. The next day, you remember the next day after St. Patrick's Day the next time you went to the site, did you walk the, was there a, a load (?)

05.02.14 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it was definitely something. Definitely. You know what, well, first of all, I felt uh, and I (?) remember I was telling a couple of guys from the firehouse they were down there the next day, too, and uh, because we still were missing two other guys from Squad 41, so from St. Patrick's Day 'til the next three or four days, then we found the rest of the guys.

05.02.36 So I went home but and Gippy would call me, say listen, we think we found Bobby Hamilton. You know, and then he would call me back, yeah, we found him. We're gonna have honor guard. So I'd drive all the way down there to walk in the line to carry the, you know, to carry the stoker up the, up the, had the honor guard (?) walk up the bridge and everyone you know, all the uniform services would line the bridge and give a salute, and so on, and so.

05.03.02 You know, I would make sure I was available to come down there if I wasn't there to do the honor guard, so from, from that day the next few days we found like, so the next, that whole, it was like a, it was, it was a time frame of you know, three to five days, five days where we found the whole squad and you know, it was a lot of chaotic stuff going on, and type of thing. You know, then I, uh, the, the day after that same day I guess, that same day I went to Elaine's house with the tool that I found.

05.03.33 Of Michael's, you know. I told her, look, we found his Halligan, we found this special tool, this, Michael had this in his pocket and gave it to her. So like we, you know, the thing for me was I went down there and I found what I was looking for, you know, I found. Even though it wasn't a whole body or it wasn't even a lot of stuff that we might identify, but in the millions of tons of, of stuff, you know, we, it was like finding a needle in a haystack, you know, and that was a great accomplishment, I think. It was a huge thing, taken off my shoulders.

05.04.09 Like I have major closure for that, because of that. I just know, you know, that was all this stuff right there, and we found it. That was it. You know, we, we found it, we got it.

JW: And, and you obviously (?) the honor guard and (?)

BRIAN LYONS: Right, exactly, yeah. It was uh, (~JW~)

JW: (Did you?) Had you had a uh, service for (?)

05.04.29 BRIAN LYONS: No, because what happens is we're waiting for DNA results to come back from that. We, we haven't got any DNA results from the uh, the three people's remains we believe we found that were very burnt. Just ashes and bones. The other three individuals from Squad 41, they were more intact per se. Than the last three. Well, they were really the first three we found, with tools. So we've only had three services for the people from Squad 41.

05.05.02 There's been memorial services, but you can't have a death certificate or anything issued 'til you get the DNA positive identification. Which that, those remains went into the pile of

20,000 remains that was existing. And that's an ongoing thing that's still another 8 months to go, doing that. Still. You know, so.

JW: Anything from St. Patrick's Day still (at last load?)

- 05.05.29 BRIAN LYONS: Oh, well, it's uh, you know, after that had happened, you know, then I was, still had an obligation to make sure that we got every single remain that was possibly there, you know, every corner. You know, there was a lot of trades and unions and people wanted to hurry up and get things cleaned up, and you were just like hold on, let's make sure we get this work with the chiefs and some of the fire department captains. Those some guys I met down there that knew my brother that were running the site down there, became good friends with them. You know, I would work with them to make sure we would clean up.
- 05.06.01 The goal now was to clean every, single inch of anything that would have any human remains so that we could give something back to a family. And we did that all the way 'til the last truckload was left. So I can say with a clear conscience that we got every single spic and span, crook and corner, there's not one single area that was untouched. So if there was any human remains anywhere within a mile square of that place, it was found and brought to the proper place to be, to look at.
- 05.06.34 Absolutely. So, uh, and that, and that I could you know, sleep the rest of my life away with that, you know, I feel good that that was done. You know?

JW: Uh, and then staying on, tell me about, I mean, obviously you met a lot of people and (?)

- 05.06.49 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, and then you know, put it this way, there were a lot of people that would like to stay, but the job comes to an end, so it was nice that the company that I was with was a low bidder on one of the projects that's, that's an ongoing project there, part of the rebuilding.
- 05.07.05 And it was nice that I got to get onto that project. I could have easily been shipped off to Staten Island or to another project, you know, but just, the way the cards played out was what they needed for me to do down there as project manager for the PATH restoration project, I

fitted into that for them. They put me on that project. And now (CLEARS THROAT) I'm on a project that's the first part of rebuilding the Ground Zero situations and uh, uh, extremely happy with the project that I'm on. (~JW~)

JW: Why?

- 05.07.38 BRIAN LYONS: Well, one is it's uh, a good position for me to be at. It's, it's a nice project because it's (LAUGHS) a reimbursable project, let's put it that way. Economically it's easier to manage than a hard money job. Uh, (CLEARS THROAT) which means it's, it's paid for time and material-wise, so it's like you don't make as big a profit, your company, but uh, it's easier to manage because you don't, you're not trying to hit like the lowest number, and there's a lot of chaotic situations, you know.
- 05.08.10 So as long as you manage everything properly and the job gets done, you know, reasonably well, you know, things will, you know, fit their place to meet your schedule. So, it, it's a good project to be on because of that situation. And you know, then it's a high profile project, I guess.
- 05.08.32 It helps your career in some way. Uh, I'm not so worried about that, you know what I mean,? You know, I'll go and like scrub dishes if I got to, you know, to, to get you know, Patricia a new, you know, bicycle tire (LAUGHS). But you know, it's, you know, some people are very career-orientated, and they, they look at it like, you know, they you know, they want to be on this project because you know, they get a better job somewhere. I'm not really looking at like that way. It's, it's a nice project to build from the ground up. You're like, you know, it's something like building the blocks, building your house up, you're starting from scratch.
- 05.09.02 You're gonna you know, demo something and build it 'til it works again. Get that train working and one day I'll be riding it around that big circle, you know? It'll be done and I'll go on to something else. So, it's a, it's a project that has building blocks and it's kind of something as you know like I've been speaking to you, what you did your whole life. It's you're building it from the beginning, you're making something work, you're making something new. You know, it's, it's uh, and it's a nice, you know, it's pretty much of a, it's a bigger project, where, you know, it's not gonna be uh, something that takes like a month or two.

05.09.36 Over a year, and two years' time you're building this massive thing that comes into a working, you know, transit system uh, when you're finished. So.

JW: Uh, is it, is uh, do you think, I mean, obviously I'm sure you think of Michael a lot. Is it some way a tribute to that, or do you feel that the cards played out the way they did for fate or do you, I don't know, what are your feelings about your.

05.09.59 BRIAN LYONS: Yeah, I think, I think uh, you know, I, I got to believe that Michael had a hand in this thing. I just, I don't know, it's just like fate brought me here, but it's like I know that this was something that probably me and Michael would have like talked about, be a great position, uh, in a great job to be rebuilding this type of thing, you know, what I mean? It's like you know, he was guided you right through there, to like to, the job you're at right now. Bonk. You know what I mean,? It was just uh.

05.10.30 You know, the whole way through, the whole process of uh, you know, sometimes I would say to myself, I'm walking like 4 months into it in the freezing cold in muck and mud and I'm saying like, Jesus Christ, Lyons, look what you got me into, man. It's like (LAUGHS) what are doing to me? (LAUGHS) I'm like freezing, I'm starving, nothing's working today. Oh, my, oh, I would just say that to myself as a joke. It was like yeah, what the hell are you doing to me? I'm down here looking for you, dope. (LAUGHS) You would think that sometimes.

05.11.04 Oh, god, you know, I mean, look what you got me into. 'Cos it was hard, man, very, it was really hard. Uh, I've got to admit it was hard, very hard. Harder than building my house (LAUGHS).

JW: How long did you think (you'll be working?)

05.11.22 BRIAN LYONS: Well, this is a two year like project, you know, and like, you know, and so we'll be here 'til, 'til it's finished, I guess, and get the train going. You know, and then you have whatever else is gonna happen down here. Like I told Danielle, she said, where will you be in 7 years? I said, I'll be the guy putting the light bulb on top of that antenna on whatever big building they put here. (LAUGHS) (CLEARS THROAT)

JW: Do you have any just general thoughts about uh, your future? You know, this is a project that goes for several years, as we've discussed (?) I'm just curious.

- 05.11.57 BRIAN LYONS: No, no, I don't know I would like to be uh, one of the people that's in charge of building the memorial type of thing. You know, make sure, you know, I would be a family member that would be involved. So I know that I would make sure that you know, things were done appropriately, you know, on the construction end of it. There's lots of people uh, you know, venting their, you know, thoughts by trying to get involved in the planning of these memorials and stuff like that. You know, I have my thoughts on it, but I'm not uh, I'm not an activist of you know, making sure that you know, it's done this way and that way.
- 05.12.33 Uh, I don't really have any way. The way I feel about it is, you know what? We're New Yorkers, and whatever memorial is built down there, will most likely be done the right way, 'cos we do things the right way here. There's a, a few screw ups here or there, you know, like the Long Island Railroad don't meet, you know, the Metro North. But, but in general (CLEARS THROAT) whatever you know, I've been to a lot of memorial things, I think, in my life.
- 05.13.00 I've been to the Arizona, I've been to different places. There's memorials in Battery Park. And I mean, I've been to it and you look at it, I'm not like, and then you read a name or two on the memorial and you know, you move on. It's not like I was looking at, why did they pick granite instead of blue stone for that, you know, memorial? And there's a lot of people (LAUGHS) here that are, that now are like looking at, you know, what, you know, they're gonna do for memorial. And you know, someone would want a granite wall, someone wants no wall, you know?
- 05.13.34 I don't know. I mean, 'cos this isn't the place I'm gonna come to you know, pray uh, for my brother and stuff like that. Uh, I just don't see myself coming here to do that. So as far as a memorial would be concerned, I would just say, you know whatever people decide to build or how they want to do it, I'm sure it'll be done appropriately.
- 05.14.00 And you know, everyone will be you know, have their little place there and everyone that died there will be remembered somehow. And uh, you know, (CLEARS THROAT) like I

said, I wouldn't mind being the one, you know, to help build it all, so looks like that's probably what I'm gonna doing. I'm getting older in my life. I don't want to switch careers too much, you know, so. That's, that's about the feeling I have about for that.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.15.10 BRIAN LYONS: I got two boats on the lake and I haven't been in once this year. This year was all screwed up, though. You know, well, what happened was I took Patricia, Elizabeth and Patricia every year they have a fishing tournament. This was one of the things, they wanted to have on a Saturday.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.15.28 BRIAN LYONS: And uh, when Elizabeth, Patricia wasn't born and Elizabeth was born first, so I took her. She was 3. So we went to the 3-5 years old, and I won first place for the biggest fish and Elizabeth won first place for the biggest fish. And everyone says, oh, you cheat. But honestly, I wouldn't want to cheat, because I wouldn't want to take them away from. I made her pull the fish in. You know, I might, I think that time I might have threw it out, but then you give it to them and if that uh, catch on I make her bring it at least all the way in, you know, so I can say she really won the fish. So, she won when she was 3, the biggest fish.

05.16.01 And then a couple of years went by and I, so I guess I couldn't, we couldn't make them 'because I had to work on Saturdays. So this year I think I even had to work on a Saturday but I took off 'cos I wanted to take them down to the uh, tournament. So we went down there, and now, and Elizabeth had Irish dancing class that day. And she, at 7th, she didn't even want to fish. The worms stunk. And but Patricia was into it. And she, as soon as she, I tossed it out and handed the pole, bam, she caught like the (?) she caught the biggest fish. I didn't win anything, but you know, when the, and then she was playing in the thing.

05.16.33 I'm like listen I think you, I think they're gonna call your name. You're gonna win. So she stood there and she's like, and they said first place, Patricia Lyons. She was like yeah. She like took the trophy, she was holding it up like that and everything. It was unbelievable.

And then, and then they called her back 'cos they had like these other prizes. A big fishing pole they gave her. So she was all psyched. She still is psyched. And she, and she took the trophy and knocked on all the neighbors' doors to show them. (?) I'm gonna go show Joe.

05.17.00 Let's go, we got to show them. She won the first place down there. So it was really good, you know. And we, you know, we fished there a lot of times. And uh, you know, I try to go out here for the sound sometimes to fish. You know what I mean?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.17.34 BRIAN LYONS: My brother's wife doesn't want to come the 11th. They have (~JW~) Michael's wife. They have a, a separate ceremony at the firehouse. Some of the wives, they don't want to come here anyway, 'cos it's too crowded. They have a quiet ceremony like they had for the last truck at the firehouse. So I don't know exactly what time that's gonna be at the firehouse, but I'll probably come here for the 11th. During the day and then go back to the firehouse. And then at 7:30 at night, at Michael's volunteer firehouse, because he was a member of a volunteer fire department up there, they gave him a memorial stone and stuff with a plaque on Memorial Day.

05.18.33 They're gonna have a 7:30 nighttime vigil which we'll go to with Elaine, Michael's wife, with that. So it's gonna be a (?) packed full day of September 11 stuff (LAUGHS). You know? From the morning 'til night.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.20.30 BRIAN LYONS: Like, like today a whole bunch of steel arrived. It's the first like major steel stuff there. It's by Church and Liberty. There, they're erecting, it's the grillage for the sidewalk, but it looks like they're building a new building, 'cos people are like all over there, the crane is there unloading the steel (LAUGHS) and stuff like that, you know what I mean?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.20.56 BRIAN LYONS: So it's, it's things like that that uh, you know, you don't want to miss. This is a simple thing, it's a sidewalk grillage, but people see (?) a steel truck come up, these big beams are coming off it, everyone thinks they're building a new, you know, these are all tourists. They think they're building the new buildings. You know, but they're really just putting (~JW~) yeah, they're putting in supports for a sidewalk. But you know, uh, it's something like that that you (?) don't want to miss or whatever.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.21.48 ROOM TONE

05.22.30 END OF TAPE # BL-005