

TAPE # CC.0903.0500.5
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PROJECT REBIRTH

05.01.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What are you wearing?

05.02.46 CHARLES : Well, uh, I have a vest on that I uh, was given, privileged to be given last year for a ride called America's Ride. And this is the second year that I, took the ride.

05.02.59 And I have uh, on the badge, my angel, on a Harley. And something I was blessed in uh, '03, which really saved me. I'll tell you about that later on. And I have some pins, different pins. Uh, this pin here is from one of the Federal Fire uh, Fire Emergency service. Protective you know (?) under the uh, new commission they have.

05.03.29 One of the fellows gave me this, and this is the Capital Policemen and this badge here is (?) authentic police officer badge from Newcastle, Pennsylvania. I have a Port Authority one also. Uh, uh, also a uh, ACE, Kansas and New Jersey Turnpikes. I haven't pinned them on yet. But uh, I was privileged (?) these people thought enough of me to give me these badges.

05.03.58 And say don't ever take them off. So I'm not taking them off.

JW: How was the trip?

CHARLES : Great. (~I~)

JW: What was the route like and how did it start?

05.04.10 CHARLES : Well, we uh, started in LA. And our first stop was uh, Vegas. Uh, we didn't have nothing particularly there. And from there, I think uh, the other states I'm really, we went in Colorado. Uh, New uh, (?)

JW: You don't have to get them in order.

05.04.37 CHARLES : Ohio and then we went into Pennsylvania, but before that we went into uh, uh, oh, gosh, I can't think of the name of this town, but the whole town turned out. Oh, gosh. (STOPS)

JW: Just keep talking.

05.04.53 CHARLES : Anyway, we, we went to several uh, towns and the turnouts, each time we think one (?) turnout was good, you know, you go and you don't see nobody. These small towns and (?) towns are economically hurting. But they came out en mass, and when we turned the corner, some of these (?) towns, the whole town was there to greet us. Uh, it was really great. And when we went to Newcastle, they, they have the home, that's the largest, that's the world's firecrackers uh, where all the firecrackers are made mostly in the world. Are in Newcastle.

05.05.29 And the same was I did a bridge uh, well, anyway. When we arrived there, we had like 2,000 bikes waiting on us. So and about maybe 10,000 people. And they joined us. And when we turned the corner, they had fireworks, fire trucks, and they did the same fireworks that you see go to the Brooklyn Bridge for 20 minutes. It was, it was really (?). I mean, if you (LAUGHS) you ever want to get your heart to thumping, those are the times that made your heart thump, just an outpour of love of the patriotism of people.

05.06.01 Uh, coming out and seeing us. And it made that hard drive. I, I drove uh, behind a motorcycles mostly all the way across keeping crazy drivers, and there were some real crazy drivers out there. But in, fortunately we, in most cases, we had police escorts, even with

police escorts, they were cutting out and cutting into it, and some of them got lots of ticket, 'cos you know, the cops were even cutting off the lanes to keep us safe.

- 05.06.28 Like left and right, and we ride straight down. Or put us on the left and they would (?). And it was real, really, really nice. And when we went to Washington, which uh, was day before yesterday, they shut down the whole town and let us through. They, they really uh, their, that, I could not believe I could go through uh, DC and all that traffic, and the traffic was thicker than New York. And that stopped, slow down doing 45 to 65 going straight through.
- 05.06.59 Uh, it's a tribute to what the country wanted, when they want to do something, they can do it. And it was really beautiful. We had a flyover uh, (?) DC. And at the uh, Pentagon. And a bagpipes uh, an honor guard. It was you know, you know, you made, it humbled me, that these people would just turn out for us like that. It was really humbling. And the charity that I was riding for uh, I was happy and privileged to ride. I (?) want to ride again.
- 05.07.33 I also in St. Louis uh, yeah, we went to St. Louis, yeah, that's another thing, I went there, and that's where I met this beautiful woman with pigtails uh, doing the go go dance thing. And that was fun. That part of it, yeah, you better not put on this so my wife could see it, but that was fun (LAUGHS). And I bought myself a Harley Fireman's Special.
- 05.07.58 And uh, they're fixing it up. I had met the owner, and his chief service man, but he was transferred out, but he's still within, the serviceman's still within the district. So he's gonna fix the bike up special. I've just got one thing I just don't want that Fireman's color. I just don't like the color too much. Uh, maybe a darker red or something. But I'm picking the bike up in California. Uh, for next year. But I'll be riding another bike. I've been given the use of another bike.
- 05.08.28 But I wanted to ride this uh, Jim Van Cliff's wife, Clief's wife, I think that's her name. And so I'm gonna take them up on that offer, 'cos I'll be going down to Florida in February to ride a lot. Get some use to pushing.

JW: When did you start riding?

05.08.45 CHARLES : Uh, I rode the other day. It was only at night, I just rode, I was (?) was getting my practice in then.

JW: When did you start altogether?

05.08.54 CHARLES : Last year. When uh, one safety course and that was it (LAUGHS). You know? And uh, today I lost all my driver's uh, I went to Ohio doing 98 miles an hour, but if the cop had caught me. I was carrying this flag that uh, has the victims' names of everybody who fell in the uh, 3 tragedies. And they told me, we had a police escort up ahead, and they told me, book it and get it on up. But we was in Ohio. And I came on up doing 98. And this guy, he uh, he said I was doing 95, but he gave me a ticket for 98.

05.09.30 So, but the mayor of Newcastle said he's gonna uh, call back and tell him, you know, we asked him that he drive at this speed, you know, to come on up like this. So we'll see if Pennsylvania will honor the mayor of, of you know, I mean, if Ohio will honor the mayor Pennsylvania. So we'll see. But if not uh, this will be a ticket I'm proud to carry. You know? As long as they don't mess with my license. This will be the first ticket I've had (?) then I got a ticket today. 'Cos no license, I found out I had lost all my ID.

05.10.03 (?) Money and ID. I can't get over it. Just been a day. Oh, get (?) we almost do 4,000 miles 'cos we crisscross. I don't lose anything, I make sure everybody else's stuff is OK but (LAUGHS) my stuff. But other than that it was a really great trip. It was one of those trips that even though somebody sitting here that got scared of my driving, I didn't hurt nobody (LAUGHS).

JW: How did the ride originate and what was it for?

- 05.10.43 CHARLES : Well, the ride is the uh, World Trade Center Miracles Foundation. It's founded by a fellow by the name of Mitch Morrison in California. He's an ex-FBI agent. Uh, and he, his background, his father used to uh, play (?) pro ball.
- 05.11.03 And he thought of how could he help uh, like many other people, some of the people like who have fallen through the cracks. When I say fallen through the cracks, people who were in that building are being, they families are being taken care of. Where people around the surrounding areas, such as buildings next door, a couple of buildings around that uh, were affected because they were not in the building, but they were there, but they didn't get no monies because they weren't in the building beside of the federal government deemed that.
- 05.11.39 They're not, some of them not getting it 'cos they're not, well, haven't gone back to work, no jobs, nothing like that. He said, felt that (?) these people should be serviced. I know that they gave personally \$75,000 to a young girl for an operation. So when I heard this about this uh, and I said, well, this is a worthy cause, and this is something for me to get involved in. 'Cos I've, I'm you know, since uh, 9/11 uh, I like the idea of contributing, helping.
- 05.12.03 I didn't already had that in me, but uh, I really like that. And so I think I'll dedicate my life to doing this, you know, trying to help somebody. Uh, I would also like to see 9/11 become a national holiday now. And uh, call it Patriot's Day. Not a soul go to work. Nothing open up (?) because we lost more people here than at the White House, I mean, at uh, Pearl Harbor. You know, it was more people. So.
- 05.12.30 And then uh, you know, I've heard people say, why, you know, we can't really win this because they're willing to sacrifice 19 people, you know, just give their lives up in those three planes. But there was, to my dying day I believe this, those 365 men or 362 men uh, no it's 343, that's what I've heard, those 343 men that went into that building, had they known that they thought they could save somebody's like that, and still went in there knowing the consequences.

05.13.02 So I, you know, I look at it like that. And that's the spirit I see around the country. Uh, I'm sad to say New York does not have the spirit. And I'm a New Yorker. It really, it's like uh, maybe it's because it's the, now it's too much hurt here, because but when you go to Shanksville and places like that, even you know, it's more spirited. It's, the Midwest, maybe they feel guilty that they weren't there to help or contribute more.

05.13.31 But it seems like New Yorkers just want to get away from it and let it die. Maybe that's, that's what I'm thinking it might be.

JW: What do you think it's about?

05.13.39 CHARLES : I think it's about the process of healing. They just uh, it hurts. Uh, but then again, because uh, I say it because every state that we went, there was full (?) coverage, radio, TV, and not just one station, several stations, because the ride was growing so.

05.14.00 Uh, DC, the same thing. Philly, the same thing. We got to Philly yesterday uh, yesterday? Yeah, yesterday. And when we leave Philly yesterday, same thing. Get to New York, nothing. But and I'm not just talking about when I say coverage, I mean radio and TV. Several stations, you know, and it's you know, and it's well, anyway.

JW: Has the city changed in your opinion?

05.14.26 CHARLES : Yes. Definitely for the better. It has changed for the better. Proof? Blackout, not one single crimes in the longest blackout that can really be reported in, in New York City history. That's really great. Less crime of any. It was probably had some but it's real minor. No one took advantage of the fact that the stores couldn't close, the gates couldn't get down, some of them. It was, that's a, I would think that's a sign of 9-11.

05.14.56 And people walked and without fear in pitch black. And I was out there and I, I felt no fear.

JW: Do you find yourself thinking about 9-11?

05.15.05 CHARLES : I try not to. Uh, when the real side, I try not to. Uh, yesterday uh, all the time I was down (?) I never cried, right? (LAUGHS) Yesterday I'm laying in the bed in Philly and I had done a TV interview and a radio interview about 4 in the morning, 5 in the morning. I don't know why they always want so early in the morning. But (LAUGHS) they went about that time, they had us get up.

05.15.30 So I finally came upstairs, and uh, I was bunking with a SEAL because he had, for whatever reason, they misplaced his key, room, he didn't have a room. He's a navy SEAL and he was traveling with us. So I'm laying there and he's, he turns the TV on, and I heard young girls say the names, saying it, and then she said my mother, such and such, and that's when the tears started. I just you know, I just couldn't hold back. You know, 'cos that, I try not to.

05.15.58 So when I see about the New Yorkers uh, distancing themselves from it, I, I probably was doing it, I'm probably doing the same thing. So I'm speaking about myself, too. So I'm you know, you do distance yourself from it.

JW: What do you distance yourself from when you say that?

05.16.13 CHARLES : Well, I distance myself from the, the hurt that you think about uh, when you think about 9/11. The anger that you know, because they definitely slapped us in the face, coming here and hitting us like that. That's what I'm thinking about, you know?

05.16.32 You know, they turned, they turned us into a one eye open all the time now. You know, uh, if uh, it means that we have to lose some of our liberties like uh, the Big Brother situation, I have no problem with that, 'cos I'm, I don't have nothing to hide. You can investigate, you listen to all my conversations, just don't tell my wife what I'm saying.

05.16.58 You know, so other than that I have no problem with it.

JW: What have you been thinking about particularly traveling across the country? Did it change your point of view at all?

05.17.14 CHARLES : No, it strengthened me. It's strengthened me, I want to ride. (LAUGHS) It just strengthened me. I want to do it again. It's exhilarating, it really is. It's tiring, but exhilarating at the same time.

05.17.28 I mean, it's, it's something that's so prideful to see Americans come out and greet you, and say thank you for just a bike ride. Not knowing that I was at Ground Zero or anything it has nothing to do with that. It's just the fact that you attempting to make focus on 9/11, on this day. And you're a part of contributing to making, keeping this 9/11 alive.

05.17.59 That, that that is so prideful. I'm, I looked (?) at the faces of the guys riding, and I told them I said, it's something about this ride 'cos I said, when you're out, when the people come out, it's better than any feeling you've ever had. I said, it's better than sexual things, better than love of a woman, is you have to really see it. Oh, you're kidding. And then they came back to me to a man and woman, I see what you mean. It's just something that make, it's a special feeling that you can't, you just uh, I can't explain it.

05.18.31 It's just really special.

JW: Like freedom?

05.18.35 CHARLES : Better than freedom. We know we got freedom, but it's just the fact that we acknowledge this other freedom, it's just great. It really is great. Yeah, we're free to ride our bikes, do what we want to do. Yeah. And we're not letting nobody deter us from doing those things. (~I~) Yeah, I can say our bikes 'cos I got a bike now.

JW: I didn't quite understand, where did you get the bike?

CHARLES : It's in St. Louis at the Harley dealership there. I should have brought my papers down so I can show you. Ah.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.19.15 CHARLES : (LAUGHS) I'm ready to rock. I don't want to seem too happy, but I'm ready to rock and roll. I'm going to Florida 'cos last year we didn't have uh, I was supposed to be riding a lot. The weather was lousy here, so I couldn't really ride. But I'm going down (?) for to take 3 months, 4 months down there in Florida.

05.19.32 I'll kick around down there.

JW: What's going on in the neighborhood?

05.19.43 CHARLES : I'm still whipping hinny. I'm, (?) playing more pinochle and I'm playing a lot more chess, and I'm staying in the house. I don't uh, I really limited myself. I don't, I'm never a bored person. Uh, I really don't drink.

05.19.59 The only time I drink is a special occasion. If there's liquor in the house, I don't bother it. So uh, I either play pinochle or I'm at home. That's all. Occasionally, and if I play chess, I'll play that to the same extent, you know? I brought my chess set along and never even played, or I played on the train going out. That's all, but I beat everybody there, so that got boring. So.

JW: How's your wife doing?

05.20.24 CHARLES : Great. She's great. She's got real good. Uh, real, real good. I can't you know, I've been blessed. That way. My uh, I told you since I'm, the last time I spoke to you, my daughter got an excellent job. Uh, she uh, I told you she had uh, called me up, Daddy, I got this job, 'cos she used to work here in City Hall. Not in City hall but for the health

department. She's an (epidemiologist?). That's the study of diseases. And she said, I got this job, I only have to be there one week, so I'm on a three-way conversation with my niece.

05.20.59 So we're saying, where's the job at? Paris. So my niece and I said, oh, that's great. We'll be (?) doing time shares. So she said, no, Daddy, I'm don't know, she said, y'all can be there, but I got to be setting up 19 clinics. She said, that's why I'm only gonna be there one. I said, 19 clinics in Paris? So she you know, I'm leading to something. Nineteen clinics in Paris is nothing. She said, no, I'm with the World Health Organization and I'm in charge of their 19 countries, and they want me to do 20 countries.

05.21.28 So she's, she doesn't have a job, she has a position you know? And I'm really proud of her. I really, really proud. She takes after her mother, I have to admit it. Smart like her daddy, but she takes after her mother. She uh, steadfast in her, the things she does. (~I~) But I, notice I said smart like her daddy (LAUGHS). (~I~) See, she can't say I didn't say something nice about her (LAUGHS).

JW: You say you don't try to think about 9/11, but how do you avoid it in New York City?

05.22.10 CHARLES : I play more pinochle. (~I~) You know, I distance myself from it. 'Cos if I allow myself to get into that, I can't do what I want to do. Uh, you know, I, and it's frustrating not to be able to do what you want to do.

05.22.29 And uh, bin Laden and, and those type like him, I would like to be able to go and just pull the trigger. And not for no reward. That's what I'd really like to do.

JW: Why do you say you can't do what you want to do? What does that mean?

05.22.52 CHARLES : I would like to go out and hunt him down. (~I~) And I wouldn't mind, if I was dying in the effort, it wouldn't be no problem, I would die would be a happy man. You know, you, that'd be a good way to go.

05.23.10 And I wouldn't even need to, let's see, you know, like you say, well, such and such did it. It doesn't even have to be known that I did it. It's not about accolades or nothing like that. I'd just like to really do it. I really do uh, I, I think about it a lot (LAUGHS). Maybe that's wrong, right?

05.23.28 But I really think about it a lot.

JW: Like all the time?

CHARLES : No. I'm just think about it. That's something I would really like to do.

JW: Where does that come from?

05.23.38 CHARLES : Hate. See, we have these jackets on that day, and (?) back of the jackets that we were wearing was never forgive. I kept saying never, no, no, they was saying never forget. I kept (?) what I was thinking uh, but I kept looking at saying never forgive. I'm not, I would never forgive this.

JW: We didn't talk about that much last year, did you feel that way a lot last year?

05.24.07 CHARLES : Yeah, I felt like that. But I was trying to turn the other cheek. But I see our boys still dying, uh, from this results of 9/11. And it's not making me happy. You know? I have two nephews that are in harm's way.

05.24.30 One (?) just made a unique group, he's in subs. And the other one's in the Air Force. And so, yeah. (?) I take it real personal now. I've took it personal before, but I just take it even more personal.

JW: So you would say you have changed?

05.24.58 CHARLES : Yeah. I was trying to turn the other cheek 'cos I was trying to understand the, but I, I find it's no understanding in that. You know? (LAUGHS) I, they, they struck uh, a building that was housing non-combatants. The Pentagon I could understand that. But non-combatants, no. You know? No. I really can't understand it.

05.25.29 I tried to understand it last year, and I've gone over it and I don't understand it. You know, I could say oh, I could turn the other cheek about the Pentagon. Those are military men. You know? They, they're, put that uniform on to die. You did put it on to serve, but they put it on knowing they, when you put it on, you are ready to die.

JW: What has your year been like this time? What stood out for you? I just remind you about August of last year when we filmed you playing pinochle? How was September 11th last year for you?

05.26.19 CHARLES : Uh, sobering. Uh, I did the ride, and uh, uh, the ride last year and the ride this year was like night and day.

05.26.32 This ride, this year, is much more uh, even though it was (?) last year, there's just much more awareness of it, and had it not been uh, this bike rally, I think we'd have had, it would have been too many bikes, 'cos so many people start e-mailing, we want to get in, we want to get in, but it was just too late. Uh, I say we, I mean, the Morison's 'cos we're telling me what was going on, 'cos I was driving his sister across.

05.27.01 And already, they have triple the amount of bikes they want to leave from uh, LA this year. That in itself is something, so. Because that's the hardest trek, you know, that desert. You know? But they had very good road captains uh, this year. very, very good ones. They had good road captains last year, but I mean, these guys would go and block off lanes and everything.

05.27.31 And just uh, make sure that they're all the bikes got through and when they got through then we would go. It was well organized, and well done.

JW: Can you be more specific why last year was different? What do you think was the difference?

- 05.27.50 CHARLES : Well, we had somebody who uh, wanted to glorify himself. He was not there for the purpose of the ride. He was there to make himself look big and, so. He had tried to split the ride up in Pennsylvania, and we were supposed to be going to D.C. He took some of the riders. He was a volunteer firefighter who was there only 4 days. Because I used to see him there. I saw him there the (?) four days. And within two weeks after the (?) building came down he was never seen again. And he told me he wasn't there. And when I was working for the Red Cross uh, in January he was saying, well, he was doing bad he needed some money.
- 05.28.33 And I helped him get money. And he, this is documented on film when he, he was doing his video he said, the Red Cross, none of them helped me. And they paid for his rent, for six months, and his insurance and all that so he just. But by the time he got on the ride, he had been at the site from then to you know, forever. And he just, and so we, he uh, Morrison had uh, Mitch Morrison had said, C.C., at the end of that last year, I said, uh, I want to do this ride again.
- 05.29.06 He said, but I don't know uh, should I do it, he said, because of all this turmoil. I said, yeah, you should do the ride again. You know, I said do it again. So he, he planned the ride, and this guy mirrored his ride this year. All right. So when we got to Shanksville this year, he was there ahead of us mirroring our ride. He called his ride The Ride of the Americas, supposed to be coming from Ecuador. Up.
- 05.29.32 And he got to Shanksville ahead of us, and he had gone and told the superintendent of the Shanksville School that all, they don't have no real ride and all of this. And when we pulled up with over a thousand, with 2000 bikes. Uh, one of the guys was at Ground Zero, 'cos we had 6 guys that worked down there, engineers at Ground Zero and put him in his place. And said, you just want to cause dissention just like you did the last ride, 'cos they had heard.

05.29.57 And a lot of firefighters don't even want to have anything to do with this uh, particular person. So he said, you're just trying to cause dissention, and where's your ride at? He had five people. Calling himself a ride, (LAUGHS) but uh, so it was much better that way, you know? And I didn't want to bring out the negativity of the ride, but since you asked. And I'm being uh, truthful with you guys, that was it.

JW: And this one was just more harmony?

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

JW: That was a precision job?

05.30.32 CHARLES : Wasn't that nice? (LAUGHS) It's (?) right? (~I~) Yeah, yeah, I know. That's what I was talking about. It was, it was well done. And I was right on their tail. And your heart was in your mouth (LAUGHS). But as we got, went along, we got better and better, though. (LAUGHS) We really did. It really did get better, much better.

JW: What else about your year?

05.31.17 CHARLES : Uh, my last year was a rainy year, so I didn't do anything but play pinochle. I really, I'm, I went to the movie occasionally, and most of the time I buy movies at home, 'cos I'd rather look at the movies at home than go out.

05.31.32 Because it's, you can relax, do whatever you want to do, and under, you hear too many voices sometimes it's a comedy you really, the people can't help but laugh and you miss the joke, so I'd rather stay in the house. Until I'm gonna be dragged out, let's go get, let's go to dinner or something. And then I complain, well I cook better than they cook, or you know? (LAUGHS) So. But that's the only time. But uh, mostly my year was very, very quiet, you know? I really didn't do that much.

05.32.00 Uh, it was a very relaxing year 'cos of all the rain. And I play a lot of pinochle, played a lot of chess, that as all I did. I really you know, it wasn't nothing that you could say oh, I did this, I didn't go on no vacations, I didn't do anything like that. Oh, I, well, I did go to uh, Detroit maybe about five times, so I can't say that. Yeah, I went to Detroit a couple of times. I have a niece in Detroit and uh, I'm always out there as often as I can get out there. You know?

05.32.33 If she has her way now, I would be out there right now, you know? My niece and I are like buddies, you know, we hang out, you know, she'd say come on out, I want to get out the house. She want to get away from the kids and her husband (LAUGHS). I said, you're just using me to get out the house (LAUGHS). So. You know, I enjoy my family you know, we're close. Uh, I went uh, I did go uh, hang out with my cousin, one of my other cousins this year (or something?)

05.33.03 She's a state Supreme Court judge, and we uh, from New York and we, we hang out to kind of take the you know, we, we're all our cousins we all hang close, so. That was.

JW: Any particular high points or low points?

05.33.22 CHARLES : There, there were no high and there was no low. And I can't tell you what might be going on right now. Not on film (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.JW: What has changed? I remember you talked about the feeling of camaraderie and purpose at Ground Zero. Do you think about that or not?

05.34.45 CHARLES : No, I've uh, I've really tried to distance myself from uh, thinking about Ground Zero. Or being in the pit, 'cos it just brings up images of stuff that I don't want to see.

05.34.58 So I uh, I don't, I'm proud to, when I see a fireman or (?) I take my hat off to them, 'cos I know what they went through, uh. They say don't criticize a man 'til you walk their shoes. I don't have to walk their shoes, I just looked at the shoes. You know? Uh, 'cos I had my, I had boots burned off down there in the first day. The rubber of them.

05.35.32 I was just thinking about it. Uh, but uh, anyway. I was proud to even be standing next to them, you know, I was proud that they wanted me to. You know? Really uh, and I don't want to get to talking about this. I'll start getting messed up. Anyway. Anyway, you ain't gonna take me down that road. I went down that road yesterday and the, I told her I was laughing, I told the lady when I came down, I said, I said don't tell them I wet the bed 'cos I was just crying (LAUGHS).

05.36.07 Yeah, it was kind of hard yesterday. Uh, so. You a mess. You done bring me down roads I don't want to go down. And I frightened to go down, I ain't gonna go down those roads (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I am interested in the change and what the day meant to you, not to take you back there. Last year you said you lived more for yourself and then chose to live differently. Has that changed?

05.36.54 CHARLES : No, I, I live more for people to help. I uh, I try to help more. I try to be more giving. I've always been giving, but I'm more aware of my giving now. I'll sacrifice myself more to help somebody else. You know? And I want to, I uh, I put in the applications for the Red Cross to drive for them, all of that kind of stuff this year. I did do that. I forgot about that. Uh, so they have me down. I'm ready to do anything. To response to any emergencies, stuff like that, so.

JW: What is that process?

05.37.35 CHARLES : Yeah, I just haven't heard back from them, but I told them that I, I'd be one of their first responders for an uh, emergency. Somebody getting burnt out their house or anything, or if they just need, whatever they might need. So uh, the response they sent me a letter and then they thanked me and then they sent me to an awards ceremony for some of the others, and they had us down and said the new people on the list to be called.

05.38.01 Yeah, I forgot about that. I did do that.

JW: What was the award ceremony?

05.38.06 CHARLES : Awards ceremony for some others who had been uh, doing good deeds for the service for the Red Cross. So I went to that party, which was nice. And I saw some people I had seen before. It was, that as gratifying. I, I found a woman there who lived in my building that we didn't even know each other. (LAUGHS) Strange.

JW: What was her involvement?

05.38.29 CHARLES : Uh, she uh, she wasn't at Ground Zero, but she, the fact that she was a, a Red Cross worker. And uh, and then come to find out she said uh, you look familiar. I say you look familiar. She said, oh, I saw you at the washing machine. I said, yeah uh, we live in the same building for the last 15 years (LAUGHS). 'Cos I, I normally uh, just come in the house and I don't speak to a lot of people. I just do what I'm gonna do and go. And I especially don't, women, I just don't want to say nothing to no women so don't nobody can say anything, 'cos I'm flirtatious (?) as is.

05.38.58 So.

JW: That part didn't change?

05.39.04 CHARLES : And oh, yeah, I have been going to church a lot more. A whole lot more.

JW: Really? Did you use to go to church?

05.39.09 CHARLES : No (?) I used to. One time I used to go three times on Sundays. Catholic church, my father was Catholic. My mother is Methodist. I'd go to her church, and then after I'd finish that I would go to the Holy-Rolly Church somebody, a friend of mine. But uh, I've been going more on my own lately, by myself. Uh, I have been going to church a lot more. (~I~)

JW: What's that about, can you tell me?

05.39.35 CHARLES : Uh, it's just something I just feel I should do.

JW: Does it bring you peace?

05.39.42 CHARLES : Yes. It's comforting to go or something. I don't go all the time. I just go when it feels it, when I feel it. And uh, I might go to, I might go to a Catholic church then I might want to go hear some good down kicking, stomping good music, and I'll go listen to that. You know?

JW: You don't go to find that at Catholic church?

05.40.06 CHARLES : No, you definitely don't go there. No, no, you got to go where ARC is kicking it. That's uh, drug rehabilitation uh, choir. But they can blow. Nice voices. They have uh, like three-part harmony almost you know, like but it's in a choir. They really sound really good.

JW: Did you hear the choir yesterday?

05.40.32 CHARLES : No, I didn't hear anything.

JW: There was a choir at Ground Zero.

CHARLES : I was no, I was on the road.

JW: Did you hear the readings of the names?

05.40.42 CHARLES : Oh, I heard yeah, oh, yeah, I did hear them, the kids, you talking about the kids? I uh, that's when I had to leave. I have (LAUGHS) I was doing the boo-hoo. I had to leave (LAUGHS). I tell you at this point I just couldn't take it no more. (?) right there at that point. Uh, yeah. I know.

05.41.01 I just, it was eating me up. I had to come downstairs. You know? I just couldn't deal with it. 'Cos when the ceremony was going on, I was not trying to hear that, you know, when the time the buildings went, I was trying not to have the TV on. And uh, my roommate at the time, he cut the thing on and he wanted to hear it. So. Uh, I had to go through that, that's all.

JW: Can you give me a strong sense of this, 'cos I had a feel of it in LA. We talked about your health last year, how are you feeling today?

05.41.44 CHARLES : I'm more content with what I'm going through, but, but uh, I'm a lot better. I'm a lot better because I, I still got stuff going through my chest and it's bothering me, but. You know, I'm content.

05.41.58 If I'm, if the Lord's got to chose me to die this way, I'm ready for it. You know, it ain't like, you know, it ain't no big thing. You know, I'm not willing to go. But I ain't scared to go. Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody want to die, you heard that expression? Well, I know I'm not gonna go to heaven. I'm gonna be the conductor on the Hell-bound Express. So (LAUGHS). Devil look out, I'm coming (LAUGHS).

JW: You're still taking a lot of medication?

CHARLES : Yeah, I am.

JW: What medication are you taking?

05.42.35 CHARLES : Uh, I just, I got a couple of pills uh, I have something (?) I got some stuff. I got some stuff, that's all. Don't worry about that. (?) the bad times, we're all right. We ain't gonna kick that.

JW: Anything you'd like to say?

05.42.54 CHARLES : Yeah. I like you as a person, and uh, I'm always happy to see you. That's why I got you your vest.

JW: Thank you.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

05.44.23 END OF TAPE # CC.0903.0500.5