

TAPE # CC 30
Charles Cook
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

01.0100 PICTURE UP

01.01.10 ROOM TONE

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: You look great.

01.04.48 CHARLES COOK: Well, I'm feeling pretty good. (~JW~) Still got that cough, but you know, I'm good. Chest still hurt, but I'm still good. I don't feel bad now that, now that they have made it so they know I wasn't lying about, I said I swallowed glass. I kept telling people, I swallowed glass. I know I did. (?)

01.05.02 Now they confirmed that we swallowed, indeed swallowed glass, pulverized glass, steel, concrete you know, and a lot of other stuff, so, asbestos, so, (CLEARS THROAT) and they found we all had the same problems. Like, a nasal drip. You know, constant, stomach messed up. You know, but some are worse than others.

01.05.28 I'm so glad (?). It's like, I'm in good company. (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I like your shoes.

01.05.48 CHARLES COOK: Well, I've had this for years. And my father made me get these shoes. I've had these shoes for like, four years. I've been buying clothes for the last eight years. But I never wear them. And I just, like the tag's still on this. These are about eight years old. And I just keep putting them away, putting them away, putting them away. So after they

gave the prognosis, when Danielle saw me, I said, she said, oh, you're looking real, I said, I decided I might as well wear these clothes before somebody else wear them. So I'm starting to wear my clothes.

JW: You're dressing differently?

01.06.23 CHARLES COOK: Somewhat, yeah. I'm dressing the same, but yeah. I'm dressing a little bit differently. Every day I dress, I'm in some, different attire, you know. 'Cos I'll wear the same thing, but I like your style, see. That's my style. I like to come out really relaxed there. I got my chess set with me. Got my clock. Oh, I should show you (STOPS)

JW: Show it.

CHARLES COOK: Oh, but you should see, I got something you can't put on camera now. One of my new additions.

JW: Did you take that to the doctor?

01.06.54 CHARLES COOK: No. This is, this is one of my new additions to the, you know, one of those, Danielle (CLEARS THROAT), I ain't showed Danielle 'cos I don't want Danielle beating me up. This is a guy's thing. You might be able, a gentleman might be able to appreciate this. This is not gonna be out on camera. I keep it locked away. I shouldn't even show you. 'Cos you might tell somebody. Now you have to imagine, see how small she looks there?

01.07.31 Now look at the second picture. Does she look so small there? (LAUGHS) (~JW~) (?)
That's what keeps you young. (LAUGHS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.07.53 CHARLES COOK: I got to keep them hidden. See, I keep it locked away. (LAUGHS)

JW: What is in there?

01.08.35 CHARLES COOK: Well, this is a clock. It's a timer clock. It's for when two people play.

JW: Is this the thing where they pop it?

01.08.45 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. And I have a chessboard here. (~JW~) And I have black and white pieces. I have a good set. This is a real good set. This is a black piece. See, the weight of them. (~JW~)

01.09.01 See, on this side are the white pieces, So I keep them separate. So when I'm playing, you know, when I sit down and somebody just pick up and does this. I'll say just choose either side and then we just start playing. (~JW~) Yeah, so, now the other night, I played, I'm concentrating, playing chess now a lot. I'm getting real good. I'm getting excellent.

01.09.26 I give myself 18 more months and I'll be ready for serious tournament play.

JW: Really?

01.09.35 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. The guys I'm playing, a couple of them are masters. And I'm occasionally slipping up, beating them. And I'm, I didn't know nothing, because I'm starting to study. Now they told me to study. So (I'm gonna start?) playing for real. It's a good game. Keeps your mind occupied.

JW: It's a good game.

01.10.03 CHARLES COOK: Yeah, especially if you got things on your mind. You just, this'll take it away from you.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.10.18 CHARLES COOK: I got this hat in Detroit.

JW: You were there recently?

01.10.24 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. I was in Indianapolis, Indiana. Not too long ago. I went to a conference. I went out there by train. Ended up renting a car, then driving back to Detroit. And then took the car back to New York. And then if I had of known I was gonna do that, I would have driven my car (LAUGHS), you know, but it wasn't, that wasn't my plan. 'Cos I went out there to ride. And I missed the ride 'cos the train was late. Something don't want me on it back. (LAUGHS) So I missed the ride.

JW: What was the conference?

01.10.59 CHARLES COOK: It was a black expo. And I went out. This girl wanted me to invest in her business that she's starting up. I met some nice people out there. Only thing wrong, it's called thehotel.com. They were supposed to set me up in downtown Indianapolis. I wound up in the (Wintham?) Hotel, which is a good hotel, which I use a lot. And I was 20 miles away from, (LAUGHS) so I had to rent a car.

01.11.28 As opposed to whereas if I was downtown, I could've just walked two blocks to the conference. But I'm glad I went out there, 'cos I met some nice, I met a nice person out there. So I'm going to Chicago. We don't have no (?) in Chicago, it's a Winthrop Hotel, since they work for the, you know, work for the airline. So we gonna chill in Chicago for a day or two. Yeah.

JW: So last year you were on your way to Katrina.

01.12.03 CHARLES COOK: Oh yes, I was on my way to Katrina.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Tell me about that.

- 01.12.39 CHARLES COOK: The day after I last left you, or when I was going on to Katrina, I took a train down to DC and went out to Silver Springs, Maryland, to receive my orders uh, to head down to wherever I was going. Now I wasn't, didn't know at the time where I was gonna be dispatched.
- 01.12.58 But I ended up going to Montgomery, Alabama. Now they was gonna fly me out, but I don't like planes 'cos of my ear situation. So I took a bus and the train. (CLEARS THROAT) And subsequently, I ended up in Montgomery, Alabama,. When I got there, they had a staging area there. Red Cross. And uh, they were calling out assignments, and they was asking, who wants to go here, so they said the worst place right now is the Gulf (Port?), you know, Gulf Port.
- 01.13.31 So I said, oh, I'll take that spot. And a group of us drove down. And now I was not driving, so I was asleep. About, when we hit Mississippi, and, 3:30, 4 o'clock in the morning, when I awoken, I thought I was, I said, oh gosh, looks like we driving into a junkyard.
- 01.14.00 I actually thought we was going through a junkyard. I'm saying, oh, they taking a shortcut through the junkyard. But the junkyard extended for miles and miles. Because all along the highway, everything was thrown, we had to go through obstacles off the highway. It was really that bad. So I said, this can't be what I'm thinking. And then I realized this was, you know, this was what the devastation of the hurricane had done. So we ended up being posted or bivouacked, or whatever you want to call it, at a naval base, a sea bee Naval base in Gulf Port, Mississippi.
- 01.14.40 And during that time, also, that other hurricane came along, Rita came along during the time that I was down there. And of course, we had to stay there. But the good part about being on the naval base was we were, we had a dry place to sleep. That was the main thing.
- 01.14.58 And the second thing was the food was so good. We didn't get naval food or anything, but you see, when, uh, every time there's a forest fire, they have a group of people who service the forest fires. They cook for the firefighters. And they came and cooked for us. And I think my, one of my first meals was steak, strawberry shortcake for dessert. (LAUGHS) I mean, the meals were like that just about every day.
- 01.15.28 I mean, really, really good food. So you didn't mind going in. Everyday I went to work, it was uh, you know, it was a pleasure (?) working, but it was really bad. Because as bad

- as 9/11 was, to me, this was somewhat worse. And I'll say it was worse. What happened to the people at 9/11 was permanent. And no more psychological effect. Because they're dead.
- 01.15.59 But these people are, who had homes, and to see your home literally maybe a mile away from where you were living, residing, was devastating to a lot of people. It was devastating to me because it really bothered me. (CLEARS THROAT) You know, it was not uncommon to see a boat maybe 15 or 20 miles away from water, in a tree.
- 01.16.27 That was not uncommon to see a boat in, (LAUGHS) on top of, what's that store? A big chain? Wal-Mart. Or (?), one of the type of stores. I mean, it's, you know, I had a fellow told me, he says, I told my brother to come on. He said, that's the last I seen of him. You know, it's, you know, it was just a lot of those stories like that. And we had a small rain. What I consider in New York a small rain, in the Gulf Port area. And it didn't rain hard.
- 01.17.04 And before you knew it, it was up to your, almost up to my ankles, because it's low lying. So I'm surprised that they don't get that more often. That's how bad it is, you know. So that was a good experience. But I had a real bad experience with 9/11 down there, with, I mean, with Katrina. While I was there (STOPS)

JW: What did you do down there?

- 01.17.36 CHARLES COOK: I went down there, (CLEARS THROAT) when I arrived, I had a big belly. Truth. My stomach was sticking out like that. And I went and I started driving a truck. And when driving a truck, I loaded my own truck. I packed stuff on the skid pack, what you would do is, you would go and, when I got there, the guy gave me, a guy came up and said, listen, can you drive a truck?
- 01.18.03 I said, yeah. I said, well, I got a truck I need you to, I'm getting ready to leave, he told me. He said, what you do is, you pick an area that you think you want to service Or you can pick any area. And when you see people in need, you just tell them, you go get, and whatever they need, you just go to the warehouse and you pack up what they need. So I started doing this. I used to make two and three trips a day. And I packed my own stuff. On the skid. Whatever you want to give to the people, I packed the truck full.
- 01.18.31 Come back, make a run. Just, you know, get it off, come back, make a run. And I, my trips went from the tip of Mississippi all the way up into Alabama sometimes. 'Cos we'd get up so

far, people would say, nobody's been in this area. Would you please come back? And so that's, you know, you'd be extended. I went down into, I can't think of the names right now. They're skipping me.

- 01.18.58 But some of the worst areas. And they would say, would you come back? I went to a church area. We have had nothing. So I come back. You get shovels, whatever you know, they might need. They might need 409. They might need something to help clean up, rakes, whatever it might be. You get what they, I went to the VA, I think that you all filmed me when I went to the VA. But (CLEARS THROAT), so you just float it. And that's what I did. But in picking up them bags and going like this and picking up them cases and cases of water and cases of food and stuff like that, I truly lost weight. (LAUGHS)
- 01.19.29 It was a good thing. It was, really it was a good thing. But I had an incident while I was there. There was a fellow coming through, we were on a naval base and the situation is that the lights went out around about 4:30, 5 o'clock in the morning. And a fellow's riding through, coming through fast. People are out getting up, ready for day. It's about 5 something. And he almost hit somebody. But he apologized.
- 01.19.58 But they had two forest rangers there. And they said, you got to stop, let me see your license. He said, listen, I got to go 'cos this is a naval base and we got to put the lights on. So I was going to the head. And coming back, I hear them still messing with him. I said, listen, he got government plates. You all can't even harass this man. So then he says, I got to go. They're calling for me. 'Cos they kept calling for us. And he kept saying, I'm coming. They say, you need to get these lights on fast, because the commander's like, you know, is looking for the guy. So he speds (sic). Next day, I hear them say, we got him.
- 01.20.29 What you mean, I said? They said, yeah. We got him. Said, what did he do? Said, he assaulted those two officers. I said, he did? So I didn't say anything, you know. But before that, someone had come to me and said, did you see an accident, right, like, three days before. It was about three days, somebody, second day or third day, somebody said, did you see an accident? I said, no, I never saw an accident. What are you talking about? They said, you CC, you the only CC out here. They said, you was out there when it happened. Did you see? I said, no, I didn't see no accident.
- 01.21.00 Which I didn't. So then, second day or third day, they came and said, they came and said, yeah, we got him 'cos he assaulted two officers. I said, who did he assault? 'Cos I'm listening

now. And they said, the two officers, one was female, one was male officer. And the one that was going to draw a gun when he didn't stop. The female never left the scene. The other guy chased him away. Said, yeah, we got him on federal charges for assaulting two federal officers. I said, oh no.

01.21.33 This is when I'm getting ready to leave. This is my third week, but I'm getting, I'm extending another week. So I went and I called the OD, officer of the day. I said, listen, I got to speak up. I said, I didn't see an accident out there, but I'll tell you what, I saw an incident. I said, I need to talk to your commanding officer. So I told him. He said, that's not what they're saying. They're saying he assaulted both of them, hit them both. I said, how did he hit them? I said, she never left here.

01.22.01 That's not what they're saying. I said, okay. I said, well, I got to tell it, even if I don't want to tell it. I said, but I don't want to see nobody get falsely accused. And they bragging that he's going to federal jail. (CLEARS THROAT) So I went to the adjutant, general adjutant, who was the JAG officer on the base. And I explained the whole situation. He said, that's not what we've been (?). He said, he don't say nothing to defend himself. I said, well, I've never seen that man before or since.

01.22.29 But this is exactly what happened. He said, well, why didn't he explain? I said, maybe he has his reasons why he's not explaining. I said, but he said he didn't hit nobody, but that's all he would say. So I said, I'm gonna tell you, if I tell you, give you this information, they gonna try and drum me off the base right away. I handed in that thing, signed it. Now my crew that I came with was supposed to leave on a certain day. Friday or something like that.

01.23.00 They waited till all the crew that I was with, and who had worked in the warehouse had gone. And then one of the guys in the warehouse said, he ain't never been here working. He never did nothing. He's been insubordinate and all that. You know, they took my money. (LAUGHS) They have like, a credit card thing. They took that. Had the MPs escort me off the base. Now I was trying to call that officer, 'cos they verify, they said, well, he's on, he's not home. He's on leave or something, whatever he was doing. I said, because I pre-warned him that they was going to try to do such, he said, they wouldn't do that.

01.23.30 I said, yes, they gonna try and do it. So they said, well, they tried to hold it up to get in touch with him. But they couldn't. So they had to say, well you have to go. I said okay. So I get out there the next, they drop me off (LAUGHS) at about 9:30, 10 o'clock in the middle of the

road. (LAUGHS) With nothing. That's how I had to get home. But I had, luckily, I got my own money. But that's what they did. I started, somebody had told me I should sue them, but I wouldn't be suing. I'm not gonna sue the Red Cross.

01.24.01 It's not the Red Cross. It's those individuals who did that. But see, I know that if I could get, I wanted to go in, (?) somebody told me I should still be suing, get people that worked around and see, I was probably the most popular person on that base. I know that for sure. Had a lot of friends. Because what happened was, I was probably the senior person, elderly, at my age. You know, (CLEARS THROAT) one of the senior people down there.

01.24.28 And I know I was the senior black man down there. And all the women that were having trouble, every time they have some trouble, they would come to me. And anytime they had stuff to give away for, when they were leaving, people would leave, I said, here, you disburse this to the people that you think. And that's the rapport I had with most people down there. And I was, I'll give you an incident, what happened. (CLEARS THROAT) I'm doing my normal runs. Now I had worked the (ERB?) The ERB is a Red Cross vehicle where it opens up and you distribute food. When I first got there, that's what I was doing. I did that about two days until I was, and the guy called me and said, we need somebody for a truck. I said, well, I'll drive the truck.

01.25.05 That's how I got into driving a truck. So, and I liked that idea because you can give out more food to more people, you know, just than giving food, you can give supplies. Plus you're giving food. You're giving bulk food. Coffee, whatever. So they came to me. One of the guys said, listen, CC, we need, we don't have no MURs.

01.25.31 That's meals. So I said okay. So they said, when you finish your run, can you give us, you know, can you stock up so that we can have some in the morning. We can take it off your truck. So I finished working about, I loaded up and just before they were supposed to close the warehouse, I went in and I had already informed them that I needed something. They waited, some of the guys waited. I said, so I loaded up with this (MRIs?). And when I brought them in, we unloaded in two ERBs. That's how much I, stuff I had.

01.26.05 So the next day, they came and this girl (?), she said, CC, I'm so glad, that night, she said, thank, god bless you. And they all kissed me. I said, what you doing all this for? I said, I'm loving it, but what's all this? So the guys go, yeah, said, you know, if you had not given us those MRIs, those people out there would have had nothing to eat because there was all the

kitchens closed down. So I said, he said, you supplied food for people that wouldn't have eaten.

01.26.30 So that's why I said I was well-liked. And if I'd have, but I couldn't get to, all the people I work with had just gone. They'd waited, they knew what they were doing. They timed it perfectly. 'Cos I extended. I was supposed to leave with my group, but I extended a week. Because they still didn't have enough drivers, so I extended. And that's what I got. The big, excuse the expression, (?) finger that way. They did it both ways. But they don't do like that. They did like my daddy said.

01.26.59 They put the umbrella in there and then they opened it up. (LAUGHS) They gave it me real good. But that's all right. I don't hold no business towards it. It's just, you know, I know I did the right thing, so that's just part of life.

JW: What about the old man you took a walk with?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What other memorable interactions did you have down there?

01.27.57 CHARLES COOK: Oh yeah. I ran into a lady, and she took me to her house. And she had some, several kids there. That's why I'm saying I'm, I was delivering in one spot and I was asking for directions. And she says, we don't have anything here. Nothing. And I said, and she said, could you please bring something.

01.28.31 Now she had like, babies in arms, you know. She was a white lady. So I just give you the race, so you know it wasn't about race or nothing. And I said, well, I don't have much on this truck right now. But, I said, what I have, I'll give you, you know. She said, no, but I need something for my babies. I need Similac and some stuff like that. And I was up near, oh wait, let me think. I was up near Route 9. I was up almost near Alabama.

01.29.07 So I told her, I make sure, I said, I'll be here tomorrow at the same time. So just tell your neighbors, anybody who has kids. And so when I went back, all I brought back was a lot of baby stuff. Baby things I brought back. Teddy bears and, you know, something for the kids

to play with. Stuff like that. So it was, and I'll be honest, they should pay people, we should pay them for the feeling that they give us. (LAUGHS)

01.29.37 I swear for God, it's a good feeling to help somebody. You know, they're saying, they're grateful, but they shouldn't be so grateful, you know. It's a good thing to help. It really is. It really, really is.

JW: What was it like when you came back the next day?

01.29.58 CHARLES COOK: Oh, they were, they were all over me. (LAUGHS) They (?) load of stuff. They got it. They got their stuff and, 'cos I told them, if I tell you I'm coming, I'm coming, you know. I give my word. That was so, that's one of the things, when they booted me off, I had told somebody I was coming with some stuff and I know they wondering where I'm at to this day. But that's, you know what, that couldn't be helped, you know. Yeah, but that was, that was (STOPS)

JW: Was there more than one mother there?

01.30.31 CHARLES COOK: You see, (?), oh yes, most definitely. There was a group of people, you know. I told them, I said, I know where you live at. Just tell them, this is gonna be my distribution point. I said, I'll try and get here by a certain time. And I did. And I just dropped everything. Then I came back with another load of food. And I dropped all that, you know. 'Cos what she, I had food, too. But mainly I had, was trying to get a lot of baby stuff.

01.31.00 'Cos she had a lot of kids. She had like, one in the basket and two like this, you know. There was, you know, I said, don't worry, I'll bring back stuff. So I did. I said, just tell your neighbors. And I came back with the food. I said, I'm gonna bring you some stuff back for yourself. 'Cos she was concerned. And then I found, I had found a box of teddy bears. I should have sent you, I says, somebody somewhere out in California. But I found this box of teddy bears.

01.31.30 And what I was doing and would do is every time I run into a kid, I had a couple of boxes, I would give them out, you know, to the little children. So when I got out there I was able to give them to the kids, so, which was, the kids were happy to have something to play with.

And the mother was happy that they had something in their stomachs for the kids, so, you know. You know, I done a lot of things in my life, but nothing better than that. That was my shining hour. Even though they F-d me up.

01.32.00 It hurt me what they did to me. 'Cos I stood there one time and said, how could they do this? How could they lie like this? I was just surprised. I almost felt like breaking down, but I said, nah, I ain't gonna break down. I ain't gonna let them have the option, you know, 'cos I was angry then. But I said, no. Just suck it up. And there was no, see, when they dropped me, there was no bus service there. No train service there. Nothing. I had to hitchhike.

01.32.33 Had to hitchhike at least 60 miles, 70 miles, to a train station. But see, God is good. I called my cousin. And she knew, she had relatives down there.

01.32.58 And they came and picked me up on the highway. You know, it was a while to wait, but you know, and Amtrak had, I had made arrangement with Amtrak to be leaving like, on the days I was supposed to leave. Normally (?) the extra week. I explained the situation that, hey, I was down there and I'm being terminated at this point. I need a way home. And they said, well, they changed the, gave me another sleeper for that day out.

01.33.34 So it worked out, you know. It still hurts. That hurts. I'll be honest. It really do. It hurts so much that I felt like going to California, the guy lied on me, and doing something he would be real sorry for. In my younger days, I used to carry that thing.

01.33.59 And would use it. Unfortunately. But God has shown me another path. Anyway.

JW: How much did Katrina remind you of 9/11?

01.34.26 CHARLES COOK: It reminded me of the grief that I saw on the faces of the people that, when we was helping to distribute checks on the pier. But 9/11 wasn't as bad as this. You could literally go along the Gulf coast and near the water, you could just ride for miles from Highway 9, I think, or 90, whatever it is, and the bridge was down. And you just see nothing but devastation for miles and miles, past the, all down there.

01.35.00 It was just really, really bad. Really bad. I wish I had taken my camera because it was something that, (LAUGHS) I really wish I had taken my camera. It's not funny. Someone, you could the remnants of what was a nice house, maybe a huge estate. With a driveway, but the trees were all down.

- 01.35.33 And a wrought-iron fence close to the water. The house was literally gone. Only thing you could see was the steps. Of the house. The only thing standing was Sambo. Sambo is the little black man holding the thing for the gate. (LAUGHS) That's the only thing standing.
- 01.36.02 Only thing standing. The gate down. Sambo's the only thing. I'm right here, boss. (LAUGHS) It's the only one. Yeah. Yeah. I should've taken a picture of that. Didn't have no camera with me, but it was just something to see. Nature did (?) his dirty. But I did eat good down there. There was one place that was (Christian?) on the water, they had set up a tent.
- 01.36.32 And I dropped supplies off to them 'cos they were feeding people. And they were running out of food. So, but they was always feeding people. So I had never eaten there. I stopped and I made it my business to stop (LAUGHS) there every chance I could get. Because they had craw daddies and everything hooked into that gumbo. Sausage. The weight I had lost, I think I gained right back 'cos I had about four or five cups, I would come in and get four or five cups and put them off to the side.
- 01.37.02 They knew I was coming. (LAUGHS) Yeah. So it was, it had its levity. I played basketball when I was down there. With a group of kids. No, not kids. They were young men in their early 20s, 30s. One guy from California, a couple others. So one kid kept calling me, hey, Old School. Calling me, Old School, come on, let's play. You gonna play? I said, I said, okay. I said, I haven't played in awhile.
- 01.37.31 I said, but, I said, I probably won't shoot. But I said, I'll defense. I know how to play. I said, I know the principles of the game. So we went out there and the first game, he was going, (?) I said, you calling me Old School? You ain't made a basket yet. He said, you ain't making one either. I said, I told you I won't shoot, but I said, I want to lock you down so you, every time you get the ball, I slap it out of his hand. By the third or fourth game, we was, we had a good time. He couldn't keep up.
- 01.37.59 He was, (LAUGHS) and he said, how old you say you are? I said, I'm twice your age and you can't even keep up with me. I said, you calling me Old School, got nerve. So every time they see me, hey, Old School, you gonna take young boys in school again? (LAUGHS) That's as bad as my uncle. I call myself, being that I was in shape, and I was on the New York City All-star Team for basketball in the PAO when I was a kid. So I come out of the service.

JW: I wondered if you played basketball.

01.38.53 CHARLES COOK: I used to shoot it up. But I thought I could shoot it up. Now my, this is my aunt's husband. Now might, I have to give you a little background. My mother and my father all, they were all what they call athletes. So, you know, they came up athletically. You know, my mother ran track. My father was the captain of his track team, swimming team, all like that. So I, sports, they ingrained sports into my brother and myself. So now I come back and my uncle, he used to play basketball. But I never thought much about him playing basketball. He said, yeah, I used to play with the (Rens?), like that, Ren, he said, oh, so what, you played with the Rens.

01.39.29 So what? You ain't got no, what that mean to me? I said, well, we was a good team, you know, all this. (?) people telling about what they're, so he said, I'll tell you what. We'll go out. He said, I, like me, he's my age like, he said, I may not be able to keep up with you running, but we'll just shoot (?). He whipped me so bad. And I could shoot. He shot lights out. He never missed. Once he got it, he didn't miss. I looked at him. He said, I told you I used to play. So years ago, I'm saying this, I say, because my aunt just became, she's somewhat senile now.

01.40.03 And the court, I'm being, the court is making administer of her house. And her stuff. And now I just picked up a plaque of his, some other stuff for his basketball playing. And he had asked me, he was inducted to the Hall of Fame for basketball. His team. Him. The Rens. They had the best pro record in pro basketball. Ever. And they played the likes of the Celtics and everybody else.

01.40.30 Even though they weren't allowed to play in the NBA, they played all them, Globetrotters, all of them. Globetrotters stole their stuff from them. All that trickery. All that stuff like that. Pop Gates, all them. Pop Gates even played with the Globetrotters after awhile. But, and there's a book about him right now. I should've brought the book down. So you know, you never know what people, when people say, yeah, I used to something, you know, you have to take (?).

JW: Old School.

- 01.41.01 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. I locked him down, boy. I locked him down pretty (?). Went behind my back and give it off. 'Cos I wasn't shooting. I was just, all I'm gonna do is pass. "Cos I said, my shot is gone. But uh, at this age, shoot, I know I can't be running up and down no court. (LAUGHS) But I was surprised. I got tired when he did, but I just refused to let him know I was tired. And then I got my wind. The wind came right back.
- 01.41.31 And I was dogging him then. I said, keep up with me. So instead of playing right, he (LAUGHS) doing like this. Every time I get the ball, he grab me. But it was fun, though. Yeah, it was nice. That was on their naval base. So we had a couple of moments to relax. And when that other, Rita came, they locked us, they locked the base down. They put an amphibious truck up against the door.
- 01.42.02 They drove it into the warehouse and put it up against the door so that it wouldn't blow away, blow us away. But I said, if it gets to be bad as Rita, I'm going on one of them ships. I don't care where they, I'm gonna be in a uniform just like this. (LAUGHS) I just joined up. Wherever that, wherever the Navy goes, that's where I'm going They was a sea bee base. That's what they were. They were sea bees. So I can understand them. It was (engineers?), same thing that was in the Army, but their combat engineers is the same thing as sea bees.
- 01.42.37 So that was, it was a decent experience. Then I came back. (CLEARS THROAT) From that trip. And what did I do after that? Oh. I received a call from Mitch Morrison. The fellow that started America's Ride.
- 01.43.00 And he told me that this guy named Fuller, he said, Fuller, this fellow Fuller called asking to speak to you. He said, do you mind if I give him your number? I said, no. So he called me. He said, listen, we got 62 homes. We're leaving from California. We're driving down to Shreveport, Louisiana. And he said, I would like you to be part of it. He has, he's the founder of Habitat of Humanities. So I went out and we escorted those homes down. And I helped to put in the first pikes and stuff for a couple of homes right there.
- 01.43.35 I had, while I was down there, I bought, I was buying it for my car. You know, the seats that you can put and motorize and make your seat comfortable and heat and stuff? But when I got them, then I looked at the two families that were moving in and I gave each one of them, the drivers one. And I guess gave (them?) my seats away. I still got to get some now for my car.

01.43.57 But I don't have no regrets about that. So that was a nice experience. So anyway, that was a decent experience. I can't complain about that.

JW: What did that look like, to escort 62 houses?

01.44.20 CHARLES COOK: Yeah, well, some of them went down by rail. And some went by truck. And we went down. It was called A Ride to Provide. And it was taking toys and stuff like that. We stopped along the way by motorcycle. Chris Judd went with us. That was, that was a brutal ride. I'm glad I didn't drive the motorcycle 'cos I was in a truck, I was driving his truck. That was brutal. Because we went through Texas and it was an ice storm in Texas. It was pure ice. I mean, it was really bad.

01.44.59 Slipping, sliding all over the road. Oh, it was real terrible. But it was nice. It wasn't that many of us who went. But it was a good ride. It was for a good cause. So.

JW: The houses were on the back of trucks?

01.45.19 CHARLES COOK: They're, you know, pre-fab houses that you put up. You put the foundation in, then you just, it's just like, you know them little tools, toys you got at home? You know, you put, (?) it's very easy. Couple of screw here, and you put a bolt here. And you put that frame on top of that bolt. Then take another bolt, put it in like that.

01.45.38 It's very easy, you know. Once they cast the foundation, you know. And they had, see, they had the foundations there already for us. And when we got there, you know, we went to church, said a prayer, and we went to work. (LAUGHS) You know, so.

JW: You put up the houses as well?

01.45.59 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. I helped put up, I helped put up two. Then I left. And a third one was still getting ready to start. But we was going back to California, that's all, and I started to stay longer, but they needed somebody to drive a truck back. 'Cos I would rather see all three of them finished. But that wasn't to be, so I saw two go up. And the people move into them. Which was, which was cool.

JW: And after that?

01.46.31 CHARLES COOK: After that, I just behaved myself for a minute. Went on my trip, like I told you uh, recently. To Indianapolis. Been playing a lot of chess. I went to Atlantic, Maryland. Atlantic City. Where else? Getting ready to go to Atlantic City again in another couple of weeks, I think.

01.46.58 I went down there one time this year. And apparently because of the way I gambled, they selling me hotel room for free, comps. But I haven't taken them up on it.

JW: Does that mean you're a good gambler or a bad one?

01.47.12 CHARLES COOK: Good. I gambled enough money to stay on the tables a long time. I took \$100 and put it up on the table and my minimum bet after I made my first initial bet was \$200 a bet.

01.47.31 And I played for over an hour, two and a half hours. And I was betting \$200 or \$300 dollars each bet. I was beating them. And every time I bet, it would be \$200, \$300. I kept pushing the money at them. And I kept winning. And I kept taking off them \$1000 chips every so often. I was still betting (?). (LAUGHS) I was cracking them. I was into it.

JW: Did you come out ahead?

01.47.56 CHARLES COOK: Of course. Yeah. I came out ahead. I won about \$6000 at the, with \$100. But I take the big chips and say, give me a big chip and I put it on my money like that. But I slide one off, none of them see I slide it off. And they think I'm betting it all. But (LAUGHS) I was stashing, you know. You don't let them see your winnings. But it was my chip, so I was just taking them off.

01.48.29 But I was pushing that money at them. One time, I was on the roulette, I like to play roulette, but I had the whole table covered. But I play certain numbers heavy. And my certain numbers were hitting. And I put a big chip underneath the big numbers I like and they was hitting, bang. And 35 to 1, 35 times 75, you figure that out.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.49.04 END OF TAPE # CC30

TAPE # CC31
Charles Cook
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

02.01.02 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.04.55 CHARLES COOK: That's my best friend. He and I talk mess all the time. And he whips my butt. Now he's one of these people that's a master. With that game.

JW: Master at whipping your butt?

02.05.11 CHARLES COOK: At chess. But we play pinochle all the time. Cutthroat. And I don't know if nobody in here knows that game, but it's very, very good.

JW: You explained it to us.

02.05.54 CHARLES COOK: Yeah, yeah. So today I'm gonna be a lazy bum. And my cousin, I got to go see about her. I have a cousin that just, well she won't see this. She just got, came into some money. Her husband inherited about two and a half mill. Tax-free. With no children. And they both sick. And I've been looking out for them before they got the money.

02.05.56 So I'm glad they got it before they, you know, so they can enjoy some of it. 'Cos it's a damn shame. Anyway.

JW: How did they get the money? How are they sick?

02.06.08 CHARLES COOK: Well, she's, she has cancer. Which she, she's only three of us, no, now you're all younger. She won't see this, hopefully. But she's a state supreme court judge, okay.

- 02.06.32 What happened is her husband had gone in for an operation this year. Beginning of the year. And they cut his (coratic?) artery at Mount Sinai. The same place where I'm going. Gave him a stroke. Paralyzed him. Okay. And did something else that was messed up when they did the operation. So I go to the hospital and so she's standing there. She doesn't say anything to the judge. You know, to the doctor.
- 02.07.01 That doctor's saying, well, we want to get rid of him, so I said, he doesn't, he's saying, he can't talk. He's almost choking up in his stuff. So the doctor is unaware of who my cousin is or her job, her position or anything like that. So she had called me, so I knew what that meant. They always call me when trouble is. My family is like that. I mean, anything happens, I know when they call. That's why I'm in charge of my aunt's stuff now. Her house and everything.
- 02.07.30 'Cos her sister, my aunts, my cousins said we, they want me to take care of their mother. So, and so these cousins, they call me when, she calls me when something's going on. So maybe it's 'cos I'm the oldest in the bunch, but whatever way. But so she calls me and she's looking at me. And normally, when she says, butch, she's, you know, she (?) something bud. She'll say Charles, and then she'll say Butch. I said, I'll be right there.
- 02.07.59 Said, I understand. I get there and the doctor's trying to get rid of him right away. I said, the man's not comfortable going home right now. Have you provided somebody to take care of him? Well, she could take care of him. I said, well she has a job. Well, he could be home. I said, how could he, if something happens, he's choking, he hasn't learned to use his stuff, how can he do this? Anyway, he got me so pissed off. So I went over and cursed his ass off. I took him to the side. I said, do you know what you just said? You're telling this woman she could take him, take him home.
- 02.08.28 She don't know how to resuscitate or, you know, get that stuff out. Nothing, you're not giving her no training, nothing. I said, but you just, what you just said just dooms you. What you mean by that he said, you know, what you mean by that, I said, you may be used to pushing people, I said, when he came in there, he didn't have nothing wrong with him, I said, other than he needed this operation that he knew was gonna have to (?) going to be there. I said, but you caused his carotid artery, and I said, that lady you're telling he can take home, she's a state supreme court judge. And he, his mouth went. (LAUGHS) You know, (?) mouth just dropped. His mouth dropped.

02.08.59 Then he's all, well, when can he go home? I said, when he's comfortable. They settled, Mount Sinai settled within a month and a half, two months. (LAUGHS) And they settled out of court. Because they didn't want to go, they didn't want to go in front of a judge. Because she knows all the judges. (LAUGHS) You know. You know.

02.09.29 So would have got probably more. 'Cos my uncle was a state supreme court judge. So it's no, it's no judge that's on the state supreme court goes to those levels that wouldn't know her or her father. So they got that money so fast, I didn't know money get pushed up that fast. (LAUGHS) Just a little, just a little influence. And they're away right now, but (CLEARS THROAT).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.10.29 CHARLES COOK: I'll show you a picture of her. She's in Florida. And she text-ed me a message so I wouldn't forget her. I'll have to show you one day. But just, and that's all you can see. 'Cos she's a friend of mine. (LAUGHS) She said that's so I wouldn't forget her. (LAUGHS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.11.59 CHARLES COOK: (MID-STATEMENT) I have a lot of friends. That don't mean nothing. Just friends. There's a party going on tonight and they wanted to know if I'm coming to the party, that's all. On this call here. The other girl's in Florida that sent that picture. (LAUGHS)

JW: What about Mount Sinai.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Show us the brochure.

- 02.12.33 CHARLES COOK: Yeah, well, the report came out this week that the dust I swallowed on the second day at Ground Zero turned out to be pulverized glass, steel, asbestos, concrete. Just as I was complaining. I said, I swallowed glass. And I kept telling them, I feel like my chest is burning all the time and it's sticky like something's sticking me.
- 02.12.58 So now they determined that the reason I have loss of lung capacity is because my lungs probably got real small minute holes (?) from the glass. So (CLEARS THROAT) that's why my chest is still heavy like it is. But I'm not alone. And I don't, you know, it just makes you feel vindicated with saying something. You're not silly. 'Cos people kept saying, it's impossible for somebody to swallow glass and live, you know, but now they just tell us.
- 02.13.30 And they sent me this pamphlet the other day with my appointment. And they put my little image on it. As you see. This it the Mount Sinai report. So I guess I'm amongst those that they consider sick. Anyway.

JW: How many times have you been in the hospital in the past five years?

- 02.14.10 CHARLES COOK: Quite a bit. But I just don't talk about it. (~JW~) I don't like talking about it. But I've (?) quite a bit. (~JW~) The VA.

JW: (?)

- 02.14.18 CHARLES COOK: No, I'll talk about it. I'm talking about it now, because now they done brought it out. 'Cos it's one thing to tell somebody, hey, I'm feeling this and nobody's believing you. You know, if you tell somebody, that's why I stopped talking about it. I said, listen, I still feel like there's something eating me up inside.
- 02.14.38 And you talk, no, they said it wasn't nothing wrong. It ain't nothing, you know. So you don't talk about it. So that's what made me get, ain't no sense in me talking about something that people don't really want to hear. Or don't believe. But now they have vindicated what I've been saying from day one. No, from the second day, third day. That I swallowed some glass or steel, whatever it might be.
- 02.15.00 Glass, steel, whatever it is. I swallowed something that's put some holes in my lungs or put something in me that I hurt from here straight through to my back, you know. It's, so now

I'm not the only one feeling this. They seen that we're all suffering from the same thing. We have a reflux, stomach reflux where our stuff keeps coming back up at us. Got the drip in our throat. You know, we all, I never had sinus problem. I got sinus and asthma you know, and all this. But you know, but (CLEARS THROAT)

02.15.32 I just spoke to a doctor today 'cos I just came from there. And uh, she was saying that she was at the site also. And she said she has asthma now, which she never had. So I said, where were you at? She said, I was in a tent the whole time. I said, oh, you was, I said, you're lucky you wasn't outside. She said, we stayed in a tent covered down. She was, you know, they kept a tent. So it really affected a lot of people. But they weren't, with their lies (?) (Christy?), I said, there's nothing wrong.

02.15.59 The air's fine. But we knew. We as people who were there knew it was something wrong with the air. We knew that the dust had to be body particles, first of all. We breathed cement. Concrete. All that, you know, structure of the building, we was ingesting that. So, and that's not, that's not even half of what we swallowed.

02.16.29 Not to mention the poisonous gases that were being emitted from that site. So, you know, but it's just, it's nice to be vindicated in what you're saying and then for somebody to acknowledge it for a change. (CLEARS THROAT)

JW: Is that why you didn't want to talk about it?

CHARLES COOK: Yeah.

JW: Tell me why it makes you not want to talk about it?

02.17.12 CHARLES COOK: Because even the doctors didn't, my general practitioners, they wanted to say, yeah, it's something but it's not that. It's impossible to live with glass in you. Well, you know, I'm saying, I'm telling you that's how I'm feeling. Mount Sinai, you know, finally saying, yeah, we got too many people feeling this glass. And we seeing that it was glass. They started examining what it was.

02.17.34 I said, yeah, I guess what you, so now they finally acknowledged it. Now my doctor, I saw him the other day, he said, I'm sorry I kept telling you that, you know, he said, but I see you

were right, you know. He said, well, I knew you had shortness of breath, but I couldn't understand it. I said, well, it's kind of hard to see little teeny holes. He said, yeah, you're right. So you know (~JW~)

JW: What was that like when he acknowledged that?

- 02.18.06 CHARLES COOK: He said, well, I couldn't see it. But he said, I now understand it, you know. Because I said, you know, he said he has received a report from Mount Sinai, you know, also. Some things are hard to detect. So, but you know what's wrong with you. You know, you know when things ain't working right. (CLEARS THROAT) You've been used to running up 19 flights of stairs.
- 02.18.34 Nonstop. Racing my kids. And you at my age. And then to have difficulty getting up seven flights, you know. What did they say, this dust has knocked out 15 to 20 years off, ten to 15 years off your life? That must mean I'm ready to go now. (LAUGHS) 'Cos how old is life expectancy, you know? Yeah, it's made me have to start doing some, you know, real hard thinking.
- 02.19.03 I got to start getting certain things, I got to really change my will and some other stuff. Get my arrangements in order. I'm getting ready to do that this week. I'm gonna finally get all that. 'Cos I don't think I want to be buried. 'Cos I'd be mad as hell to find out they done put me in the ground, I wake up down here buried. (LAUGHS) I think I might, I might be mad to get in that oven, too. (LAUGHS) Haven't decided how I want to go yet, though.
- 02.19.29 But I want to make, I want to make things easier for my family so that they don't have to do anything. I'm gonna have that stuff laid out in two places, so it just, the flag and all that other junk from the VA and all that kind of stuff. So that's my plans this week. (CLEARS THROAT) Better, you know, I'm not sorry for myself, so don't think that. But you come to go and I've had a good run.
- 02.19.57 So that's all that's about. But I got good company. Got a lot of good guys with me. And women. Yeah.

JW: Have you thought about those people more lately?

- 02.20.25 CHARLES COOK: No, I was down there couple of days ago. Just before, I saw Danielle. And I went down because a lot of the people that went down there to clean up and to work and clean up were of Mexican descent. Or Latin descent. And a lot of them are not legally here. But when I was there, I can verify they came, they went into places and none of them didn't have a mask or anything.
- 02.21.03 They went to clean, and every time you're cleaning that dust, that's just coming right back up at them. So they had to, that was really even worse than being in the hole. Because they got, had all that dust to clean up. And a lot of them will come up sick now with a lot of cancers and stuff. And I went down to, not for myself, because I do have my own private health care. And I happened to get interviewed by Channels One, I was on that. And then I got interviewed by ABC, CBS, 10/10 Wins, CNN, some others that were on the radio station and stuff like that.
- 0221.38 And I said something. And the guy said I should say this more often. And also repeat what I told them. I said then and I'll say it again, who's gonna respond to the next disaster when the government turns its back and won't give health or medicine to those that could respond?
- 02.21.58 Even if they came there to work or volunteer. Who's gonna respond if you're not gonna take care of them? I don't think anybody will. (CLEARS THROAT) Yeah. It make it real hard.
- JW: How do you feel about that?
- 02.22.15 CHARLES COOK: I think this nation, when I was in service, and I went anywhere, I got good reception from whatever country I was in. If I was in France, or if I was in Newfoundland, if I was in Germany, wherever I was at, people treated, you American, oh, you're good people. People don't look at Americans that way no more.
- 02.22.43 They look at them as bullies now. And it's sad. Bush is doing something that is so horrendous at this time, he need to be impeached for just what he's trying to do.
- 02.23.04 Prisoner of wars fall under the Geneva Convention. (CLEARS THROAT) He got angry and he came out speaking for you senators who are against me wanting to interrogate these prisoners harder and crueler than normal, you all should shut up. McCain was a prisoner of war. He is permanently disabled from torture.

- 02.23.31 And he was under the Geneva convention, now imagine if Bush has his way, what if you and I go to war today or tomorrow or your son goes to a war. You can't expect no decent treatment from, you know, his enemy. Because Bush has his policy. I will isolate them, I will drum them, I will torture them, whatever, to get my information. You make yourself no better than Hitler.
- 02.23.59 And that's just where he's leading to. Sad to say. That's really sad to say. So I don't know. We really, we've run into an abyss. We're just going the opposite way where, with what we used to be. We're worse than terrorists. I, you see, I'm, I don't believe in what the terrorists are doing. I understand they want to get people out of their countries.
- 02.24.30 But you put yourself on a lower level than they are when you do this. That's just what he's done. He's put us as a people on that level, as a nation. 'Cos people look at us, oh, you Americans, you're all in the same pot. I wasn't supposed to go there with that. That's not (that's not the route?).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How many times a year have you been to the doctor?

- 02.25.27 CHARLES COOK: This year? About ten times. Or better We getting ready to go the 26th here. I got to go to my other, I got three other appointments with my regular doctors in the next month.

JW: What do they do at those appointments?

CHARLES COOK: Now you getting personal.

JW: In general.

- 02.25.54 CHARLES COOK: No, no, no, I've been getting tested. I'm, well, the only one that I'm really concerned about is the guy with the fingers. (LAUGHS) For those of you who don't know, I'm getting ready to do a colonoscopy in a couple more days. I had one test recently. I

had broke my rib. And the doctor had to, he told me, come in, come in. I see a bruise in here like that. So he said, I want to check you out. And he said, drop your pants, and I dropped my pants.

02.26.39 And of course, he wanted to examine me down here. He went and got something, it was a camera. And you know how small the smallest camera can be. On a tube about like that. And he pushed that down my penis with no, and said just inhale. I said, huh? And down he went to go down, yeah. So those are the kind of examinations I've been getting lately.

02.27.06 Which are not really nothing you want to talk about. Now I was, I managed to joke about it when the nurse came in there. I said, when I came in here, it was that long. I said, when he told me what he had to do, I said, it got to be that long. (LAUGHS) I said, if he come in here telling me I got to do that again, it's gonna be me and about 21 others, 'cos they got to pull me in here. (LAUGHS)

02.27.33 That is not a good feeling. That camera going all the way up you like that, oh gosh. I didn't know you could open up that much. But he put a camera up there to look up into my kidneys. So you know how far you got to go down through here. To go into your kidneys. I was saying, can you go through my mouth? Do any other way? Can't we just do this another way? (LAUGHS) But then he said, no, you'd be gagging and this is more direct.

02.28.00 I wanted to know, couldn't he go the other way? (LAUGHS) He says, no, this is the way you got to go. I couldn't talk him out of it. So.

JW: Why are you dressing differently?

02.28.16 CHARLES COOK: Well, I used to dress all the time. Okay. But to be honest, for the last, actually more than five years, for the last six, seven years, I've been just buying a lot of clothes 'cos my girlfriend dresses a lot.

02.28.32 But I always had like, rough (?) clothes 'cos I like to (?) rough. So I've been stacking them, buying them and putting them away. But never wearing them. But then when I started feeling sick again, I said, I better start wearing my clothes before somebody else wear them. And so I've been wearing my clothes rather than let somebody wear them for me. That's all. I just been putting on my clothes. It's like this ring.

- 02.28.59 I've had this ring 15, 20 years. I think I've worn it maybe about a total of two months. You know, only wear, I don't wear it, you know. I had purchased it with one thing in mind. Said, I want it 'cos it's nice. And then just in case I need some extra money real fast. But then I said, no, just give it to my son. You know. So my son keeps saying, yeah, Dad, where the hell's my ring? But he can't wear it on this finger. He has to, he's gonna have to get it sized larger.
- 02.29.31 'Cos his hands are much bigger than mine. Yeah, 'cos he's about 250. Yeah. His mom was lucky she's a big woman, 'cos I started to whip her butt (?) somebody might have gave me some help with her. (LAUGHS) No, that ain't happening.

JW: Do you really think you'll die soon?

- 02.29.53 CHARLES COOK: I didn't say that. But I'm preparing, so nobody else has to do anything for me. Yeah. I'm just feeling how do I feel, you know. But I'm just looking around how things are going with other people. And I'll say, what make me feel any luckier than anybody else? And then I'm at that age. I'm 66 this year. In a couple more weeks. You know, that's, and they said they'd take 15, 20 years off your life. So that's saying I'm gonna be 90 at this point. 'Cos they're saying it aged us.
- 02.30.32 So how many people you know reach 90? That's just being realistic.

JW: You scared?

CHARLES COOK: No. To be truthful, no.

JW: Really?

- 02.30.50 CHARLES COOK: No. No, I have no fear there. Why should I fear something I don't know? I might be apprehensive about the way I go. (CLEARS THROAT) But I'm not scared, no. No, I don't fear things. No. The only thing one fear is going to jail and being locked up and being incarcerated or something. I can't be moving around. That kind of stuff. But have no fears. No.

JW: Does that come with age?

02.31.27 CHARLES COOK: I thought about it, I feared death, I turned over in a jeep in service. And I never fear, up until that point, I thought I was gonna die. Something was gonna happen to me that I was gonna die. I wasn't gonna make it out of service. So I was always apprehensive about it. And when the jeep turned over, completely over, and up underneath the top of me, I never feared death after that. No, I don't fear death.

JW: I wonder why that is?

02.32.00 CHARLES COOK: Hey. I just don't. It's nothing to fear. I didn't fear it when I went down in the hole. I was, you know, what's gonna be is gonna be. That's why I was able to go in them little spots. What's gonna be is gonna be. You come to go. And it's a matter of how you go. You can go with dignity or you don't go with dignity. Now when (?) the Reaper come, I'm gonna show him I got a reaper, too. I ain't ready to go, I won't, I'm gonna try and fight him, you know.

02.32.34 But if I done fought the good fight and I'm tired, I'm just gonna let him say, hey, come on, let's do what you got to do. Let's go here, we go to this place I ain't seen yet. A lot of people gone before me, so (CLEARS THROAT) that may be sounding like a joke, you know, the way I'm spitting it, but I can't worry about that. (CLEARS THROAT)

JW: Did your daughter the doctor respond to the report?

02.33.03 CHARLES COOK: Not, my baby ain't, no, she's here, too. Oh yeah, by the way, you know how my family's against me riding a motorcycle? My daughter's home. I had told her about I wanted a bike from France. So she's here right now. And, I don't know who that is. Anyway, she's here right now. And she said, Daddy, I went, Mike took me on a ride. He's a mechanic for motorcycles. She said, oh, it was so nice. I said, oh yeah?

02.33.35 I said, I thought you don't want me on a bike? Daddy, I'm gonna get my license, she just got her license. And Daddy, I'm getting a bike. I said, didn't you told me you don't want me, well, I don't want you, but oh, Daddy, it's so nice. (LAUGHS) Now she's more

understanding. Her husband's not really feeling it. Her mother's not feeling it, you know, but now she understands. She just got her license.

02.34.01 So she went to school, got her license. Now she's getting ready to get a bike. So when she gets her bike, I won't have to buy a bike. I'll go up there, 'cos she's in, you know, she's, might be in Africa most of the year. She'll be at least there, Africa or India, someplace. So I'll go up there and get the bike and ride, (?) let her do her thing. Yeah, so, yeah, she's, she's a rider now.

JW: But nobody had a reaction to the report?

02.34.40 CHARLES COOK: Well, I haven't spoken with her since then. She took me to dinner for Father's Day, I think. And I spoke with her since then. She took me to a restaurant I did not know existed. It used to be a pipe club on 36th Street. I think it's 36th Street right off of Seventh Avenue.

02.35.00 I told her we could go to Wendy's or someplace like that, when I saw the prices. The price of a steak was \$60 for a steak. She said, Daddy, I want you to enjoy this 'cos, she's a, she doesn't eat meat. And so, but I couldn't enjoy that steak it just cost, it's too darn much. She took my wife and my son in law. We all went together. Which was nice. I enjoyed it, though. Yeah, it was nice. Had a good time. Wore this African outfit that she had gotten me from, yeah.

02.35.33 You ever see the, or she bought some, from, I think it was Mali or one of them. Can't think which country, but it was West Africa someplace. It's a long white drop and then come down to about like there. And a white, so I wore that with, you know, since she bought it and it was Father's Day, I wore it. I will not put it back on, you know, but I wore it that one time. (LAUGHS)

02.35.56 She said, oh, I'm so glad you wore it. I said, yeah, well, I had to wear it one time, you know. She won't see it again, but (LAUGHS) yeah. So you know.

JW: Sounds great.

CHARLES COOK: Yeah, yeah, my kids are good.

JW: How's your son who's on medication?

02.36.23 CHARLES COOK: He's all right. He's working. He's working. He should go into his field. He should really go into this field. I don't know why he doesn't. He got two degrees. But I think he doesn't, the strain. He don't want to bother with it right now. But he's, he works at the airport. But I'm trying, my nieces are in that field. And could easily set him up with something. One of my nieces works with, what is it, MTV or one of them. And then she does, she writes for magazines.

02.36.57 Like she did articles for (Luke?) and Puffy Daddy. Yeah, Puff Daddy and, no, what's the other one? Biggie Smalls and what, she does a lot of stuff. She's in a lot of magazines But he's not ready. He said he's not ready to do that right now. He said he's going back to school again to get something else. Then he said he'd be ready, so he seems to be doing all right, though. It's all good.

JW: How have you changed over the past five years?

02.37.31 CHARLES COOK: I haven't changed. I was always crazy. No sense. Nonsensical. (CLEARS THROAT) Maybe I've changed. You don't notice a change in yourself, I would imagine. And especially over the course of five years. 'Cos changes comes suddenly or subtly. And I didn't see no sudden changes, so I wouldn't notice.

02.38.02 You follow what I'm saying? So other than that, I'm a frustrated want to-be motorcycle rider. (LAUGHS) 'Cos every time I get ready, supposed to be going on a bike, something keeps me off of one. That must be my destiny to die that way. I think that's what it must be. But I don't know.

02.38.31 Okay, yes, I know who it is. I have a number when it's called, it says, do not answer. (LAUGHS) I put do not answer. (LAUGHS) So I don't have to worry about it. I'm not gonna change my number though But I got do not answer, so I see that number, I got to, 'cos normally I just pick up my phone, don't worry about who is calling.

JW: You programmed it to say do not answer?

02.39.05 CHARLES COOK: I know automatically, do not, I'll show it to you. Where is it at? Let's highlight it. (LAUGHS) Don't answer. So when it comes up, I just look and say, okay. Let it keep ringing.

JW: Do you now feel you have a calling?

02.39.43 CHARLES COOK: (MID-STATEMENT) I never thought of myself like that. I know I've, I've responded to people in fires and gone into buildings and help people, get them out. And having stood around and wait for credit for it.

02.40.01 I've done stuff like that I've gotten credit for saving a couple people on my job when I was working with transit. About three times I saved somebody, you know. Of course you got credit for that 'cos you've been working for the job (?), but I saved a cop from getting killed once. I got acknowledgement for that. So I suppose I've always been helpful that way.

JW: Were you like that when you were younger, is it part of your nature?

02.40.32 CHARLES COOK: Yeah. that's why I said, I was younger when I did that with the car. I was like 15, 16. This guy went to jug him in the side with a knife and I went into him. And to that and the cop was (?) that's with a bulletproof vest. And I, I had subdued him more than the cop did. So.

02.40.58 Yeah, they gave me a little Thank you note, that kind of junk. (CLEARS THROAT) I was a young boy then.

JW: I'm interested in how your memories of 9-11 change or fade over the years.

02.41.25 CHARLES COOK: I try not to think about it. I don't uh, only time I think about it, I, I think more about what the Red Cross did to me. Daily. I have real animus about that. You know? I really do. I (?) treasure my name and they've slandered it by doing what they did to me. That bothers me a great deal. That bothers me daily, I think about it daily.

- 02.42.00 To the point that I think about it going in the kitchen, and I'm cooking up something, going down there and leveling that building (LAUGHS). I shouldn't say that, but it really bothers me. But they're not the ones that did it. Do you follow what I'm saying? It really bothers me. And I know how to cook something up. And if I didn't know, it's very easy to go to the library and find out. But that used to be my field when I was in service. Explosives. But god, now that bothers me.
- 02.42.32 The 9-11, I try not to. I don't want to think about it because uh, I stopped trying to think about it when I found the hurt. When I say I found the hurt, I told you in an interview years ago. I found the hurt of it because see, I, I removed myself from what I would see. Ok?
- 02.43.00 It's just like if I saw something that was grotesque. Or any time I've seen like parts of people. I've seen a child with a head smashed or I've seen the brain on a street. I've seen a leg cut off somebody right in front of me, stuff like that. I just remove myself from it, and I'd look at it as a soda bottle almost. I can do that for whatever reason. I've always been able to take my mind out of oh, it's a human being. And it's just to me, it's just a piece of something.
- 02.43.32 But when I went into that, the Port Authority, and it was something about. I hadn't been seeing pictures, but it was something about seeing those offices that I knew one of the offices uh, at Port Authority. It was something about that scene that hit me, that made me know I couldn't do that no more. Go down there to that hole. That's what made me stop. Because it became too personal, for whatever reason. It's just that I didn't uh, disassociate myself with people being dead.
- 02.44.02 I looked at them as victims, then, you follow? Before I didn't, uh, they would just not think of people.

JW: That happen on a particular day?

- 02.44.14 CHARLES COOK: No, I just walked in there one day. I was around February or something like that, I walked to the Port Authority. And I just come from the Red Cross or was on my way to the Red Cross. 'Cos I left the hole, went there, and I was on my way to the Red Cross, yeah. Left the hole, was on the Red Cross and I was, I was, stopped at the Port Authority to get (?) there's a uh, place in there that sells cigars or something like that, they sell the uh, I like the uh, rolls with the raisins, the cinnamon raisin rolls they have, they sell there.

02.44.47 And I saw the exhibit, and they were talking and just something about it just got to me. And I said, I can't do this no more. Said it right there. Said I can't go there no more. I tried after that. Went back and I said no, I just can't do this no more.

02.45.03 There's no (?) need, there's no more recovery, there's no more, it's no need. They're not gonna need me. That's when I stopped.

JW: What about the anniversary?

02.45.29 CHARLES COOK: No. I, I cut myself off from certain thoughts. I don't readdress them. I told you, I have a thing where I put it up on the shelf, and once I put it up on the shelf in my mind, in an imaginary closet or shelf, I don't go back to it. So if something bothers me or something, I put it up there and I shelf it, I don't go readdress it later, unless you bring it up. But it's in that (?) box on the shelf. So it don't bother me. (LAUGHS).

JW: You can do that?

02.45.59 CHARLES COOK: Uh, very much so. My wife taught me to do that.

JW: She did?

02.46.05 CHARLES COOK: Years ago she taught me. She said, you know, if something's bothering you, just. And I have taken that. I'll have to tell her that one day. It really works. And I don't know if it works for her. But it works for me. She said, just go to the kitchen, imagine going to the kitchen, there's a cupboard, and whatever's bothering you, put your, put it in that little cupboard. Put it in a box and put it in the cupboard, close it up. And don't go back to it.

02.46.31 And you will think about that when you open it, whatever it is. Say you got a telephone bill. I'll address it at the next time. I don't think about it 'til it's time for it to be done, whatever. 'til I open that box back up. When I open it up, that's oh, I got to do this or this. Other than that it's just gone.

JW: Clinton does that?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.47.07 CHARLES COOK: Well, listen, he forgot about it. He didn't even remember her doing her knee thing. I don't blame him, you know? He uh, I forget stuff like that. I forgot I even had that picture 'til just now. (LAUGHS) It's in the box (LAUGHS).

02.47.31 Yeah, it's in the box. So. I didn't know he did the same thing. So he and I, see he and I have something in common there, besides being brothers (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.47.47 END OF TAPE # CC31

TAPE # CC32
Charles Cook
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

03.01.02 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Does a dry face have anything to do with your situation?

03.01.29 CHARLES COOK: No, that's just a ugly old face. I just finished shaving. Before I came down here, shaved real fast, took a shower. Washed my hair. And I jumped in the car, and drove down. And I had some bad traffic coming back. And that's just. But I can put something on it and make it look lively. Now that's, that has nothing to do with anything other than the fact that uh, time is against me. You know?

03.02.01 Now I, I'm not gonna blame nothing on that, (?) that. Uh, but uh. No big thing. Look at it. I'm (?) almost 90 years old, according to what they're telling me. 'Cos I'm looking good for 90. People (?) I say, I'm 90 now. I had, let's see, 77 and (?) 77, ok. Almost 80, 86. (?) Eighty-something.

03.02.34 So I got (?) my fifteen extra years they put on my head. Feeling (CLEARS THROAT) like an 86-year old, too. But I still ride my bike. Uh, I stay in shape and I walk a lot. In fact, I'm as, I'm getting ready to start running, starting 5 o'clock in the morning, starting Monday. I'm gonna be jogging with Melvin uh, I'm talking about Melvin Van Peebles. He jogs every morning.

03.03.04 So he and I, we go out to dinner, Croi and I are supposed to, I mean, Danielle and I were supposed to go see him, but he, the other day. Uh, he's a filmmaker. You know who I'm talking about? Ok. Uh, my mother and he used to be partners. And he and I remained good friends. So he said Charles, you need to come and work, go out and work with me. Work out, run a little bit.

03.03.27 So I'm uh, go with my bike first, and run with him, and run along with my bike. 'Cos I know I'm not gonna be able to keep up the first, it's gonna take me awhile to build up, 'cos he runs maybe 6, 7, 10 miles every morning, Every day he runs. I used to see him when I was driving, he'd be running. He runs straight up Broadway and then comes back, ten miles uh, every day, he does. He tries to do five up and five back. Uh, I used to run like that.

03.03.59 I got to get myself back in shape. It might help build my lungs up. That's why I decided I would do it. 'Cos you run, you expand your lungs, you know? So I'm gonna do a little of that, do a, run a block, walk a block, half a block, run a block and walk a half a block. You know, but run two blocks, walk half a block, something like that. 'Til I can build up a straight run. Give myself three months. 'Til I can do it right.

JW: Do you go to church much these days?

03.04.39 CHARLES COOK: I've been occasionally. They try to get me to come in there and sing. My cousin wants me to come in there, one of my other cousins, she wants me to come in there and sing. I got a nice voice.

JW: What to sing for us?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

CHARLES COOK: I can really sing. That's what I should have done as a profession. I can sing.

JW: Are you thinking about doing it?

03.05.03 CHARLES COOK: I did. We used to sing 'til uh, one of our guys went to jail and I said forget it, and I went in the service. Like we used to really have a good voice. I used to sing on shows like (Animal Jump?) radio and stuff as a kid. I could sing, though.

JW: Do you regret not doing it?

03.05.18 CHARLES COOK: Yes. 'Cos it would have been such easy money. I'd have been doing something real easy and (?) yeah, I regret it, yes. (?)

03.05.32 Yeah, you know, when I go see my wife, she's always trying to, let's go into church and sing. My wife can really sing, too. And she sings in the choir. But my wife has a real voice.

JW: How is your wife?

03.05.48 CHARLES COOK: She's fine. That's a good woman. I don't know what she saw in me, but that's a good woman. Told me how I'm her husband for life. I just finished talking to her. She wants to see me today.

03.06.02 She said if I have to come get you, I'll come get you. Can she let you go? If she don't want to let you go, don't worry about it, I'm coming anyway. (LAUGHS). See, that's how she is. And I believe one life, one wife. So.

03.06.28 I mean, I'm with her when she said that. But I did too many bad things, I can't go back.

JW: Anything happen this year that you'd like to discuss?

03.06.56 CHARLES COOK: There might be a little one around here that look just like me. I seen him, he looks just like (LAUGHS) me. Oh, I got some baby pictures and if that don't look like me, I don't know. That kind of that happened. (LAUGHS) Oh, gosh. Danielle must have talked, opened her big mouth. I'm gonna kill her.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Did it become true?

03.07.34 CHARLES COOK: This is a new one.

JW: You have a baby?

CHARLES COOK: I've got two, boys.

JW: How old are they?

03.07.46 CHARLES COOK: One is gonna be almost 3, and one is 4 months. Oh. Yes, yes. I know. (LAUGHS) I thought I hung up my spurs. Guess not.

JW: Are you taking care of them?

03.08.09 CHARLES COOK: Of course. I'm a responsible person. (LAUGHS) Yeah.

JW: Same woman, different woman?

03.08.24 CHARLES COOK: Different. Yeah, keep quiet. I have to, you know, I was trying to emulate a friend of mine. He went and made an Emmet and I just wanted to let him know that I can do something, too (LAUGHS). It's all your fault (LAUGHS). And they told me, you know, you, you are too old. I said, ok. Anyway, that's moving right along. Yeah.

JW: What's the meaning of Life?

03.09.07 CHARLES COOK: What is the meaning of Life? It's to wake up each morning, try not to do anything to anybody that you want to not to happen to you. Just be good to yourself. Make it so that you don't have to look over your shoulder at no time.

03.09.30 I walk the streets and I don't fear nothing. I don't have to look like this or that, other than those fools out there trying to hurt people for obvious reasons. But I don't have to look across if somebody is has some animus against me. 'Cos I haven't done anything to step on nobody's toes like that. So, I like myself. (CLEARS THROAT) But I don't like this feeling I got in my chest. I like myself.

03.10.12 You got a list down there.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

CHARLES COOK: My girlfriend (?) told me to tell you uh, hello. Dannie, she said to tell you hello.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How's Peaches?

03.10.32 CHARLES COOK: Oh, she's. She's handling that situation you know, that one eye, she, that's a real bad situation for her, though.

JW: What happened?

03.10.44 CHARLES COOK: I'll tell you. Uh, she called up a couple of years back. She talked to me and she told me, she said, Charles, you got to tell my mother something. So I said what is it? She said, I got to have an operation. I got cancer. And she said (?) So I said I'd call her mother. And I called her father, you know, told them both. So uh, her mother went out there and then the doctor told her, said listen. Uh, to get it all, you got to take your eye.

03.11.17 Or you could just let it, (?) he said to take, to make sure that you get it all, you got to take your eye. Or we could do it and we might not get it all. So she said, take the eye.

03.11.31 But in taking the eye, to do it, they had to take almost all of the structure, all up in here. So all of this is gone. So she has a (?) it's really bad. And she was a pretty girl. So what she's dealing with, she, she's strong. She said, just do what you got to do. And uh, she recovered. She's not working with Martin no more. Martin had some crazy ways, apparently.

03.11.56 So she had to let that go. Well, you know how crazy that is. And so but she's been called for a couple of projects, and she works with uh, I forget what the uh, she's out in California recently. Uh. Uh, this school down here (?) gifted school for the performing arts school, whatever, they were, she's on the board or something and they asked, this is the second year they asked her to be on it. But. Somebody's asking her to do a project. She might be, get into it. But she said she wanted to step away from it.

03.12.27 But I think she, now I think she wants to go back into the field. You know, to try to get herself back in. But health-wise, she had to step away from it. So, but she's, she's a nice person. I accept her as my daughter. She is like that is my daughter. And I helped put her ass through college. I try to be nice around her, to keep my (?) flaming ways away. 'Cos both her and her mama would kill at me (LAUGHS).

03.12.59 Oh, I'm a dead man walking the day before. I'll be as bad as my grandfather. My grandfather, when he died. I had to work so I didn't go. This is my father's mother. My mother's mother, father, my mother's father. When he died, now he's from Jamaica off the island, so when he died, my wife said, when they came to the funeral, she said, there were like six woman in the car jumping in the funeral car.

03.13.30 He was my man, they're all saying the same thing. He didn't tell me he had all these kids (LAUGHS). But he was seeing me, he was seeing me, too. He was seeing me (LAUGHS). So I come by it honestly. (LAUGHS) It's uh, listen. I believe like the Muslims, don't take on more than you can afford. (?) And if you can afford more than one or two. You know?

03.14.01 And there's a shortage of us. So I'm just trying to help uh, help out when I can. You know, I'm still in my hump mode (LAUGHS). That's the only bad thing. That's why I ain't gonna get to heaven. So I'm doomed to purgatory, I think. Oh. I think is it purgatory that (?) they allow you to have fun there, right? Hell you're gonna burn up. But what, purgatory's ok, right?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.14.47 CHARLES COOK: (MID-STATEMENT) I got to straighten up, I've got to have some fun (LAUGHS). I used to tell people I was gonna be the conductor on the hell bound express. When I was a kid. They'd say (?) I said, I know I'm going to hell. So I'm gonna be the conductor on the hell bound express. What do you know, I've become a conductor for the city.

03.15.03 So I'm in, I'm in training for the hell bound (LAUGHS) express.

JW: Where does the pain from 9-11 sit today for you?

03.15.30 CHARLES COOK: The pain? (~JW~) Oh, that's, that's out the door. It's in the closet. In that box. So I don't know what I'm thinking about it, so I left it in the box for today. Excuse me. When things bother, I'll telling you again, I put it (?) in a little small box. I put it in a couple of little boxes, and then I put it in the cupboard, and close the kitchen door and that's the end of that. And I just, I think about the children now, when I think about it, these kids coming up without their fathers or mothers.

03.16.02 You know? When I was down there the other day, I normally walk down to the reflection pool. But I said, no. I'm not gonna go all that far deep, that's for the families, the many families. You know, I, I was up there because somebody, I was invited because some of the responders were given tickets to the commencement service, the past couple of years. But I've (?) I don't want to intrude in the uh, reflection pool.

03.16.28 I think that's a private moment with family members. Even though people, we were in those same places. But so I didn't go down there far. But I understand they got some exhibit and, and in Number 7 on the 45th Floor, when I had the motorcycle ride, I'm was gonna go back adown and see that. When I was in (showed us?) coming across country. And something on 42nd street, they actually sold something but they said, one of the people told me that they saw me in a film working at Ground Zero.

03.17.02 So I might check that out I'll catch, find out where it's at. (CLEARS THROAT)

JW: Wonder if there is footage of that?

CHARLES COOK: Oh, yeah, I'm gonna find out.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.17.16 CHARLES COOK: A girl told me, she said I saw you, Charles. She said, I saw you, I said what? She said, yeah, well, it was you, C.C. she said you were with two women at the time, coming out of a tent (LAUGHS).

03.17.30 I said no, that wasn't me, she said, yeah, it was you (LAUGHS). Yeah. I said, oh, that must have been the tent that we was come to eat. She said, yeah, (?)it was a group, it was firemen

and all of y'all were coming out at the time. I said, oh, I'll have to see. I'm gonna check it out. I doubt if it's me. But I will see. (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.18.21 CHARLES COOK: (MID-STATEMENT) Worker bees stay around. It's them others that get close to the queen, they get stung and die (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.18.37 CHARLES COOK: (MID-STATEMENT) But if you got to be anything, be a hornet. You, you can get stung all day long, don't bother you. Yeah, switch up and be a hornet.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.19.01 CHARLES COOK: If you see it there, reach up. This is mine. You know, it's, I wanted a new car. I didn't have not one penny in my pocket when I went into the dealership. I didn't know I wanted a new car. I went into the dealership, I looked at it. I was talking with this girl. I come back and I said that's my car. The guy said, what? I said that's my car. Because I smelt it before I got there. Saw it. I came back, signed the papers, walked out with it the next day.

03.19.32 Just got to say this is what you want. Didn't have no money for it. Went and got the money. It's my car. (?) say I want it, I visualize it, I claim it. Same thing in church. You see it, you claim it, same thing. Same principle. Just claim what you know is yours. Your destiny is to be rich, helping people, and to help people you need to get richer.

03.20.01 So you can do your calling, 'cos you got a good heart. You know, that's on the real side. That's why I like you and my baby. And I don't look at Danielle in a, you know, that other way. She could lay in the bed all year long, it would be nothing going on. Not that she's a bad-looking woman (~JW~) I'm just, I got to tell the truth, you know, you know? (~JW~) That's my friend, that's my sister. You know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.20.31 CHARLES COOK: No, no, she's a good-looking woman. Uh, she could be look at it I got nothing. That's my sister for years, for days. And I said, that's all it's gonna be. You know, she's (?). I wouldn't jump. You can be in bed. If I'm gonna jump in the bed and do something to you, that's the way I feel about her. You follow what I'm saying? And so. Now you try some others out there, and their young ladies, now they might be in trouble (LAUGHS).

03.21.03 No, she can't get offended because she know I got love for her.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.21.26 CHARLES COOK: Claim it. (~JW~) That's all you got to do. You know? Say, I see myself being the head of a company, a corporation. That's my destiny. I'll go out and get it. Put yourself in a position to do it. All you got to do is go get you some wannabe film makers, that are aspiring to be wannabe filmmakers, young students. And show them your body of work. And let them say uh, this is my vision.

03.21.59 Well, we're gonna struggle. But we're gonna become something, we're gonna do something. And they will get out there, they'll get some internship work. And next thing you know, you got a company. It's more under this hat than it looks like (~JW~) you know? I'm not as dumb as I look (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Where do you suppose you'll be in five years?

CHARLES COOK: I ain't looking that far.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 03.22.42 CHARLES COOK: It depends on the morning. When I have one of those bad days, it's real short. And when I have good days, the sky's the limit.
- 03.23.02 Depends on the day. That's all. I don't look at that. That's why I'm wearing my clothes. I'm not, want nobody else to wear them for me. I still ain't take the tags off of this one. (LAUGHS) These brand new socks. Brand new shirt, (?) All brand new. I have so much clothes I just don't wear them.
- 03.23.31 So I'm gonna wear my clothes. I started to wear a jumpsuit coming down here, but I was in that the other day. Not that one but another one, and I have a, a party I'm supposed to be going to later on, so this way I can go in there like this. I didn't dress up to come for this interview. If I was have my way and wasn't going to this party, I'd have been dressed down, 'cos I got my chess set and I'm gonna beat up on a friend of mine.
- 03.24.05 In a few minutes, or we gonna beat up on each other. Now I'm gonna go over here and get the Metro north, a free ride one stop. And go Mount March park and play until about 7, 8 o'clock, and then I'll go to the party. (CLEARS THROAT) excuse me. That's the way my day for today. Tomorrow I'll go to dinner with some of my friends that are 60-year old friends.
- 03.24.30 And I mean literally, we all grew up together. Two retired police officers, a court officer, all my friends. Uh, we all grew up together and we'll have a party. We're gonna have, in fact, we're having dinner uh, uh, Robert's birthday, his (?) cousin runs a restaurant, owns a restaurant in uh, Pelham, New York, so we're gonna drive up there tomorrow.
- 03.24.59 And, or take a little food and talk-talk, have fun, you know, remembering this when we used to run the streets like fools. (LAUGHS) Oh, boy did we do some stuff. So I can never (COUGHS) tell people what they can't do 'cos I did, I did but there for the grace of god go I. 'Cos I was fortunate as a young kid. 'Cos I used to fight all the time. I could have been, not that I fought like I'm going out of my way to fight, but I used to fight.
- 03.25.40 So. Nowadays they don't fight. They don't even know how to do that. They got to pull the gun out at you. Sad. Sad world. (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.25.57 B ROLL

03.32.43 ROOM TONE

03.33.25 END OF TAPE # CC32