

TAPE # JK.0903.0600.6
Joe Keenan
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

05.43.12 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I want to go backward and go through a lot of the year. Last time you were on the edge of a lot of big change. Your oldest daughter was about to get married?

05.45.13 JOE: Right. My oldest daughter, Janine, was married last September. Last

September 6th, actually, so she just had her first anniversary. And uh, your oldest getting married is a big thing in the family. So we were excited. It was a, a large family event, people came in from California and from Michigan.

05.45.35 And we had a, a gathering at the house for a week before the wedding and a week after the wedding. But uh, everything went nicely. Uh, she and her husband, Andy, are happy. They, they live locally uh, in Valley Stream. They have a nice little house. And it was a, it was a big step for us for the first one to leave.

05.54.57 It's one thing when they leave to go to school and she left to go to college, you're really not leaving. You just staying in a different place. But this time she actually left. So that was a, it was a big thing for us. And uh, since they're happy and it's going well, it makes it easier. We're happy also.

JW: Did she move next door?

JOE: Oh, no, no, no. No, no, no (LAUGHS) we ran out of houses in our row (LAUGHS).

JW: Everything is going well?

05.46.27 JOE: Everything's going fine with them. Uh, she's uh, Janine works for uh, for Fox. She works for Rupert Murdoch. And she's was, she's a CPA. And uh, she has a nice job there. In fact, she was just promoted. I got a promotion notice over the uh, my e-mail about two weeks ago. So uh, they're well on their way. They're doing fine.

JW: We were talking about how it was different for you than last year. I'm curious about that.

05.47.07 JOE: Well, the, the first September 11th of course, we were busy working. Uh, and then last year, I was pretty much involved with uh, with Janine's wedding, and uh, things at home. And uh, it's not that we didn't pay attention to (?) September 11th last year, it's just that we were preoccupied with family matters.

05.47.31 Uh, between Janine getting married and Karen being in the police academy we have uh, other focus. But this year was uh, this year was a little different. Uh, we uh, home life has settled down and gave me a little more time to think about it uh, to think about what we did 2 years ago and what it meant and uh, how I felt about it now. And I have uh, different emotional outtake on it now than I did last year, or even in the, in the very beginning there for the uh, September 11th '01.

JW: How is that?

- 05.48.07 JOE: Well, I have more time for reflection, I guess. Uh, I understand now what we went through and what we did, as far as work was concerned. Uh, when you're actually doing the work, you're (?) involved in it and you don't realize what you're doing. Uh, you know what your daily task is, you know what you have to accomplish, and you set forth uh, to do that.
- 05.48.30 Uh, but now that I look back on it, I, I understand a little more what we went through back then. Uh, I have time to, to think about it now. One, one of the things that I was thinking about this morning when I was uh, I was home alone this morning. My wife was uh, my wife's a teacher, and she was at school and Karen was at work, my son was at school, and I was home uh, by myself this morning, and I was watching the news on television. Uh, the news with the uh, children reading the names.
- 05.48.59 Something that I thought might not be uh, good TV. But it turned out to be very uh, uh, very grabbing uh, to watch the children come up there and, and read name by name, and you know that every name was a person, every name was a family. Every, every name that they read affected tens if not hundreds of people. And uh, that's pretty far-reaching. Made me think back to people that I've lost in my family. I mean, I live in, I live in New York my whole life.
- 05.49.31 We were very fortunate on September 11th, we didn't lose any family members, but we lost a lot of friends, people that we knew. Uh, people that I hadn't thought about in a while and uh, now you reflect back on it and you see all those poor families that were hurt, and you think back on yourself, people that you lost in your family and how, how these people must feel now and uh, and what they're going through.
- 05.49.56 So I had a little more time to, I wasn't as busy this September 11th, so I had more time to think about what actually happened. Uh, and uh, it was more emotional this morning. It uh, it meant more to me as a, as a New Yorker, I guess, or as an individual looking at the family. Uh, as to what happened two years ago. What happened two years ago was terrible. Uh, those poor families that went through an emotional strain they'll never recover from. They're all scarred. Those people didn't die of illness, they didn't die in a traffic accident.
- 05.50.32 Uh, it's a, it's tough emotional scars that these people have to live with for the rest of their lives. It's not easy for them.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Did your reaction surprise you? I found today surprisingly much more emotional for me. I've been brought into others' lives through this event and I feel through them, but I found myself feeling as if I put it aside last year just to get through it?

- 05.51.45 JOE: I think uh, I don't know if it surprised me. It, I was conscious of it. I think last year at this time, we were tired. We were emotionally tired. We had worked a hard year and we had seen a lot of things we had never seen before, done a lot of things that we had never done before.
- 05.52.04 Uh, accomplished tasks that had never been accomplished before. And we were, we were emotionally drained. We were tired. And then in, and in conjunction with that, the, the high point at home with my family, with my daughter getting married, it uh, it wasn't that we weren't ready for September 11th anniversary last year.
- 05.52.28 It's just that we didn't, I don't think I wanted it to affect me. This year, uh, I had time to think about it. And uh, I thought about it in a different way. In fact, one thing that I did this morning, is uh, I thought about the people I worked with last year uh, two years ago. And how lucky I was. Uh, to be with those people. And how competent they were. And the work that they did just unquestioningly. Uh, whatever I asked them to do, they did. And in fact, I even uh, I even sent some e-mails this morning as I was watching television, because I wasn't sure that I had ever said thank you to them.
- 05.53.07 I know that they understood that I appreciated the work they did, but I don't know if I ever said thank you. So I, I did that this morning. And uh, that helped. Made me feel better. And sometimes in police work uh, we don't do nice work. Uh, our tasks are not friendly tasks. And we understand amongst ourselves, we look at each other, we understand, we have a way of, a way of nodding, a way of leaving a scene going some place else where we understand how each other feels.

05.53.40 But we don't normally say it. We don't communicate well with each other. And I felt that uh, I wanted to do that today. I've been separated for a while now, and uh, it uh, I'm looking at things a little bit differently. I have more time. I don't know if it's good or bad. Before things didn't affect me as much.

05.54.00 Now I'm finding that sometimes things do affect me. Uh, it might be good, it might be good to be a little more emotional about uh, subjects, but uh, I did definitely have a different feeling today than I did last year.

JW: What did you mean by separated?

05.54.17 JOE: Well, uh, I'm no longer in the police field. I retired. So uh, it's uh, police work is a, is a funny thing. It's (?) not that you're always going a hundred miles an hour. It's just that you're ready to.

05.54.30 At the drop of a hat, you move. And you do whatever has to be done. Uh, so you're always prepared for that emotionally. You might go the whole day without performing a task. But when you have to, you just step right in and do it. Uh, so when you wake up in the morning and you go to work, you're prepared for that, you're ready for that. Uh, now when I wake up in the morning, I don't have that pressure on me. I don't have that feeling that I have to go uh, and perform a task.

05.55.00 I don't have to, I don't have to run the race today. So sometimes uh, sometimes that affects you. It affected me in the beginning. Uh, uh, it's not that you don't, it's not that you feel like you don't have a purpose. It's just that you no longer (?) no longer are (?) performing what you've prepared for in the past. For years, for my whole adult life I did one thing. And now all of a sudden I don't do that any longer.

05.55.29 And it took me a while to adjust to that. It took me a couple of months to uh, to slow down, so to speak. To uh, get back into the mainstream of regular life. And uh, now I, I feel I'm adjusting to it. But in the beginning, it wasn't easy.

JW: In what way?

- 05.55.46 JOE: Well, I uh, I was no longer doing what I always did, what I love to do. Uh, police work's a funny thing. It's a, it's a hard task to do normally, and it's almost impossible to do if you don't want to do it. And I enjoyed it very much. I always wanted to, to do my work.
- 05.56.01 I looked forward to going to work. I looked forward to uh, that uh, uneventful event that uh, that, that was going to happen today, something that I wasn't prepared for. And uh, it was good. Now I don't do that any longer. Uh, now I, I don't want to say mundane, but I do normal tasks. (LAUGHS) The uh, the unknown element has been taken away uh, so that little edge that you're prepared for every, every day at work I've mellowed a little bit.
- 05.56.33 Uh, I'm not uh, not uh, as high with that. So it, it took a while to get used to that. I felt like I was going full steam and now I'm going half steam (LAUGHS).

JW: How has your family reacted?

- 05.56.48 JOE: Uh, depends on which one of them you ask (LAUGHS). (~I~) Well, my wife uh, I think she likes me being home. She, she's, she likes the idea that I'm not out there doing stuff that she's not.
- 05.57.02 I used to go to work in the morning and then, or in the afternoon or in the evening, wherever, whatever the tour was for that day. And then she would have to wait for me to come home each day. So it's probably tougher on the family waiting for you to come home, than it is for you yourself when you're at work. Because you're always uh, you always know what you're doing, you always feel you're in control. But they don't know what you're doing, they don't know what you're involved with.
- 05.57.27 So she doesn't have to worry about that any more, for me. Uh, uh, she's worrying about it now for my daughter. Uh, but she didn't, she doesn't have to worry about it for me now, so she's glad that I'm not doing it any longer.

JW: But the other side of you being home?

05.57.43 JOE: Me being home? (~I~) I'm always in the way (LAUGHS). So I, I don't know if uh, if my daughter, Karen and, and my son, Joseph, who is still at home, I don't know if they're as glad that I'm home all the time (LAUGHS) because now I uh, I, I see things that I wasn't there for before. And uh, I always have something to say about it. Where if I, if I wasn't at home and I didn't know what was going on uh, they didn't have to worry about it.

05.58.07 It's, we're getting along fine. It's not, uh, I'm, I'm joking about it a little bit. It's not a, it's not a negative thing it's just different, it's very different. I have to find ways to occupy my time. Yeah.

JW: What do you generally do?

05.58.21 JOE: Well, (?) what I have been doing uh, is there are always things when you're at work that you want to do, enjoy doing, but don't have the time to do. And one of those things was uh, I'm a, I'm a high school official for uh, football and baseball. And that was something that I never got to do as often as I wanted to do. Maybe I would do it once a week, maybe three times a month. Now I'm available to do it all the time. And that's what, that's pretty much what I've been doing, I occupy my time with that. I love it. I uh, it's something I always wanted to be involved in.

05.58.57 And now I have the time to do it. And I uh, I umpire baseball for uh, New York City high schools, and I do football also when uh, in the season, it starts, it's starting this week. I uh, I can do it as much as I want, whenever I want. And, and that's good, and it's something I enjoy. So it's a, it's another love that I had that I never really was able to get involved in, that now I can. So that's (?) what I'm doing now. That's what occupies my time.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What about Karen?

06.00.15 JOE: Well, Karen is uh, has graduated from the police academy. Last time we spoke, she had just entered the police academy. I believe we spoke last in August, and July 1st she had gone into the police academy. She's now completed that. She's uh, out in the field, she works in the 60th Precinct, Coney Island in Brooklyn.

06.00.36 And she very much enjoys it. She's happy to be doing the work. And uh, she's been as we say in the police department, she's been in the street now for uh, for about 7, 8 months. So she's well into it. And it's, it's been good for her, but it's also been good for me, because it gives me a little bit of a connection.

06.00.58 I don't have a, a complete separation now. Now, a lot of police officers retire and they have a complete separation from work. They have nothing to uh, reconnect them. Uh, they don't have a, an easing-out period. Uh, with Karen now, I have my easing out period, because she comes home from work, we talk about what she did the night before. Uh, we talk about the funny stuff, we talk about the (?) stuff that isn't funny. She asks me questions. I ask her questions. It's not all-consuming for me, but it's just enough to keep me in touch.

06.01.32 And at the same time uh, if she feels she has a question that she doesn't want to ask somebody else, she can come home and ask me. So it's, I think it's been good for both of us.

JW: Can you give me an example of what she might ask?

06.01.46 JOE: Well, it's simple, simple things. You have to understand she's new. She's brand new at what she's doing, so she'll, she'll get a, we call uh, our tasks, our individual items, we call them jobs or runs.

- 06.02.00 Where she'll get a radio run and she'll go out on a job whatever the, what it might be, whether it's a robbery or somebody who's ill in (?) a house or somebody's passed away. And they are tasks you have to perform, and you have to deal with the people's families. And she'll come home and she'll say, I did this last night uh, what should I have done? So I'll tell her what I think. She had a, she had an incident uh, I don't know a month or 6 weeks ago where somebody had just a normal call, somebody had, an elderly had passed away.
- 06.02.32 And uh, she went to the, she went to the house. Police officers have to go to the house. There are tasks they have to perform. They have to uh, get a proper identification, have to secure property. And while that was going on, family arrived and you try to be uh, you try to be uh, not obtrusive on them, but yet at the same time you have to perform your duties. So if there's a little uh, uh, a little bit sociology involved, I guess, interacting with the, with the people.
- 06.03.02 And she would come home, tell me what she did. And I said, well, that was good. All right, maybe next time you can try it this way. And that's the, that's the type of stuff we talk about. She, she'll come home and tell me about the stuff that uh, she thought was exciting for the night, maybe, in her precinct there was some sort of chase, and people were running through the streets, and that's always an a, an adrenaline rush and you don't realize it until it's over how excited you were. And she'll come home and we'll talk about that, so uh, something now, where we have uh, a real core in common that we might not have had before.
- 06.03.36 Before she was my daughter, and she would go to school and we would talk about things. But now she's actually doing, we have something that we both understand. And sometimes we'll talk at home, sounds like we're speaking in code. Nobody else understand us, but we have something that we can really relate to with each other. And I think that's good.

JW: You used to talk about how police officers separate themselves because they only talk to other officers?

- 06.04.02 JOE: Well, that's (?) true, because uh, when we're at work uh, we see things and do things that we might not want to bring home. Uh, we don't necessarily discuss what we do at work

with people who don't work with us in our field, who don't understand why we had to do whatever it was. But now with uh, with Karen doing the same thing, she, she can feel free to speak to me about it.

06.04.28 So if she's coming home and she's uncomfortable about something that went on during the day, she has an outlet. And that, and that's good, and I'm glad to be the outlet. Because uh, uh, just by the nature of my being older than her and having done that work for years, I can give her answers that other people wouldn't be able to. So it's (?) good for her because she can come home and vent a little bit. And not hold it in. A lot of police officers hold uncomfortable experiences in, and that hurts them the next day when they go to, they go to work and maybe they're a little edgy or a little grumpy.

06.05.04 If you have somebody (?) to discuss that with uh, it takes the edge off. It's good.

JW: Do you worry about her?

06.05.11 JOE: Sure. Of course. Uh, but uh, you know, police officers are (?) funny in that way. We always uh, we always feel that individually uh, we're invincible. Uh, so I don't start to worry about her, I don't start to think about it until it's near the end of her tour.

06.05.30 And uh, I start to uh, I must have asked uh, a hundred times in the past year. I'll say to my wife, what, what time she get home? You know, what time she supposed to be home? Uh, so when it's the last half hour, I start to (?) wonder about where she is and what she's doing. So uh, she always makes sure she calls. You know, I just finished, I'm going here, I'm gonna go to the my friend, or I'm on my way home, do you need anything? So that's good. We have that uh, uh, little understanding where she'll give me a call, let me know where she is.

06.06.00 So uh, during the day, I'm probably more comfortable with her being at work than my wife is, because I have a better understanding of what she's doing each day uh, than my wife does. Even though my wife uh, almost our whole married life this is what I did. But it's different when you're the outsider. I have a better understanding about what Karen's doing than Jane

does. So it might be a little bit easier for me. But of course you always worry. You always worry.

JW: What about right now? What kinds of stuff is she doing?

06.06.36 JOE: Well, she is uh, she does regular patrol work. She goes out in a radio car some days, and some days she walks a foot beat. And uh, she'll perform uh you're at the uh, you're at the call of the radio. Wherever the radio sends you. Uh, the, the police radio calls you, it sends you to do a task, you, you might have a lost child and then from a lost child you'll go to (?) a robbery.

06.07.02 And uh, from a robbery you'll go to somebody's parked in my driveway (LAUGHS). So uh, you have different uh, different jobs you have to do, and she's running the whole spectrum of the different type, different type of experiences that police officers go into. She does uh, she's low man on the totem pole where she works, so she gets uh, sent out a lot to different, different precincts, to go to parades or uh, maybe they have what we call a robbery post that has to be uh, manned with extra personnel, and uh, those are the type of things she's doing.

JW: Going back to after this past September 11th, what about the year and the kind of things you've done? You went to Ireland?

06.07.53 JOE: Yes, we went to uh, the uh, Irish government uh, I, I guess I didn't fully understand how they felt in Ireland when we were attacked here in, in New York. They have uh, a closer kinship to us than uh, than I had ever thought about. And they reached a point where in the police department we have a uh, uh, a Gaelic football team, Irish football, so (?) it's not soccer, it's not rugby, it's not American football. It's Gaelic football. It's sort of their national sport.

06.08.27 And we have a team here uh, in the police department. And last year, we went over to Ireland to play a few games against the uh, Irish teams, the county teams and the police department teams uh, in Ireland. In Ireland they call their police department the Garter. Uh, it was a little bit of a mismatch, it's sort of like uh, the Little League going to play against the major leagues because it's their national sport. It's what they grow up in. It's what they, they do all the time.

06.08.58 But one of the things when we were over there, we coincided the trip, of course, this just wasn't uh, wasn't a coincidence. Uh, in a place called Dunnadee, Dunnadee Forest in, in Ireland. Which is a national uh, preserve, a forest preserve. They were dedicating a portion of the park uh, to the police and fire victims of uh, of the original 9-11. They have something called the American Walk. And we were there, we broke ground. Uh, they're planting a tree for each police officer and each fireman who died on September 11th.

06.09.34 And uh, next to that tree there'll be a plaque dedicated in their name, and this will be along a cobblestone walk in their forest, which was very nice. And they brought us over there, and we helped break the ground and (?) dedicate the land in, in Dunnadee Forest. And Dunnadee is (?) a small town, and the whole town came out to see us. The school was there, and we had a little reception afterwards, it was very nice.

06.10.01 Uh, they told us there uh, the Irish people told us, that when they think of America, their first thought is New York. Uh, that's what they consider coming to America, coming to New York. So when we had our problems here, they very much felt for us. In fact, they even closed down the whole country for a day uh, in uh, in sympathy to what we were going through. Like I said, something we never uh, I had never really thought about that before. I hadn't considered their involvement.

06.10.30 But they felt very close to us. They felt a very close kinship to us. And they wanted us to come over there, and we went over there and they (?) treated us royally. The people were great. They made us feel, made us feel good.

JW: What other things have happened after those months leading up to your retirement?

- 06.10.59 .JOE: Well, (?) leading up to my retirement was of course uh, mixed feelings. I was, I, I was ready to retire. I knew it was coming. Uh, emotionally, I think I was preparing myself for it. But you're never really prepared. It's a separation. There's a definite separation from the day before you retire until the day after you retire. Uh, we have a saying in the police department, when you're out, you're out. And it's true. Uh, you've completely separated yourself from the daily routine that you were used to.
- 06.11.34 And it's something that you have to get used to. Uh, first few months of retirement were, were uh, were dreary for me. Uh, I was uh, feeling, I was missing it. I was, I was missing the work. I was missing the people I worked with. And uh, it takes a while to get over it. It's a, it's definitely a separation. But uh, as it went along, I got, I got more and more used to it, and I got involved in uh, things with the family and uh, and doing my work with the high schools.
- 06.12.04 And uh, and I started to enjoy that. And uh, that along with the combination of Karen still being involved and continually talking with people who I worked with it uh, it smoothed over (LAUGHS).

JW: How do you feel now?

- 03.12.22 JOE: Oh, now, I'm uh, I'm, I'm glad of my career. I'm glad of what I did. I'm uh, I'm uh, I don't know if proud's the right word. But I think, I think I did a good job. You know, I always, always tried to do whatever my work was. I, I feel that (?) at the end, at the end of my career, which just happened to be uh, coincidence, it wasn't planned this way, but at the end, after 9-11, I was involved with it, I performed a task that needed to be done, and I feel that I helped.
- 06.12.58 So I'm satisfied along those lines. I don't feel as if I left unfulfilled. I feel like I did my job, it's time to move on. It's time to let somebody else do it now. And so that was good. I'm (?) satisfied uh, about my career. I'm not uh, wishing I had done something else. I'm not

wishing I had done more. When maybe before, I had thought about that, and now I don't anymore. Now I say I, I know I did what we were supposed to do. We, we, we had a job we had to do and, and uh, we did it to the best of our ability.

06.13.31 Maybe everybody doesn't think we did it correctly, but we know what we did with the availability that we had and we tried the best we could. We (?) know that uh, we (?) that nobody else would have been able to accomplish more.

JW: So you think it would have been different 3 or 4 years ago?

06.13.57 JOE: Well, when in, the police department, usually as you go on in your career, you advance uh, to a job that's more separated from the street work. And (?) I was in (?) in that situation. I was a, I had been promoted a couple of times, and I was in a, in a detective unit, and I wasn't out there every day in the street battling crime so to speak. Uh, running around in a radio car answering, answering jobs. So you, you get a little bit separated from the actual police task.

06.14.30 And sometimes guys leave and they leave on that down side. That didn't happen with me, though, (?) for the last year, I could not have been more involved than I was. I probably was more involved in the last year than any time in my career. So I feel that uh, I, I feel satisfied that I did police work. I, I feel I left on a high note. It was a terrible reason, but I left on a high note. I know that uh, I know we did what we were supposed to do.

06.15.01 And I, and I felt satisfied with my work.

06.15.33 END OF TAPE # JK.0903.0600.6

07.01.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Your son, Joe?

07.01.50 JOE: My son, he's uh, he's in school (~I~) He's uh, he's getting along. He had uh, he's going to St. Francis College in Brooklyn. And uh, he worked all summer as a, as an electrician's helper. And uh, he had uh, a couple of years back he had been injured playing football in school. He was in, he was in college on a (?) football scholarship. And he was injured to the point where he couldn't play football any longer, NCAA had pulled his eligibility to, to play football. So that upset him uh, that uh, uh, took a piece of his identity away, I guess.

07.02.32 And uh, he stumbled a little and uh, he came home from school. he took a little time off. He went uh, he went to work, and now he's back in school again. So that's good. I'm, I'm happy with that.

JW: What about your wife?

07.02.51 JOE: Yeah, my wife's a high school teacher, Catholic high school teacher. She's looking forward to stopping. But uh, at this point right now, she was committed. She's uh, she's very committed to her school. She's the type of person that if she takes off two days in a row, the school will close and all the kids will fail (LAUGHS). And they'll all, they'll all be homeless (LAUGHS). So she's very dedicated to what she does. So she's, she's still teaching right now. Might be uh, might be only another year, but uh, she'll decide that when the time comes, but right now she's still teaching. (~I~) But we did have our, pretty much our first summer together.

07.03.30 Uh, in 25 years, because I always work for the summer. I usually have a week or two off. Uh, and then portions of the day when you're not working, but this was the first time uh, she being a teacher, she's home every summer. But me being a police officer, I'm not. I'm just uh, work continues on. So this was the first time that we were home for the summer and we were able to, not that we did much, but if we felt like doing something, we didn't have to check the calendar, we didn't have to check the schedules. We just did it.

07.04.00 Yeah, so that was good, that was nice for a change.

JW: Do you see a lot of your police buddies?

07.04.11 JOE: I don't really. Uh, I see them, I see them from the neighborhood. Uh, I live in a neighborhood that's uh, very much police officers and firemen and teachers. So I see them socially in that context. But uh, the guys who I actually worked with or uh, I don't see them as much as I would like.

07.04.34 We speak on the phone, uh, we'll shoot e-mails back and forth uh, send each other jokes and little comments. But I haven't actually kept in touch with them as closely as I thought I would. And I'm a little bit surprised about that. I thought I would uh, keep in touch with them more. And more so on their side. I (?) was in a very unusual situation. All the people in my unit, there were 8 of us worked together.

07.05.00 We all pretty much were in the same boat, work-wise and family-wise. We were all about the same age. My whole unit retired. My, the office that I sat in is completely gone. There were 8 new people there. So we all retired uh, within 6 months of each other. So we're all pretty much going through the same thing. Uh, and uh, we, we'll talk back and forth and we'll uh, maybe go to lunch once in a while. But as far as going back to the office and seeing the guys?

07.05.31 That's not there for me. It's not, it's not there anymore. So I uh, I don't uh, see them as much as I thought I would. Still involved in that, though, because through the Emerald Society uh, I still see everybody. Uh, you know, we have our meetings and we have our functions. And I do some umpiring in a police league, so I see guys who I know from work that way. But as far as uh, going back to the job, to see people and talk, no, I haven't been doing that.

JW: What else might have surprised you about retirement?

07.06.06 JOE: Uh, probably uh, I tell people other fellows who are getting ready to retire, I say what's the, what's the hardest thing to get used to? And I said, probably the hardest thing to get used to is the freedom. Uh, being a police officer, your life is pretty much regimented.

Uh, your day revolves around going to work, and then when you go to work, you have a, you have a regiment, things you have to do at certain times at certain places you have to be at certain times.

07.06.32 And uh, you don't uh, you can't freelance at work. You have to do things according to the rules. Now, uh, I really don't have any rules. If somebody calls me up and says uh, you want to go to the Met game tomorrow, I don't have to say well, let me see if I can get somebody to cover or uh, let me change my tour. I just uh, say Ok. I have a, I have a little joke at home, I always used to carry a calendar book with me and I used to have to write everything down in the calendar book because we were involved in so much with work that you had to keep your meetings and prepared.

07.07.07 And so now I say, let me, let me check my schedule, and I open my hands like this and I say no, I'm free, I can go. And uh, I think they're a little tired of seeing that at home. (LAUGHS) But uh, it's true. The hardest thing is to get adjusted to is the freedom. And uh, once you start to get adjusted with that, it's good. Because you can uh, you can be more uh, more in the real world uh.

07.07.33 You, you don't have to worry about if I'm working this weekend, or if I'm working that night. If you were to call me up and say uh, let's go to dinner Friday night, I'd have to say oh, let me check, let me see if I'm working. I don't have to do that anymore. So that's good. That's good, that's a good thing.

JW: My wife quitting her job reveals different sides of her. I'm discovering when the work is gone, it's like in a good way some things have changed, and have there been any revelations for you?

07.08.27 JOE: I don't know if, if my family interprets it that way, but I, I could see that as being true, because I know that when I went to work that I always was uh, focused along those lines. I knew that there were things I had to do. And I would come home and I'd still be thinking about cases that we had, or something that took place today that I have to finish tomorrow. And uh, I guess that, that might have made me a little more serious than I am, uh, than I would want to be. It might have made me a, a little grumpier at times than I want to be.

07.09.00 Uh, I know it's hard for uh, uh, for my family to believe, but I do like to laugh (LAUGHS) I

do like to fool around at times, and I do like to have a good time. And I just really didn't always have the opportunity to fit that in. Uh, sometimes now they're uh, a little tired of me fooling around. But uh, (LAUGHS) I don't care. I went all those years not doing it, I'm going to do it now if I want to. Uh, so uh, yeah, does (?) it reveal a different side?

07.09.29 It probably brings you more to the person you really are. It uh, because you're relaxed. You can say what you want to say, you can do what you want to do. And uh, get involved with things that interest you, as opposed to things you have to do. So it, it might uh, bring you back to who you really are.

JW: Did you always want to umpire?

07.09.55 JOE: Oh, sure. That was one of the things I always wanted to do, that I, every year I made the commitment to myself, I'm going to do it this year, and then I couldn't fit it in. And I would uh, I work with an organization, a union that understood my job situation and they gave me a lot of leeway where I could uh, do a very small schedule or be the fill-in guy. Uh, if somebody was sick, they'd give me a call and I'd fill in. Now uh, now I can be a complete part of it. I can uh, jump in with both feet. I, in fact, I think my wife thinks I've jumped into it too heavily.

07.10.32 I think she, she probably feels I'm doing it too much. But it's something I enjoy, something I always wanted to do. (~I~) I've had the opportunity, I've had the opportunity in the past year. I've umpired at Shea Stadium. And not, of course not for the Mets, but I did the city championship at Shea Stadium. I had the opportunity to uh, umpire at uh, Staten Island Yankee Stadium, so I've been places and done things and, and met people that I wouldn't have, that I never did in the past, and I enjoy that.

07.11.00 And it's good. I'm gonna continue to do it (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: We talked about the police department and how after 9-11 there was a certain difference in the attitude of the people at the time. And there were sort of a camaraderie. How do you think the department's doing now? How does time change things like attitudes?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 07.12.12 JOE: It's a hard, it's a hard question to answer, because we always felt as police officers that we were a coherent group, that we worked well together. And maybe we felt that the people didn't understand us. Uh, and sometime we had an us and them attitude uh, where we felt they didn't understand us, and they knew we didn't understand them because we were always picking on them.
- 07.12.36 And uh, (?) the general public uh, the general public's encounter with police is usually negative. Something has happened to them that's negative, and we're responding or we're doing something to them uh, you know, because they've committed a violation or, or a crime.
- 07.12.58 So our interaction is never really favorable. It's usually uh, revolving around some sort of negative situation. So we always felt, or we might have been lead to feel that they didn't understand us, because we were only trying to do our job. And we knew they didn't understand us. When 9/11 happened, that, that just disappeared, just completely disappeared. Uh, we within the department worked freely amongst ourselves and, and uh, (STUTTER) did our job.
- 07.13.31 But the public finally stepped back and looked at us and said wait a second. Maybe these guys are doing some good work, maybe they are (?) maybe they are helping us. And they really reached out. The (?) public really reached out to the police and the fire department uh, and supported us. Uh, in my particular situation, I experienced that in the beginning, but then I got divorced from it a little bit because I pretty much lived in, in the uh, recovery site in, in Staten Island for the next ten months or next eleven months.
- 07.14.05 Uh, I got up at 2:30 in the morning and I drove to work and uh, I was at work at 3:15 in the morning and usually home maybe 7:30, 8 o'clock at night and just jumped in bed, got up and went to work again. So, and we were completely isolated, we were a secluded area and we had no interaction with the public. Uh, but our interaction with other agencies was excellent.
- 07.14.31 Uh, something that was not uh, usually normal. Uh, if we needed something from, for instance, the highway department or department of highways, we would call them up and immediately we got what we wanted. The department of sanitation uh, other, other federal

agencies uh, even private business. Sometimes I remember once we were up there and we (?) were building uh, a landing strip, and uh, we had figured out that we wanted to put tarmac down on (?) the composite dirt, which, which was the landfill and we did that.

07.15.02 And then we wanted to uh, we needed holes in it, and we needed jackhammers to drill holes in, in the uh, in the (?) tarmac that we put down. We should have anticipated (?) putting in our holes before we put the tarmac down, but we didn't. We learned the next time we did it. We (?) did it a different way, but that was a, that was an item the police department doesn't have. We usually have everything. The jackhammers we didn't have. We got on the phone, we called the (?) local construction company and uh, within an hour, there was a, a pickup truck there with two workers and about four jackhammers, and they said (?) what do you want and where do you want it?

07.15.37 And uh, the, they went out and they, and they helped us. Now what I'm getting at is while I was up there doing that, I don't know if the involvement with the rest of the police department and the public changed. It probably started to fade out as time went along, and then uh, as police officers were released from the emergency task and sent back to their normal duties, then their interactions with the public started probably started to be on that uh, negative interaction again, negative in the sense that something bad had happened and the police responded.

07.16.13 But I think that the public uh, from what I can just, just see a little bit and you know, where I live and what you see on, on television, I think the public uh, is willing to accept that (?) we're trying to do a good job.

07.16.30 You know, they're a little more lenient where they might not have accepted a mistake before or accepted uh, uh, a situation. Now I think they view us a little differently. Will that change? I don't know, you know? Is the police department changing? The police department always changes. To the, to the public, they think the police department's stagnant and stays the same all the time. It doesn't. Police department's constantly changing. Before 9/11 and after 9/11. Maybe more so after 9/11 because we're aware of things we weren't aware of before.

07.17.01 But the police department's always changing, always trying things different way. Trying new programs to interact with the public. So has the police department changed? Yeah. Uh, it would have changed anyway, but it's changed more because of 9/11. Has the public's

opinion of us changed? I think so, I hope so. I, I'd like to think so. Uh, now I'm looking at the police department, I'm a civilian now (LAUGHS). So I can look at what they do and uh, I hope other people will look at it, you know, with a little more lenient eye and give the guys a chance to do their work.

JW: Anything specifically you miss about the job?

07.17.40 JOE: Well, you miss uh, you miss being with other police officers because uh, uh, a police officer who's survived, one who's stayed on the job 10, 15, 20, 25 years. Not one who's 3, 4 years in, or even my daughter who's a, who's a year in.

07.17.59 But somebody who's, who's survived. Uh, they've become a different person. Uh, years ago, maybe in the '50's uh, the term cop was supposed to be like a negative term. You weren't allowed to call a police officer cop. He was a, he was a police officer. That connotation's not there any more. We call each other cops. So it's a, (?) an acceptable term. Uh.

JW: I don't (LAUGHS).

07.18.27 JOE: You don't call them cops? (LAUGHS) Ok, you're allowed to now. But uh, what we do is uh, being a cop the way I like to explain it is, is or being a police officer, that's what I am. That's not what I do. Uh, now somebody might be a teacher, or somebody might be a banker, and that's what they do, and not necessarily what they identify with. But a police officer who's been around awhile, 10, 15, 20, 25 years, that's how he identifies himself. That's what he does, that's who he is. So uh, separating from that, changing from that, I'm not that anymore.

07.19.02 In my heart, I still feel like that's what I am. But uh, I'm really not. And uh, I have to accept that. But uh, police officer's personality is different because his job uh, changes him. His job moulds him a certain way. And probably he was predisposed to that anyway; otherwise, he wouldn't have gotten involved in that type of work. He would have become uh, a fireman or (?) a teacher or a banker, if that's the way he wanted to go.

07.19.31 But the mere fact that he came into police work, some guys don't survive. They don't like it.

They don't like it, the best thing to do is leave. Because you'll be miserable if you don't like it. Give it a chance, (?) you know, if you're trying it a young fellow and he's trying it and he, and he's had a few bumps and scrapes uh, he has to give it a chance to see if he will like it. And if he does, and if he stays, that's what he turns into. He turns into a police officer, that's how he identifies himself. So I miss that with my friends.

07.20.00 I miss being with those people. I'm, I'm with people now more than ever in my life who aren't that. Uh, just for instance, with the umpiring uh, I'm with guys who uh, in other fields of work uh, people I never had the opportunity to associate with before. Not that I'm a, in favor of them or, or look at them unfavorably. It's just I never really interacted with them before. So now I'm uh, with other people and I have to, sometimes I have to be careful (LAUGHS).

07.20.32 What I say or, or what I do, because I have to remember where I am. (LAUGHS) You know, you don't have to, well, if you're in a, if you're in a police environment, if you're in a room with uh, 5 or 6 other police officers and you say something, they understand what you're saying. It might sound harsh to an outsider's ear uh, we have a little bit of a morbid sense of humor. Because usually when you see uh, bad things a lot you tend to joke about them.

07.20.59 And uh, if an outsider or if (?) the little old lady was standing on the corner waiting to cross and she heard three police officers standing in the street joking, she wouldn't understand it. She wouldn't understand what they were joking about. But sometimes you laugh and you joke about things to make them go away, so that you don't have to face them, so that you don't have to uh, uh, so that they won't hurt you. Uh, you know, you, you don't want to talk about uh, bad things at home, so sometimes you joke about them with your friends.

07.21.30 I remember once, years ago, I came home and I must have been, I must have been down uh, and I (?) didn't realize it. Uh, for 7 years I worked in a, in a homicide unit that dealt with uh, vehicular homicides. So basically all innocent victims. And uh, you know, how many times can you see kids hit on bikes and, and killed or babies fall out of baby seats and killed, or old uh, old man or an older woman crossing the street coming home from the grocery store hit by a tractor trailer.

07.22.03 Those aren't good things. Those aren't good sights. And I remember one time coming home and I guess I was a little uh, stand-offish or probably I was grumpy. I was probably being mean. And uh, my wife said, what are you, you know, what's the matter, what's the matter?

And I said, uh, bad day at work. Said, well, what, what? And pushed the issue and I said, well, what do you want me to tell you? Want me to tell you about the dead babies I saw today? And all, so but to another police officer I could say that.

07.22.28 To someone who's not, even to a family member who tries to understand, they can't, they can't understand it because they weren't there. They didn't actually see it, they didn't actually experience it. They didn't have to handle it. They didn't have to tell the parents that their kid fell off the, was getting off the school bus and the school bus ran over them. Uh, they didn't have to do that. So sometimes uh, cops will, will uh, have a morbid sense of humor and joke about things and, and that's what gives you camaraderie.

07.22.59 That's what sticks you together. That's why they all join clubs. That's why we have all these retired clubs and uh, I just got (?) a flier in the mail the other day uh, I was in Highway Patrol for 11 years, and they have a club they call it the, the Rocking Chair Club. So I got my first official invitation to go to a Rocking Chair Club meeting. And I'll probably go. (LAUGHS) Go and see the guys I haven't seen in a while. So there's that uh, I guess there's uh, uh, a reinstitution into society, where you have to come back. When we retire, we come back into the regular society.

07.23.32 But uh, most guys like it. Uh, the other guys I speak to who are retired, they're all happy. So that's a, when you first retire you want to talk to them, 'cos you want them to tell them, they want, you want them to tell you you're going to be happy. And now I'm telling other guys who are getting ready to retire, don't worry about it, it's good. You'll like it. So it's a, it's a, although it's something that we strongly identify with, it is a (?) load off your mind.

07.24.03 It is a relief when you don't have to do it anymore. And as time goes on, you only, you tend to remember only the funny incidents, and only the good things that happened. You, you block out the bad stuff, so uh, hopefully I'm on that side of the fence now. Hopefully I'm at the point where I can start uh, only remembering the good things.

JW: Where does the work that you did in Freshkills fall?

07.24.42 JOE: Well, that's stands as a (LAUGHS) uh, this might sound like a, a pompous term but it's like the crowning jewel on my career. Uh, I know I left the police department being a police officer. I know that I was doing police work when I left.

- 07.25.01 Uh, it's a task that I wish I did not have to do. It was a task that I wish none of us were involve in. But it's something I'm very proud to have done. Uh, I'm, I'm very happy to tell people I spent the last year of my career at Freshkills. That uh, I was uh, the supervisor uh, up there. That I uh, performed whatever tasks needed to be (?) done that day. And other police officers identify with that.
- 07.25.31 They all uh, they're all uh, uh, congratulatory is that a, is that a proper word? Uh, they tell me oh, you guys did good work up there, we're glad we didn't have to go there. Boy, you guys had a bad task. (?) that was a dirty job. That's the expression we use, a dirty job. That was a dirty job. And uh, I'm very happy to say I was part of that. There was a, there was a cadre of, of steady personnel that worked up there.
- 07.25.59 There were about 15 of us. During the course of the day there were anywhere from uh, 300 to 800 people working up there, but there were about 15 of us that were there every, single day that ran the place. And uh, that's a good group. I can meet anyone of them at any time, either tomorrow or 5 or 10 years from now and we'll immediately be (?) back to where we were. Uh, because we all know what we did up there. We did the best we could. Sometimes we read in the paper, and sometimes we hear on television and it annoys me a little bit that uh, uh, we didn't find this and, and we didn't do that, and uh, people were buried up there.
- 07.26.36 That's just not so. That's just not so. There's, there was no way that task could have been performed any more efficiently than it was. People from all over the world came to see what we were doing. Delegations from Italy came, delegations from uh, England, from Germany. They came to watch us because they feared that what happened to us was going to happen to them, and they wanted to know how to handle it, what to do about it.
- 07.27.01 So when the rest, when (?) governments were sending delegations to us to see what we were doing and how we were handling it, must mean we were doing it right, it must mean we were doing the right thing, and we were performing the job correctly. And I think we did. And uh, as part of my police career uh, I'll never hesitate to say I was there. I'll never hesitate to say that I worked with that guy. You know, I, I worked with the inspector who was there, Jim Lowango, who I knew for years.
- 07.27.29 We were, we were buddies before and uh, we worked up there. And uh, I hesitate to mention names because if I do I, I won't mention somebody and (?) that'll be wrong. But the, the 15 of us who were there, I'll take any one of them at any time and go do any job. Because uh, I

completely trust them, and I know that they were all, they were all had their heart in it completely. You couldn't work up there. There were people who came up there in the beginning who left. Because it was a, it was a nasty job.

07.28.00 It was a dirty job. And, and uh, you know, that's fine. That's fine, they just went back to doing their regular job, and when it finally got settled and uh, it was down to a uh, small group of people who were there every day, they were the best. And I'm, I'm glad I worked with them.

JW: When you talk about what it takes, and I look at your family history and I see the uprising of the new generation of police officer in your daughter, how do you think she's doing or fits the bill? Police work seems to be almost a genetic thing.

07.28.49 JOE: Well, maybe. Uh, uh, every, every police officer doesn't have that in their family, but a lot do. You'd be surprised how many, how many people in the police department have fathers, brothers, mothers uh, aunts and uncles who (?) were police officers.

07.29.04 Uh, am I happy that she's a police officer? I don't know if happy's the right word, but I'm proud that she is. You know, uh, I would be happier if she was doing something that where I never had to worry about her getting hurt, but I'm proud of the fact that she's doing it. Uh, and I think she's doing it correctly just by the mere fact that she doesn't tell me everything (LAUGHS) and that's good.

07.29.32 Because maybe she shouldn't tell me everything. Uh, so uh, I think she'll be fine. I think she has the make up for it, emotionally. Uh.

JW: What is that?

07.29.42 JOE: Uh, first of all you have to like people. And you have to be willing to help people, and you have to be willing to do things that other people might not be willing to do. Uh, as (?) I mentioned before uh, people die.

07.30.00 It's just something that happens. Some people die violently, some people die natural causes. But you're the police officer, you're there. You have to take care of that situation. If it happened in the street, you have to take care of it. You have to call the family, you have to

tell them what's happened. You have to be the one who chases and catches the person who just knocked down and robbed your grandmother. Uh, so you, you have to be willing to do thing that other people aren't willing to do.

07.30.33 Is that in your make up uh, what makes a person be that way? I don't know. I don't know uh, you have to be a, I guess you have to have a strong character. You have to be uh, a little willing to take chances. I guess you have to operate outside the lines a little bit, you have to be willing to take that chance. Uh, which with me personally, probably other people would uh, would say what do you mean, you're so regimented? You're so straight. Uh, you do everything according to the rules.

07.31.01 Well, that's what, that's what it appears to you, but (LAUGHS) you weren't with us when we were out at 3 o'clock in the morning in a radio car uh, doing our work. Uh, so I think Karen can handle it. Uh, I wish she was about uh, 5 inches taller and 50 pounds heavier (LAUGHS). But she isn't. And uh, but uh, emotionally, I think she has the emotional make up for it. She's strong. Uh, she's intelligent. Uh, I know she can handle herself in a uh, personal interaction with other people, and hopefully uh, hopefully she'll like it.

07.31.39 If she likes it, I think she's made for it, I think she'll do well. She doesn't like it, she'll, she'll find that out in the next year or so, and she'll move on to something else. I don't think that'll happen, though. I think uh, I think she has the personality for it. My older girl, I don't think she would have been a police officer. She's uh, just a, a different uh, different make up.

07.32.00 Karen was a little bit of a free spirit when she was growing up. She was a little bit of my problem. Uh, so uh, she was willing to take chances. Uh, so I think she'll, I think she can be and will be a good police officer. My oldest girl is an excellent accountant (LAUGHS) and that's, and that's what she, that's what she does well. And we'll see what happens to Joseph when he, you know, when his time comes.

JW: What about the future? How do things feel now?

07.32.47 JOE: Well, the future's always a little scary. Uh, it's, it's unknown, and anything that unknown uh, anything that's unknown uh, makes you apprehensive. Uh, I'm not worried about it.

07.33.01 Uh, get along, and maybe my, my wife and I'll, we're still young enough to enjoy uh, ourselves. We, we spent the last portion of our lives bringing up our children and sending them to school so that they could go out on their own. Well, we're finished with that now. Now we have to refocus on ourselves, in the next you know, for the future. And maybe do stuff that we want to do. What is that? I don't know (LAUGHS).

07.33.30 I'll (?) tell you next time I see you. But uh, it's uh, it's at least gives us the opportunity uh, at least gives us the opportunity to try different stuff and uh, we'll see. The future uh, the future's uh, is unknown, who knows what's going to happen? You know, things could change tomorrow you (?) never know. But uh, I'm more uh, probably more prepared for it now than I was a year ago.

07.34.00 I'm ready to give it a shot. Well uh, it's all you can really do. We'll wake up tomorrow morning and handle what comes.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

07.34.31 END OF TAPE # JK.0903.0100.1

08.01.02 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What were your thoughts today? How long has it been since you've been to Ground Zero?

08.01.14 JOE: I haven't been to Ground Zero. I drove by in my car numerous times you know, in the course of everyday business, driving up, you know, uptown or going to the theater, whatever. It, it's part of the traffic route, so I've driven by.

08.01.32 I haven't actually walked into Ground Zero or been there. Uh, in over a year. Uh, as a uh, as a Ground Zero function, I haven't been there. Actually I haven't been there since the day of

the closing ceremonies. Uh, in last year whether that was in August of '02, or when they had the official closing ceremonies, that was the last time I was there as a Ground Zero event, as a World Trade Center event.

08.01.59 I've passed by from time to time, and thought about it. I've seen it on TV and thought about it, but I haven't been there uh, in uh, in a year.

JW: What was the feeling emotionally?

08.02.12 JOE: It's uh, it's pristine now. It's (?) cleaned up. It looks like a construction site. It doesn't relate uh, for me back to Ground Zero. Uh, I'll have to stand there, the one thing that did relate back, two things, two things that did relate back.

08.02.30 One was the uh, the cross out of the steel beams, because I remember that being there. I remember standing next to that. And seeing that today. That was a real part of what we know as Ground Zero. So that was, that was one thing. The other thing was the repair, as I mentioned the repair of those buildings over by uh, the American Express building and the, and the atrium and I don't know the names of all those buildings. But those buildings being repaired.

08.03.00 And uh, my most recent memory of them was being in disrepair, looking as if they were bombed with holes in them and being inside those buildings when the dust was floating and the smell was foul. And standing inside the building, looking out as if cannon balls had flown into the building. So seeing that uh, brought me back memories. But actually looking at Ground Zero itself it's uh, it's something different.

08.03.32 It's detached right now, because my memory of it is being in the hole when we went down there a couple of times or seeing the guys climb on the piles and uh, removing the debris and having debris delivered to us. Uh, so it, it's a different place right now. I know what it is when I go there. I know that's the World Trade Center, I know that's where the World Trade Center was. I know that's the remainder, but it just doesn't relate for me the same uh, as (?) it did in the past.

08.04.01 Uh, because it's been cleaned up, I guess because the job's being done uh, the coming back. Uh, but uh, but emotionally if I, if I uh, if I think about it, the emotion about the World Trade Center is probably stronger now than it was in the past. Because in the past, that emotion was clouded by a job we had to do. Now that doesn't cloud it any longer, so now to think about the terrible thing that happened, boy.

08.04.31 It's uh, it was sad.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What were you saying about it being sad?

08.04.48 JOE: I was saying it was sad? (~I~) Uh, it's, it was sad because now I can look at it a little more realistically about what actually happened, what actually took place. I can be, I can stand on the side and look at it now, in the same manner that people were able to look at it two years ago, which I didn't really have the opportunity to, because I was too busy.

08.05.11 We were (?) busy, we were working. So now when I look at it and reflect back on it uh, it was a terrible thing. It was uh, it's very emotional. Makes me uh, feel for those, for those families.

08.05.29 Uh, one of the things that I said uh, I (?) I've mentioned to other guys who uh, who I've worked with uh, I said, when it comes time, when it was time to retire, what you miss and what you don't miss, I said one of the things that I'll never miss. I'll never miss is having to speak to another victim's family. I spoke to, on the September 11th, 12th and 13th, a thousand people, hundreds of families I spoke to.

08.05.58 Uh, we were (?) trying to process, and one of the things we were doing in the very beginning was trying to find who was missing, find out who was missing, how many people were missing. And uh, families were coming to us with holding pictures uh, giving me a picture of their missing son, daughter, husband, expecting me to be able to go out into the street with

that little picture and find them. It was just, just an impossible task. So one of the things I, I will not miss is speaking to another victim's family. I don't ever have to do that again.

08.06.32 And uh, uh, I'm glad that I don't have to do that again. Because that was, that was tough.

JW: What do you think about the site itself and its future?

08.06.47 JOE: I don't know. It's uh, (?) I've always believed that uh, there are people who take care of each task, people who take care of different jobs.

08.07.00 Uh, it's not my job to take care of that. I have faith that uh, the people who are in charge uh, will do the right thing. Uh, do we need a memorial? Yes. Do we need office space? Yes. We lost uh, thousands of acres of office space in one day. Uh, I think the (?) number was something like 11% of the office space in New York City disappeared in one day.

08.07.28 Well, we need that, our economy needs it. Uh. Do the feelings of uh, of victims' families have to be stepped on by what we need economically in the city? Well, no, they shouldn't be stepped on. But each side has to understand the other side's feeling. Uh, the economy has to be rebuilt. Down in (?) Lower Manhattan, not necessarily just Lower Manhattan, but that uh, with the offices that were there were nation-wide.

08.08.02 I mean, they were, there were companies there that did things that affect the whole country. Yet at the same time, there has to be some sort of remembrance there, there has to be some sort of uh, of (?) memorial and some sort of uh, I think the, the term they're using is hollowed ground, something sacred. Well, yeah, you can't, you can't forget. But I'm sure both of that can be done together. Maybe where there used to be a road and there used to be a building, well, maybe the road can be where the building is, and the building can be on the other side, so there can be a little park.

08.08.32 I'm, I'm sure that the people who are in charge can, can work that out. Uh, I don't know the answer. I'm not trained in that field uh, so I, I don't know that answer. But I believe that the people who are heading those commissions uh, will try to do what's best for both. And, and what's best for both has to be done, even if each side has to compromise a little bit.

JW: Anything you would like to discuss that I didn't cover?

08.09.06 JOE: I don't think so. Uh, I was it an eventful year for me? Yeah, a lot of things happened. Uh, I had a child who got married. I had a child that followed in my footsteps. Uh, I left my career, I moved on to something else. But uh, uh, sometimes uh, I'd like to step back.

08.09.26 I'm just a little cog in (?) the wheel. You know, I'm, I'm just one story, and there are thousands or millions of stories, and I'm just one person. Uh, my life moves on. Uh, do I wish it had stayed the same and not changed? Well, probably, probably. But circumstances prevented that. You know, two planes flew into those buildings, which changed all our lives. And uh, my life along with everybody else's.

08.09.58 So now I'm in a different direction. Uh, maybe next time I'll be able to tell you better (LAUGHS) if uh, if I thought I had an eventful year. Uh, I've had a slower year. I was, I was tired at the end. I was worn out. I was ready, I was ready to stop. And I did. And I know a number of my friends felt the same way. And it was just, it, it's, it's good to be retired, but it's better to not be doing what we were doing.

08.10.32 I was worn out. And uh, I'm glad that I've had the opportunity now just to sit back for a while and recoup and uh, play with the dog and read books. And uh, take a little longer to (?) clean the swimming pool than I normally do. Uh, but uh, I'm glad because I don't, I, I was ready to stop going 100 miles and hour. And uh, that was good.

08.11.00 That was good. Maybe that'll wear off in a few months and I'll be ready to, to run again. And if that's so, that's what I'll do. But uh, right now I'm glad that I'm uh, at the pace I am, which is a much slower pace than I was a year ago.

JW: Thank you.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

08.11.30 ROOM TONE

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

08.12.02 END OF TAPE # JK.0903.0800.8

09.01.04 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I wanted to ask you about your daughter, whose boyfriend is in Iraq.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

09.01.23 JOE: My daughter, Karen, my second girl, who's a uh, a police officer on Coney Island. Her uh, her boyfriend is stationed in Iraq right now.

JW: What's that like for her?

09.01.34 JOE: Well, for her it's stressful. Uh, she uh, focuses every day on reading the paper to see what's going on over there. And uh, waits for his uh, waits for his letters and the occasional phone calls. But it uh, it's top priority to her at this time.

JW: Is he a cop?

09.01.59 JOE: Actually he is. He's a, he's a police officer also. They met when they were in the police academy. And uh, he was a uh, a full time serviceman before he went into the police department, and uh, on active reserve afterwards and his uh, reserve unit was called up, and he's a, he's an MP, a military policeman, so he had a, he had to go over to Iraq.

JW: Was it a surprise for him to get called up?

09.02.30 JOE: It was a surprise for him, because uh, he's near the end of his enlistment. I'm not exactly sure how it works, but it know that when you're a full duty serviceman, when you come out, when you fulfill your commitment, you do have some what's called inactive reserve time. And he was on that. And usually uh, that time just fades away. But uh, this is the second time he's been called up.

09.02.58 He was, he was called up, I think about uh, 2 years ago, he had to go to uh, uh, Guantanamo, and then he came home, and now he's, his unit's been called up again. It's because of his specialty being an MP.

JW: Guantanamo is in Guantanamo Bay?

JOE: For uh, I guess for the prison camp.

JW: Was this post-9/11?

09.03.21 JOE: No, it was uh, I guess when they were setting it up with uh, in the beginning with the Taliban uh, I'm not exactly sure.

JW: How long was he called up and did he come back?

09.03.39 JOE: He uh, he was away for uh, I think 7 or 8 months. He came back, went uh, went back to the police department, and then uh, when, when the action in Iraq started, and they called up all the troops, he was pulled out of the police department and sent back, sent back to Iraq.

JW: How did Karen take that?

09.04.02 JOE: Well, of course she wasn't happy. Uh, they were uh, they were doing fine together, and uh, he was upstate, he lives up in Washingtonville. And then of course Karen lives in, in Brooklyn. So it was a, it was a, a traveling relationship, but they (?) were doing fine. On their days off, they would visit each other, and uh, after uh, after work, but uh, when, when he was called up, she had to, she hadn't expected it, I believe.

09.04.31 So when uh, he was called up, she was very upset.

JW: He came back recently?

09.04.38 JOE: He just in fact, he just went back uh, he was home for two weeks R & R, and they flew him back to the, back to the States. Sometimes they just fly you to Germany uh, and you, you spend your time in Europe. But they flew him home, and he was home for two weeks, and he just went back uh, 3 or 4 days ago.

09.04.57 He flew out of Baltimore, went back. He's actually in Iraq now because we got a phone call from him two days ago, so he's, he's back in country, as he says.

JW: How is she doing?

09.05.10 JOE: Well, uh, she's, she's now looking at it as uh, a light at the end of the tunnel. His enlistment is over soon. So she's expecting him uh, to be back home in a month or two.

JW: How is it for you?

09.05.28 JOE: Well, there's concern because uh, you know, he, he now is a, a member of our group, you know, so we're (?) concerned about him and we're, we're concerned about uh, how Karen feels about it. And uh, we try to uh, try to sympathize with her and uh, hopefully, hopefully he and his whole unit will be home soon safe.

JW: What's an MP do there?

09.05.53 JOE: Well, uh, as (?) he says, MP doesn't stand for Military Police. It stands for multi-purpose (LAUGHS). Whenever they have an assignment that nobody else does, the MP's do it. But technically what their responsibility is, is to (CLEARS THROAT) secure an area after, after the main thrust of troops have gone through. So if uh, uh, they'll maintain the roadways for uh, the advancing troops and as troops go into uh, into an action in whatever city or village, the MP's will follow closely behind and they'll secure the area after the uh, the main troops move on.

09.06.33 So they live, they're there with uh, whatever insurgents might remain. They're there with the everyday people. They have to try to establish order after the initial action because after the, after the troops leave, the, (?) it's chaotic wherever they just were, and somebody has to remain to try to restore order. And that's basically what the MP's do. That and prisoner responsibility.

09.06.57 But uh, prisoner responsibility from the way I understand it now, I'm not sure if I'm 100% correct, but they ship the prisoners out to Kuwait, and then from there they'll ship them either to Germany or to, to whatever facility they have. But immediately in country, the MP's would be responsible for uh, securing and initially processing of prisoners, while at the same time, performing a police function in the uh, in the towns and cities uh, that have just seen uh, just seen action.

JW: What do you feel about Iraq and the 9/11?

09.07.39 JOE: Well, uh, everybody has a point of view. Uh, (?) my point of view is that uh, nobody wants to be there, nobody wants to, to have war, nobody wants to see anybody die on either side. But sometimes things have to be done. If they're uh, uh, if, if the president and the country feel and (?) the leaders of the country feel that uh, this will help secure us 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now, then we have to do it.

09.08.08 Uh, because we didn't do it in the past, and it lead to many terrorist acts across the whole, across the world, not just us. Israel and Malaysia and (?) Germany and in Spain wherever they (?) where they're having all the explosions and terrorist acts. They're all coming from a uh, centralized group.

09.08.31 And if uh, if this war on terror now can end that, although it's terrible now, it'll help in the future, and that has to be done because it could only get worse if it, if it festers.

JW: Do you think about it directly with what you did at Freshkills?

09.08.50 JOE: What do I feel? I, I feel that if the people they're hunting were directly responsible. Uh, I feel that uh, factions of the (?) Taliban and (?) factions of al-Qaeda and uh, funding through uh, these terrorist governments were directly responsible for what happened here. Uh, that's what I feel. I might be wrong, but that's what I feel. And if uh, if they hadn't, if

they hadn't been allowed to uh, to grow, and if they hadn't, and since they weren't checked, uh, the World Trade Center is a direct result of that. Just as other tragedies were, and hopefully will not be in the future.

JW: What about your retirement and the connection to your retiring early and your dad?

09.09.56 JOE: Well, I didn't, I didn't have uh, plans on retiring at this age. I, I figured I would work a little longer. Uh, and see, the police department's a, is a funny place. Uh, after you've been there for a long time, after you've become a survivor, and it's (?) part of your life, as you move along, your jobs and assignments get better. So usually when a person reaches a retirement age, when a police officer (?) reaches a retirement age, chances are he has a pretty good assignment. And it's something that he's worked towards, something that he likes to do.

09.10.31 Otherwise he wouldn't be there. He (?) would have left. So I was in that position. I had a nice assignment. Uh, I enjoyed very much what I was doing, and I had no intentions on leaving at that time. Things change, the world changed. And along with it all the little pieces changed, and I was a little piece. Uh, so my assignment brought me uh, in an indirect way, to become involved in the recovery. And (?) because of that, uh, I worked a lot of hours.

09.11.03 I uh, became tired. I was uh, uh, thinking, starting to think more about retirement than I had, than I had in the past. Uh, police departments are a funny place. You can't go back. After being removed for a year, or, or ten or 14 months, to go back to the same seat that you were in before is different. It's not there any more. Uh, all circumstances surrounding have changed.

09.11.32 Every day something changes in the police department. But you don't realize it because you're involved in it, and you're there every day and you're moving along with the changes. But when you separate yourself for a year, and then come back, it's different. It's almost like you (?) you sit in the same spot and you look around and you say, where am I? Uh, so that

and uh, and honestly uh, police officers uh, pensions are tied uh, to the amount of time they work.

- 09.11.59 It was financially advantageous to retire at that time. And uh, a lot of factors put together uh, decided uh, made me decide to retire earlier than I had uh, than I had originally uh, planned. My father worked on the, worked for the police department for 32 years. He also had no uh, intentions of retiring. He came from a different, a different era. He came from a uh, a different time. He was a Depression Baby.
- 09.12.29 So he grew up through the Depression, went on to World War II. Immediately (?) upon returning from Europe, he joined the police department, worked through the '50's, the '60's, the '70's, the good and the bad times, and uh, their mentality was to, to work until the end and then retire when you couldn't work any longer. I think, I think our mentality has changed a little bit now and probably from looking back on them. Uh, my father gets sick in the office uh, he gets sick at work. Uh, his detectives had to take him to the hospital.
- 09.13.00 He had a minor stroke. And uh, it happened right at the desk. Right, right while he was in the squad room working. So I don't know if that's uh, I don't know if you, you (?) pushing the package a little bit by staying . Uh, maybe it's better to get out a little early than to get out a little late. And uh, so we, we gave it a try. We'll see what happens.

JW: How has it been?

- 09.13.23 JOE: Well, it was difficult to uh. Being in law enforcement, being a police officer, it's all-consuming. It's what you do, it's what you are. And to no longer be that is quite an adjustment. Uh, my children are older, so they're not home during the day. They're out working and, or at school. Uh, my wife's a school teacher so she's gone. She's uh, she's away during the day. So I went from uh, (CLEARS THROAT) I went from one being in charge, and two uh, having what I thought was a, a position of responsibility.
- 09.14.00 Working a lot of hours, to all of a sudden uh, maybe going 100 miles an hour to all of a sudden going nowhere. Uh, so in the beginning it's, it was quite difficult. And I, I had heard

in the past, guys uh, you go to parties, you, you meet people, you hear conversation. And somebody told me once, he said, never retire in the winter. Says, it's the worst time of the year retire. It's dreary, it's gray, nobody's around. And I retired January 1st. So I retire (LAUGHS) right in the middle of the winter.

09.14.28 And uh, I understand now what he meant. For the first three months, it was dreary. It was uh, it was quiet, there was nobody around. Uh, my dog and I became good friends (LAUGHS). And uh, I read a lot. But I uh, I felt that I probably made the right move. I was just unhappy with the move. I, I wasn't pleased with the fact that I was no longer doing what I wanted to do. And it, there's an adjustment period.

09.14.57 You have to, you have to accept that. And if you retire, before you're emotionally ready, it's hard to accept. Uh, but as the time goes on, as with everything else, when time goes on you start to get used to it and you accept where you are. You accept the changes. And uh, now it's Ok. But it's uh, it's, it's November now, so it's 11 months. First uh, first few months were tough. Then as spring came and I, you know, and uh, it, as life comes back, you know, the little flowers come up and the kids go out and play.

09.15.35 Uh, it becomes easier, you find things to get involved in. And uh, and it's a, it's uh, easier for you to accept and start doing new things. But uh, being a police officer is a very uh, a very strange job because it grabs a hold of you. If you like what you're doing. I have to, I have to say that, if you like what you're doing and you want to do it, it grabs a hold of you, and that's, that's what you want to do all the time.

09.16.00 Uh, even when you're home you still feel like you, you go to the store, you still feel like you're a police officer. You're looking around to see, to see what's going on around you. And all of a sudden you're not that any more. Your identity has changed. You're no longer the person who takes charge when something comes up. And uh, that's not easy to get used to. But uh, it comes along. Uh, you start to accept it after a while.

JW: Could you ever go back?

09.16.27 JOE: Uh, technically could I go back? Yeah, you can go back. You uh, you write a letter and you send the letter to the commissioner and you ask for permission to come back. And usually the permission is granted. Uh, very rarely does anybody go back. Because now I'm another year removed. So now I'm actually, I haven't been in my office since uh, about 9:30 in the morning of September 11th. That was the last time I was in my office, except to clean it out. It's tough to go back to that. It's not the same. It's not there anymore. The people I worked with aren't there.

09.16.59 My whole, my whole squad retired. I had ten detectives. They're all gone. Uh, everybody's scattered, gone different ways. What I was doing uh, the assignments I had at that time are now different. There are new bosses uh, new agendas. It's, it's tough to go back.

JW: September 11th affected a number who decided to retire?

09.17.23 JOE: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. A lot of police officers retired after September 11th.

It uh, the system is odd. The system sort of forces you to retire. Is it advantageous for you? Probably. It (?) the person himself is probably better off. But the system itself uh, requires that you, it forces you to leave. A lot of, a lot of police officers would have stayed if the system was different. But it isn't. Uh, so uh, they had to leave. They had to leave to secure their future.

09.17.53 They had to stop what they were doing so that they could be better off in the future.

JW: Do you stay in touch?

09.17.59 JOE: Yeah, usually. Uh, most of them. Uh, my, my unit yeah, uh, some of them are in Florida and some are uh, upstate and a couple still live in the city. But uh, we speak.

We e-mail back and forth, we stay in touch.

JW: Get a few beers?

09.18.16 JOE: We, we've tried, but it just uh, it's, it's tough. Everybody's in a different, everybody's life has gone in a different direction now. Uh, uh, one of my detectives is uh, caring for elderly parents now. So she's, she's tied up.

09.18.31 Uh, another one has uh, uh, has become ill and he's spreading his time between uh, a house he had bought. He's only, he's only 44 years old or 45 years old, and he's become ill and he's spreading his time between a house that he had always wanted to buy in Florida and uh, living here in Long Island. So he's, he's back and forth a lot. I speak to him quite a bit. Another one has a, a married late in life, has a little baby. He's living upstate, so his life is going in that direction.

09.19.00 Another one moved his whole family down to uh, Florida and he's working in law enforcement down there. So uh, we always talk about everybody getting together. It's just not gonna happen. It, it won't happen.

JW: But if it does?

09.19.13 JOE: If, we'll (?) I'll call you if it does and you can be there (LAUGHS). But it's just not going to happen.

JW: Any random thoughts since we last met, whether it has to do with Iraq or Bush or world events? Any other moments like after 9-11?

09.19.51 JOE: Well, I received responses from everyone of them who I sent it to, and one just sent back uh, a short line. He said uh, I didn't know how to say it, but I was thinking the same

thing. And uh, we, we formed a bond. We, we always had a bond before, but it became stronger uh, because we had a real purpose at work. Uh, it (?) had become personal. When (?) police officer goes to work, he sees bad things every day. Uh, when a police officer walks into your life as a civilian, it's usually not for a good reason. He's either giving you bad news or he's doing something to you that you don't want.

- 09.20.31 We don't usually, we don't usually arrive to uh, return the stray dog or kitten (LAUGHS). We're coming for a reason that you don't want us to be there. Uh, but we separate ourselves from that, because it's just, we call them cases. It's a case or uh, what you would know as a radio run in a patrol car, we call that a job. So you're either on a case or on a job, and you, you're driving there, you're sitting in the car, you're talking to whoever you're with about last night's ball game or what are you doing tonight.
- 09.21.00 And then you get out, take care of business, get back in your car and go on to the next thing. But with 9/11 uh, it had become personal. Because it was something that happened to us. It happened to, in our community, it happened right at our doorstep. And uh, everybody knew somebody involved, everybody uh, lost somebody involved and we had a real purpose to do our assignments. And uh, that was, that was uh, emotionally draining. And uh, afterwards uh, it becomes uh, less important.
- 09.21.34 Uh, the work itself becomes less important. I'm not exactly sure where I was going there (LAUGHS) (~I~) What do I feel now? Well, I feel that uh, I feel unfortunately that our troops are over there, they're doing something that has to be done. Uh, what's unfortunate about it is, of course for, for them being in peril, but what (?) I think is unfortunate is that people here are starting to lose, lose the feel for what happened.
- 09.22.05 It's uh, two years removed now. Uh, people uh, on with their lives, they're moving other directions, and they're, they're starting to forget why our troops are over there. What they're actually doing. And they're, the great support from the very beginning is now starting to fade a little. And that's not right, you know? We were told in the very beginning that this wasn't something that was going to be a year or, or six months.
- 09.22.30 Maybe we thought it was, maybe we hoped it was, but we were told in the very beginning it was gonna take five, ten years for this to, for this to play out. And now people are losing their

uh, losing their desire uh, they're losing their uh, stomach for it. And that's unfortunate, because uh, it has to be done.

JW: That very thing, that's actually one of the reasons I'm doing this. So that that doesn't happen.

09.23.03 JOE: I understand. But it does happen. People, people want to see it stop when, when a little community uh, wherever the little community is, whether it's in Kansas or, or on Long Island, they see uh, soldiers coming home, kids from their neighborhood coming home dead. Uh, they lose their zeal for uh, for, for the real purpose, for the inner meaning. And uh, and that's difficult. And I can understand that. If, if you see somebody uh, you knew your whole life and you say, gee, what a waste, why?

09.23.31 Thousands of miles away in the middle of nowhere, why are these poor guys getting hurt? Well, nobody wants that to happen, and if it could all happen with uh, uh, with uh, make believe bullets and make believe bombs, we would much rather do it that way. But that's not the reality of life. It's not the world we live in. And uh, this has to be done to protect uh, not, not my future, but my kids' future and their kids' future.

09.24.00 It has to be done.

JW: Thank you.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

09.24.36 JOE: (MID-STATEMENT) although, I have to admit, this was uh, uh, a little earlier than I've been getting up lately (LAUGHS). If I had to put myself back in the early mode, but that's ok.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

09.24.57 END OF TAPE # JK.1103.0900.9