

TAPE # JK45
Joe Keenan Anniversary Interview
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

01.00.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I usually ask you about how 9-11 affects you now?

01.00.48 JOE KEENAN: And I usually tell you that on 9-11, I, I don't take it any differently than any other day. I don't go to any memorials or, or, special ceremonies, but one thing that we do every year, and I never really thought about it, although I, we have done it every year, I just never mentioned it to you.

01.01.08 The weekend before 9-11, whenever that should come up - this, this year it was yesterday - our Emerald Society Pipe band runs a memorial concert. And we've been doing that since 2002. So this was our 6th year, is that year? Two, three, four, five six. Seven, right?

01.01.28 So they rent town hall in Manhattan on 43rd Street, and they have a memorial concert. And bands from around the country and, and well, for instance, last night. The Boston Police were there, the Boston Police Band, Chicago, Cleveland, band from Bergen County, New Jersey. The Marine Corps band was there. The Coast Guard Glee club was there. And actually the Irish tenor Ronan Tynan was there also and he, he sang a few songs.

01.02.00 And, and they have a little concert, and we have some films. We've been doing that each year since, since 9-11. And it's a little memorial, because we lost people in, in 9-11, there were people in our band who died. And just the overall thing, and we've had the concert. Well, yes, yesterday, we were having a concert, in Town Hall, and we had an intermission. We came out, people were standing in the street, because it was warm in the hall and it was warm in the lobby.

01.02.28 Now, the people who attend this are basically us. It, the, the people from the Emerald Society, band members, families, the other band member's families. It's pretty much a closed

group. The, the hall was full. I don't know how many people town hall holds. But a few thousand, it, it's full. But it's all our own people, people from police department, from the fire department, from the other police departments, their families, their spouses. We were standing outside in, in the street waiting for the intermission to end.

- 01.02.57 And there was an impromptu demonstration which I, I don't believe in coincidence, I don't believe in impromptu demonstrations. And about (?) 60 or 70 people came down the block, all dressed in black. And they tried to walk, march, rush through us, standing in front of the hallway there. And they were, they were chanting that 9-11 was an American conspiracy and that the government were the killers. And, and they were confronting us, standing in front of the hall, standing in front of the hall there with our families and our wives and our children.
- 01.03.32 And first of all, they had to have known we were there to show up. So they had to know one, that it was a police function, that it was a memorial for 9-11. And they had to come there solely with the purpose of disrupting it. Well, for the first time in a long time, I really got angry. Along with a lot of the other people there. And as they came down, as they came down the street to confront us, of course, there had to be a police presence, and you know, cops were running all over the place, trying to block them off and separate them from us.
- 01.04.02 But they came there solely for the purpose of, of disturbing what we were doing. We weren't bothering anybody. We had our own, own agenda. We were indoors, we weren't outdoors. Nobody knew we were there. We were having our own remembrance in our own way. And their sole purpose was to disrupt us. It's just, you know, it's, it's not right. It's right, it's not right. I mean, I guess they, inside the hall afterwards, after intermission was over and we went inside, we, we talked about it, they talked about it from the stage.
- 01.04.31 And I guess the mere fact that we were in there remembering and celebrating 9-11 is the same thing that gives them the right to do that. But they came there solely for the purpose of confrontation. And they would have been a confrontation probably if cooler heads hadn't prevailed. Just the way they were set up, they were crossing the street, so we were separated. But they attempted to come over the cars and, and to come into our, into our midst when we were standing there with our families. And we weren't, we weren't bothering anybody.
- 01.05.02 And, and I really for the first time in a long time, I was angry, I was ready. I was ready for, ready for it to start. We were ready for it to go. I was gonna be was involved in it as anybody else. And then a funny thing happened. I saw there was a fellow there from Cleveland, from

the Cleveland police band. And he was wearing his, his band uniform. He was wearing his kilts. And he got into a, a verbal altercation with them. And he started to move towards them. And then just myself and the fellow who was standing next to him, we grabbed him from behind, we said, look, you know, you're here on vacation. It's not worth it, and then all of a sudden, I realized I was doing the as me thing.

01.05.31 You know, and it's just not worth it. So we just, we pretty much all went back inside. But the, I think we spoke years ago when we first started this, about how dare they. And again, I'll say it, how dare they. You know, we weren't bothering anybody. We were trying to, we were just trying to remember in our own way, nice and quiet, indoors, we had no media.

01.05.56 We had no television coverage, nobody knew we were there. Except the people who had rented us the hall. But yet, obviously, somehow, it had gotten out. And they came for the sole purpose of disturbing. And it just wasn't right. Just wasn't right, and it was lucky that an ugly incident didn't, didn't evolve, because if it had, we would have been wrong. You know, the focus would have come back on us. That we weren't allowing, police weren't allowing them to, to demonstrate. But I just don't understand, I, I don't understand the mentality.

01.06.30 I don't understand how people can feel this way, how people can still believe after all these years that this was somehow (?) of our own doing. That we weren't the ones who were attacked. I just don't, I just don't get it. I don't understand it.

JW: It must also feel strange given your role in the recovery?

01.06.54 JOE KEENAN: You know, I, I didn't think of that at the time. But for the first time in a long time, I really felt emotion about it. And I, I just couldn't, I couldn't stand to look at them. They were, if, if it had been a different situation, and, and years ago and if, if it had been in the middle of a park years ago, it would have gone the wrong way (LAUGHS). It definitely would have gone the wrong way. But I think the fact that they were so many families there, and people had brought their children. And you know, and, and their spouses and the boyfriends and girlfriends whoever, and their parents.

01.07.28 There were elderly people there, people there in their 80s and, and 80s to and children. And these guys came looking for a fight. They came looking for, as if what if, if what they said was true (~JW~)

JW: What were they saying?

01.07.43 JOE KEENAN: They were saying that it was a government conspiracy, that it was a cover-up, 9-11, we did it to ourselves, and we're covering it up and saying that the, the terrorists did it. But even if all of that were true, how did, what did, what did that mean to us? You know, how did we do it?

01.07.59 We weren't the ones involved, if, if what they're saying is true. We were still the people who were responded. We were still the people who live in the city. If, if there was a, an overall conspiracy, it was perpetrated on us, also. So, for, for them to come in and, and look for a problem. And hopefully somebody will find out. I'm sure, I'm sure it'll, they'll, it'll be looked into, because somebody told them we were there. They had to, and, and they came for the.

01.08.27 Not only did they show up there, but they showed up just as we were breaking for intermission. That's not a coincidence. They were, they were waiting.

JW: Anger's understandable?

01.08.41 JOE KEENAN: And you would think after all these years, the anger would be gone.

(~JW~) And, and it probably was gone. It was (?) I guess it just lays there, it lays under the surface. And the right circumstances will bring it to the forefront again. I thought, I thought that wasn't so, but I guess I'm wrong.

01.09.00 But there was a lot of anger on that block last night. A lot. On both sides. And they were, they were, it was just a, a very fortunate situation that there were, there was a (?) patrol force there. They had, there was like a parking detail outside the place, so that our people could put their cars, and whenever and then they had a barriers in the street. You know, whenever they have any sort of a concert, standard. There's always 10 to 12 people assigned. And fortunately, they were between the people from the concert and the demonstrators.

01.09.33 And because the people from the building were police-oriented also, they realized, gee, you just can't put these guys in that position. You can't, when they said to stop and move back and get back up on the sidewalk, everybody did. If it had been two different types of groups,

the poor ten guys who were on the detail never would have been able to control the situation. There were just too many people. There were thousands of people there. Just too many.

JW: Your wife was there?

- 01.09.56 JOE KEENAN: My wife was there, she was standing right next to me. Probably first time (?) probably first time she's ever seen me act that way. I've, I've acted that way before, but it's always been in a work environment, never in a, you know, never in a home environment. So it's probably the first time she ever saw me behave that way. She doesn't say anything. Maybe she didn't realize it, maybe she was as angry as I was, I don't know (LAUGHS). But we were standing right next to (?). Actually when they came down the block, we thought it was some sort of party. At first, it looked like a, a frat party or, that type of thing. And then we realized that it wasn't.
- 01.10.29 They were all dressed the same, they were dressed in black, and they were carrying a signs and they were yelling and screaming and making gestures as if they wanted to enter and in fact at one point, the police officers had filtered them all into the street, so they were walking down the street, so it was, we were separated from them by a line of parked cars and barriers that were just normally in the street. And there was a small walkway because you always have to keep the (?) sidewalk open. It was a small walkway, and two of them started to come in there. And I happened to be standing there with the, with the Cleveland police only because that's where I happened to be standing.
- 01.11.04 Not that I was speaking with them, they, they were standing their first, and we were standing. We told them don't come in this way. You know, and, and all of a sudden, all their bravado ended, and went someplace else, 'cos they, they looked and they realized that it was not the place to go. And they went back in the street and started to curse at us. And, and continue on with the rest of the group. But that's not the point, the point is how dare they. You know, why, why did they come and why, why did they have to come and bother us when we're just trying to, just trying to honor our own?
- 01.11.32 And, and stay, we weren't in the public eye at all. It wasn't as if we were at a memorial in the street. It wasn't as if we had had a parade. Nothing. It was just people getting out of cars,

going into a concert hall. If you were a tourist or anybody else walking down the block, you never would have known who we were. But.

JW: You have a reservoir of emotions and images in your mind, and the emotional bank is part of your effort?

- 01.12.17 JOE KEENAN: I know what you mean. We, we you know, there were all sorts of nice clichés and nice little sayings. We'll never forget, of course, but we would like to let it go. We, we would like to just be left alone, let it go, we'll remember in our own way.
- 01.12.32 We don't have to stand on a corner and shout that we'll never forget, because we know inside we'll never forget. We saw things that we had never seen before. I, I know I mentioned it to you in the past that I was always, always fond of saying you can't surprise me, there's nothing you can show me I haven't seen. Well, I was wrong. (LAUGHS) There was lots that I hadn't seen. And I saw them all in that small period there. And now I can probably say there's nothing I haven't seen before.
- 01.13.00 But it's just that, and, and I'm rambling a little bit and I'm losing myself. I, I'm losing my thought but (~JW~) but the idea that we want to remember and honor the way we want to. Just leave us alone. Just leave us alone. And it was, it was wrong. If they, if those people were demonstrating and a bunch of off-duty police officers and their families had walked in to disrupt them, we would have been suspended from work.
- 01.13.33 We all would have been punished. You know, the, there's a, there's a dichotomy there, there's a double standard there. And maybe so, because we're probably held to a higher standard, which we probably should be. But, but we weren't looking for trouble last night. And actually I never really read the paper this morning, I was up and out of the house at 7:15. So I was wondering if there was anything. I was going on my way home last night, I was saying oh, gee, I hope this doesn't hit the paper with, with pictures.
- 01.14.01 That would ruin our concert for the future. But, I, I didn't even look at it. But I don't, I don't think they weren't, there was anything. My wife didn't mention anything to me about it. So I guess, I guess it just went as a non-event.

JW: You also mentioned this dichotomy of our country, as we fight to have the right to have demonstrations, and it's a tricky dynamic?

01.14.43 JOE KEENAN: The, (?) other places in the world where they wouldn't be able to demonstrate like that, and they wouldn't be able to say those things, and, and, and create a problem. They don't appreciate what they have. They don't appreciate where they are. And I'm not saying their thought process is wrong.

01.15.00 If you're a, if you're a left or a right or a conservative or a Republican or a Democrat or, you know, whatever, that's ok. That's fine. But you have to appreciate why you are allowed to be that, and you really shouldn't step over the line. And I think that's stepping over the line. I really think they were wrong. And they don't, it's, it's similar to, of course, it's not exactly the same, but it's similar to that Supreme Court finding years ago that you're not, you're allowed to have freedom of speech, but you're not allow to yell fire in a crowded theater.

01.15.33 Because where does your freedom of speech end? It ends where it creates a danger for others. So although you can say anything you want, you can't stand up in the middle of a crowded theater and yell fire, because that'll create a danger for others. And that's pretty much what they were doing last night. They were coming to look to create a problem. And if they want to demonstrate and they want to, they can go down to city hall and get their permit just like everybody else, and you know, walk up and down in front of the UN or wherever they want to, and, and demonstrate and sing and yell and.

01.16.03 But when you go looking for a confrontation, you know, you look for trouble, you usually find it.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: We had the first three years, the Whittaker-I'm-done-with-it?

01.16.42 JOE KEENAN: Yeah, well, I'm done with it again now. I got it out of my system (LAUGHS).

JW: What other remembrances will you have?

01.16.53 JOE KEENAN: Well, we, we, the football game is actually separate. We, we have our annual football game with the fire department and that's, that's actually, actually it's passed. It, it already was this year. Yeah, we had it already. And this year we won. So that was a good year (LAUGHS). But (~JW~)

JW: Do you umpire a game on 9-11?

01.17.14 JOE KEENAN: Oh, that was the Poly Prep game, oh, yes you're right. The home (?) well, on those occasions that I did that, it happened to be a weekend, and that's why, because we have, they have their service on a weekend. This time, it's during, it's a Tuesday, so school will be in session, so they won't be playing sports while school was in session.

01.17.32 They usually have it on the weekends. That was pretty much coincidental, they have their memorial, they have their memorial game. And now that you bring it up, we did do it last week. I just, I hadn't thought of it, and we did it, we did it again last week.

JW: What part does anger play in all of this?

01.17.52 JOE KEENAN: I thought it didn't. At first, there has to be anger. There was anger. And it, and it's simmered and lasted for a long time. But (?) we try to behave in such a way that we perform our function, perform our job and ignore the anger, which you take the anger home with you, or you let it loose where you're driving in your car, you know, and you scream at the windshield. But you try not to, you try not to let it involve your work. But when you're not working and you're confronted with this, it does, it does bring up bad thoughts.

01.18.30 It just so happened, when, when I was waiting for you to come down this morning, this afternoon, sitting downstairs in the lobby and there were two TVs, and on the left-hand side was the football game, and the right-hand side I don't know exactly what it was, but it was Channel One from New York, and they were showing films from, from 9-11. They were showing the, the attack and the, and the buildings coming down. And it's just I guess part of our history that'll never leave. It's something that's, that's always gonna be a remembrance for those who are alive at the time.

- 01.19.00 And as you watch it, as I, as I watched it briefly for the 10, 15 seconds that I, that I paid attention to it, I, I pretty much just shake my head, and I, and I still can't believe it. Still can't believe that people can hate other people so much that they would do something like this. Or something like that, regardless of who they are or where they are. There has to be a real hatred and hatred's a tough thing, because I don't think as Americans we really hate. We say we hate, we always say oh, I hate you, I hate this.
- 01.19.01 You know, Met fans hate the Yankee fans, Yankee fans hate the Met fans. Everybody hates the Red Sox. But we, we don't really hate. It's just, it's just a word we use. Those people who did this hate us. They hate us. Maybe we should hate them back. And by hating them back that's be the way to stop it. I, I don't know (~JW~) well, what else has worked? What else has worked? We've never shown that before. We've never shown the anger. We've always tried to work with other, other people in other countries.
- 01.20.02 And you know, yeah, sure we're the big bullies on the block. We're the, we're the richest, we're the strongest, you know, we have the most. And if you're gonna pick a place to be, I think that's the place you'd pick, as opposed (LAUGHS) to the place that doesn't. I think on a whole, governments have tried. You know, and I'm (?) I'm not naïve, I know things go on. I know that there are always deals and, and you know.
- 01.20.29 Something's to bring a price down over here, or to bring a price up over there, or to put you out of business, and you're trying to put me out of business. But to just take unwarranted attacks on civilians, you know? Maybe if this had been a military base it would have been a different story. So well ok, it's the beginning of a war. We've, we've attacked your military, you've attacked our military, now we'll get on with the war. But in most cases, civilians are usually left out of that. And, and this time that's how it started.
- 01.21.00 It started with civilians. And if something's gonna get you mad or get you angry, and I think that would be it. (~JW~) I think you saw that. Were you, did you, did, where were you when it happened?

JW: I was in Detroit.

01.21.14 JOE KEENAN: Ok. I'm sure people all over the country felt it, but you know how they say oh you (?) could feel it, you could cut it with a knife? Well, you could feel it here. Walking in the streets, and just looking at other people and everybody looking back at each other.

01.21.29 And it was good and bad at the same time. It was bad because of what had happened and so many people died. And it was good because the people who live here, not because it's New York City, just because it was where it happened. But the people who lived here were probably never closer, and never more cooperative, never friendlier, more understanding to each other, than in that period. And now of course, it's you know, everybody's gotten back to their own business and gone back to their own families and on their own ways and that's separated a little.

01.22.01 But I think if you bring up that situation again, if you get five or six diverse people from any place, from the city, and you just grab them and put them in a room and talk about it, I think they'll all agree again. And they'll all just come back a little bit.

JW: Come back to what?

01.22.15 JOE KEENAN: Come back to the feeling that we had then. The feeling that it was, it was a, an us-and-them situation. It was us-against-the rest of the world. We have to take care of ourselves, we had to help each other. And I think that's what everybody was doing. Now you had to see it here in the city. It was absolutely amazing. It was like a movie.

JW: It was felt (~ovlp~)

01.22.36 JOE KEENAN: I know it was felt all around the world, because I, I had people from all over the country calling us, you know ,what can we do, how can we help? We want to come in. And we pretty much had to tell them to stay away (LAUGHS) you know, we can't, we can't handle you right now. But I knew that everybody wanted to touch. But we were way past touching, you know, we, we were what everybody wanted to touch.

01.22.57 And the feelings here in the city were, were very, it was very good. It was very tight. Unfortunately, it takes a bad thing to make good things happen. But.

JW: What is your opinion on that, too? Does it have to happen that things are back the way they were?

- 01.23.22 JOE KEENAN: Doesn't, it shouldn't have to be the case. But it is, because everybody's involved in their own lives. Everybody was where they were an hour before it happened. Everybody was in their own little cubby hole, whatever that cubby hole was. And now that the crises has passed, that individual crisis has passed, people start to go back to what they have to do, what's important to them for the moment, their families, their life. And they also have to go back into their own little cubby holes again. It's not that the people don't want to get along. That's not that they don't want to cooperate. It's just that they're busy (?) life gets in the way. You know, life gets in the way and they have to continue on with whatever it is they were doing.
- 01.23.59 Nobody had any regard for their own individual standings at that time. It was what can we do to help? We had, you know, you know, to be trite about it, you had, you know, people who walked the streets, and, and bank presidents working together, you know, to, to get, to get things done. It didn't matter who you were. It mattered where you happened to be standing at that particular moment, and what needs to be done. And it's good that you can pull together like that. And, and that's why it's so wrong for those people to come down the block and, and interfere.
- 01.24.33 That's why it's so wrong. Because those are the same people who probably wouldn't have helped, who wouldn't have done anything. Who might have run away. You know, but now, and now because they have the right to say what they want and, you know it's the law that they can say what they want, they, they get you know, puffed up, false bravado, and they, and, and they want to, they want to profit from other people's misfortune.

JW: I saw something like that last year during the ceremony.

- 01.25.06 JOE KEENAN: If that's the way you really feel, fine. Then, then work all year to prove that you're right. Do what it takes, do research. Do investigation. You know, get, get committees together, prove you're right. Don't just walk up and down the street and yell and curse at

people and, and upset them. And, and, and break in on what they're doing. No. If you really believe it, then, then do it, run with it.

JW: Hatred and non-hatred – does hatred always have to be a part of it, a constant conflict?

- 01.25.57 JOE KEENAN: What does it come from? I don't know, does it come from jealousy? Everybody, if, you know, you always say we used to sit around the, the lunch table and talk and say you know, if everything was equal, if everybody got paid the same and everybody lived in the exact same house and drove the same car, what would you do? You know, what would you do for a living? What would you do? And we would laugh and say oh, I would be this, and you know, I'd be a ball player and oh, no I'd be a you know, piano player in a bar. Or whatever. And I think it comes to a little bit of that, that people are jealous of what others have. And, and maybe that's, maybe that's right.
- 01.26.32 You know, maybe if (?) you lived, if you live in a situation where it's very difficult to just every day you have to worry about if you're going to eat, I can understand that. But do you hate the people who are eating, or do you try to get along with them, and maybe figure out a way that you can be part of them, or they can help you. Going in their house and killing them and taking their food isn't really the answer. Because after you eat their food, then you're gonna have to go kill somebody else and take their food.
- 01.27.00 So that's, that's not the answer.

JW: How's your granddaughter?

JOE KEENAN: Doing fine. I actually brought pictures (LAUGHS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 01.27.42 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) the Brooklyn Cyclones baseball team in Brooklyn was having a Irish Night. So we had, we, we (~JW~) We had a hundred tickets, we bought a hundred tickets. And we had a barbecue, and our band member were there, and the fellow

with the bass drum put the bass drum down and she picked up the I don't know what you call, the drumstick?

01.28.03 I don't know what you could call the thing, the mallet that hits the bass (~JW~) drum. The, the baton, but she picked it up and she was having a ball banging on his drum. That's what that is. With, that's behind the stadium, we're in the parking lot behind the stadium. (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS RE: Granddaughter)

01.29.01 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) have you seen the police memorial in Washington? (~JW~) It's built in an oval with fountains in the middle with an archway, and then on the two sides are ovals, stone wall about 3 feet high. And the names are engraved randomly on the, on the stone walls of all the police officers who have died across the country. In our nation's history. If you should come up, if you live in wherever, I, I don't want to mention some place 'cos I don't want to sound as if I'm you know, making up a, you know, small town.

01.29.33 If you, if you live in Small Town, USA, and you through research discover that in 1810, a sheriff died in your small town, USA, if you get the paperwork to Washington, they'll put his name up on the wall. That wall is for everybody. But every year, in May, we have May 15th, the week that surrounds May 15th, we have National Police week. And we have a ceremony in Washington, DC, and we have a parade, and we put the names on the wall of those who have died the year before.

01.30.04 And that, she's sitting on the wall there. We went down this year as a family. That's Karen, my daughter Karen, and myself. We presented wreaths at the memorial this year.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How did that come about, that you placed wreaths?

01.30.20 JOE KEENAN: Well, I'm an officer in a national society for national police (?) society, and when they were having the wreath laying, when they were preparing for the wreath-laying ceremony this year, they lay four wreaths, and the people who run it asked me if we, if I

would be interested in laying one of the wreaths with my daughter in the name of our society. So that's what we did.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Are you going to Mets games?

01.30.55 JOE KEENAN: Yeah, we have, you know, we didn't go that may this year because we've been busy. We probably only did six, seven or eight this year. We usually do a lot more than that. But. You know, we getting busy at home for upcoming weddings, and you know getting, trying to get the house in shape and all that. So (?) it ate up our time (LAUGHS). Ate up our time.

JW: What about the wedding?

01.31.24 JOE KEENAN: My son, Joseph, is getting married September 28th, just in a few weeks. And then Karen will be getting married November 9th. So. We, Joseph's getting married. The church is Rockaway, and then they're having their (?) they're having their party in the New York Botanical Gardens in the Bronx, in the Bronx Botanical Gardens. And then (?) Karen will be getting married in our local church. Joseph's getting married in Deidra, his fiancé's local church. And then Karen'll be in our local church, and we'll have a, she's having a party out in the Westbury Manner.

01.31.58 So you know, two big family functions and Jane wants the house to be all clean and fixed and every crack filled and painted, and new this and new that. And we, so that's what we were spending the summer doing. I mentioned it to her, I said, you know, if I remember correctly, I think we have two halls rented for these weddings. I don't think everybody's going to be in our house (LAUGHS). It doesn't really matter. And she says, no, no, no. If, everything's got to be right. (LAUGHS) So that's what we've been, we spent the past few months making everything right. Yeah.

JW: How's Joe doing?

01.32.35 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) well, they're, they're probably as crazy and overwhelmed and disorganized as everybody else was when their wedding came up. I don't remember that from years ago. Of course, we were married a long time ago. So I, I don't remember it being that hectic. But I guess there is a lot more pressure now, and to, to get things right and to find a place to live, and so between the four of them, you know, my, my two children and they have two fiancés, they're probably as nuts as everybody is right now.

01.33.07 Everybody else is at this stage. In fact, they're going to be at my house this afternoon because Karen has to go up, Karen and Vinny have to go up to the church and meet with the priest. They have to have their private meeting with him, then we'll have a meeting with them. Next week. And so after the, after they finish meeting with him today they're going back to our house, and the others are coming over, also.

01.33.31 So anything to grub a free meal. (LAUGHS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.33.39 JOE KEENAN: It would be ok if they just sent the baby and all of them stayed away, that would be ok, too (LAUGHS).

JW: What about January and your health experience?

01.33.51 JOE KEENAN: Well, January wasn't fun. I had a, I, I have been treated for the past I guess four years, probably since about late '02, early '03, I've been treated by Mt. Sinai hospital for breathing problem that I was having. For lack of a better explanation, for lack of a better term they're calling it restrictive airway disease. And they're finding that a lot of us who worked at the World Trade Center, or at the recovery, are developing this (?) restrictive airway disease. And I apparently developed it.

01.34.31 My throat, the (?) opening in my throat had closed. I was having difficulty breathing. My, my sinuses were clogged. I was having difficulty getting air in. It was disrupting my sleep pattern. They sent me a couple of times to the hospital to go overnight for sleep, sleep exams. And one night, they wired me up and they watch you as you sleep.

01.34.59 You go to a room and you, and they watch you while you're sleeping, which is a difficult thing to try to, try to sleep while they're watching you. But you lay in the bed, they wire you all up, and they told me that I woke up 147 times during the course of the night. Now, of course, you don't realize that, but they can tell from the, the pattern of, of how they set you up. So I was having trouble breathing (~JW~)

JW: When did you do that?

01.35.20 JOE KEENAN: I did that over the, let's see. Probably I did it, probably in the summer of '06, and the reason I'm saying that is because I remember sitting in a real nice hospital room in Mount Sinai, very, very nice, very similar to a hotel room, and I couldn't get the ballgame on the radio. So I had my earphones on (LAUGHS). And I was listening to the ballgame. So it had to be sometime during the summer. And that was the second time I did it. And I had done it probably 3 or 4 months before that, first time was probably in February, and I failed. And then they wanted to send me back again, so we waited a few months and they sent me back again, and I had failed again.

01.36.01 So I was having trouble with my sleep pattern. I was having trouble keeping my breath, gaining breath. I couldn't, stairs were starting to get to me. Any, any sort of physical work, any exertion was getting to me. And as I say, I've been treated by Mount Sinai, probably going on three or four years with this. And in the very beginning, the doctors in Mount Sinai said that we would do treatment, we would do medication.

01.36.32 They would do couple of times they went in a non-invasive, and they would clean my sinuses and go into my throat, and they took a couple of polyps out of my throat, and you know, they did things over the course of the years. But the doctor always said right from the beginning that if it didn't work, they would have to perform surgery. And around December, first week in December last year, I had my regular appointment, and I went in. The doctor said, he said look, we're just not getting anywhere.

01.37.00 He says it's, it's foolish to continue treatment. He says, we're gonna have to perform some surgery. Said Ok, let's get it done. And he said (~JW~)

JW: What was your thought process through that?

- 01.37.19 JOE KEENAN: I knew I didn't feel as good as I should, and I, I knew I wasn't performing the way I should. I contributed it to a lot of things. You know, I contribute it to getting older. To you know, one thing leads to another.
- 01.37.33 When you, when you get out of breath easily, you tend not to do things. When you don't do things, you get out of shape. When you get out of shape, you don't work out. When you don't work out, you don't play sports or, or move around. So every, one thing it's like a snowball. Just keeps getting worse and worse and worse. And that's what I was doing. And I was, and I was sluggish all the time. I was tired all the time. I'd wake up with headaches. And have some difficulty breathing.
- 01.38.01 And I knew something was wrong. But I also felt that well, I'm going to the doctors and they're treating me. They'll find out what's wrong and they'll fix it. And that's pretty much my thought process. I didn't think it was a life-threatening thing. I figured whatever it is, I have something in there, and they'll find it, and they'll fix it. So in, in December he, the doctor said we've gone as far as we can with the treatment. We'll have to do some surgery. And I said, well, let's go ahead and do it. And I said, let's get it done right away.
- 01.38.32 And the doctor said let's wait for after the holidays, because it's gonna be more involved thing you anticipate, than you think. And to be honest with you, I really didn't believe him. I thought it was just gonna you know, be a one or two day thing, and the one or two (?) day procedure turned into two or three months. He, he told me in the very beginning, he said, I said well, what's gonna happen, what are you gonna do?
- 01.38.57 And he said well, what we'll do is we're gonna go in, we'll go in through your nose, we'll go in through your sinuses, and we'll clean up what's there, we'll see what's in there, in (?) a more extensive way. He says, you seem to have some growths in there, we'll take those out, we'll clean everything out. He says, then we're gonna go down your throat. And he said, we'll have to increase the size of your airway, so we're gonna have to cut out a piece of your throat. Cut out a piece of the back of your pallet. And reduce the size of your tongue. And basically what they did was the size of the hole in my throat, would close, so they made it bigger.

01.39.31 And the way they made it bigger, by was by taking portions of it out. So that it actually didn't, they didn't treat the symptoms, they just fixed the problem and they made the hole bigger. So (~JW~)

JW: So parts that were constricting were taken out?

01.39.48 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) what they did was I guess like a Roto-Rooter. They, you know, they have a pipe and they, and sludge had built up on the inside of the pipe, so they made, they went in and they cleaned it out. But by cleaning it out, they were, there wasn't sludge built up.

01.39.59 They, they took out a piece of the back of the, the top of my throat and my pallet, and shaved the back of my tongue to make my airway bigger. The doctor had said that, he says, right now you don't feel it. He said, but breathing the way you do and sleeping the way you are, he says in five years it'll create havoc in your lungs, and it'll give you a hard problem. He said, so it has to be taken care of. We have to do it. And we agreed to do it, and I said Ok. And he said to me, it's gonna be extensive.

01.40.30 And again, I didn't really think so. I've had procedures before. And the doctors always tell you, this is gonna hurt and you know, you're gonna be laid up 4 to 6 weeks, or 2 to 3 weeks. And always in a few days you feel better, and so I thought this was gonna be the same thing. I figured, you know, ok, he's given me his doctor's speech. (LAUGHS). And he said to me, this is probably going to be the most painful thing you've ever experienced. So after he finished his explanation, I said to him, I said why would you say that?

01.41.00 Why would you sit in your office and tell a patient who's sitting across from you that what I'm going to do to you is the most painful thing you're ever gonna feel? I said why wouldn't you just wait for me to wake up and, and feel it and curse you then? Why, why would you tell me up front how bad it was gonna be? And he laughed and he said for two reasons. He said, one, I know you for about 3 years now, and I like you. And he said, and two, I know you have a gun. (LAUGHS) And that's why I wanted to get it out in the open. But he was being comical about it.

01.41.32 But he said I want to be honest with you. I want to tell you exactly what's going to happen and how it's going to feel. So we waited until after the holidays. And we had an appointment

January 12th for going to the hospital to have the surgery done. And of course, I was apprehensive. I, I was afraid of the surgery, because the longer I waited for it, when he told me in early December, this has got to be done.

01.41.58 If he had said come back Monday I would have been there Monday, and had it taken care of. But now I had five weeks to think about it. And I was saying oh, gee, he said it's gonna hurt. (LAUGHS). He said it's gonna hurt (LAUGHS). And (~JW~) yeah, he said it's really gonna hurt. And he was right. And so, but I didn't know that of course, before the surgery, and then when we went to, we went to the hospital in January the day of the surgery, it was a Friday morning we went there, and your people were there. And to be a little bit honest with you, that was good and bad.

01.42.29 That was bad because I didn't really want anybody around at that time. But it was good because it made me not chicken out (LAUGHS). Because I said to my, I thought about it, I was sitting in the, the prep room outside, I was sitting in the waiting room of the operating room. And I was wearing a gown, and I'm next. I'm waiting for them to yell next, and I'm going in. And I almost walked out. But two reasons I didn't because I knew that if I, I walked out, I was gonna have to eventually come back in and do it anyway, and I was already there.

01.43.02 And the second one was that everybody was there watching me, so I didn't want to walk out while they were all sitting there, watching me. So we had the surgery and they filmed it. I don't know if you saw it or not, I didn't. They asked me if I wanted to see it, I said I don't need to see it. I've been there, I, I was the one, I don't need to see the surgery. And I don't want to see it (LAUGHS). (~JW~) So they performed the surgery. And when I woke up, the doctor was 100% right.

01.43.31 It hurt. And the, the I couldn't talk. I, I thought I was having difficult breathing, but I really wasn't. It was just because of the pain in my throat. They had me on the oxygen. But they, I couldn't talk for awhile, I couldn't eat. And I couldn't drink. I was in the hospital I think 6 and 7 days. They wouldn't let me leave the hospital until I could stand in front of the doctor and drink a glass of water. He said, you can't leave until you can stand, stand in front of me and, and drink a glass of water, because I couldn't swallow.

01.44.04 And at first, first few days that was Ok, because I didn't want to go home. I just wanted to lay down and leave me alone. They were giving me medicine every 4 hours, and it made the pain go away. And that was fine, and I didn't care if I didn't eat, and I didn't care if I didn't drink,

because it was all right. They gave me my medicine and I'd go to sleep. I would wake up, they'd give me my medicine, and I went to sleep. So I wasn't worried about it, but then after about 5 or 6 days I wanted to go home.

01.44.28 And I actually couldn't, I couldn't swallow. I couldn't drink the water. And (~JW~) it was, I would, I would put it in my mouth, but I couldn't swallow it. It would, it would, as I would try to swallow, I was swollen and it would drip back out my mouth. I couldn't, I couldn't get it down.

JW: Emotionally, how was that feeling?

01.44.46 JOE KEENAN: That was, that was frustrating. Because they never, you know you usually say well, I know it's going to hurt, but I'll just do it and get it over with. But I couldn't do it to get it over with. So that was difficult. It was the first time I had pretty much experienced not being able to do something.

01.45.02 You know, when you, you hurt your leg and you know it's gonna hurt if you try to walk on it when you're doing therapy, but you know in a, in a week after that, it's gonna be ok. This wasn't the situation. I just, no matter how much I tried to drink the water, when nobody was in the room, I would put ice chips in my mouth, just to, I figure well, I'll get, they'll melt and they'll go down. But they melted and they came back out. They didn't, they didn't go down. I couldn't swallow them.

JW: The nurses came in?

01.45.24 JOE KEENAN: The nurses came in, checked me all the time, and this, the glass of water was still there. They said, you try? I said I trying, I'm trying. They treated me fine. I have, I have to say, that I was in Mount Sinai and involved with the World Trade Center Clinic. They could not have treated me better. They, they were very good. They were very patient. But it was just difficult. I couldn't do it. So eventually after 5 or 6 or 7 days, which ever it was, I think it was 6 days, doctor came in. By that time, I was up and walking around. At first I wasn't even walking around. Because the pain just kept me down. From my throat all the way through up into my nose and then my, they had my nose packed.

01.46.01 And they had my throat packed, and I made them promise that when I woke up they would have the tube out of my throat. Because I had had two surgeries in the past, and first time when I woke up I never realized that you had a tube in you to help you breathe. So the first surgery I woke up from I had that tube running down and, and breathing. And that was an awkward experience. And then the second time, I, I asked the doctors, I says, can you have the tube out before I wake up? They said, what we'll do is as soon as you wake up we'll take it out.

01.46.30 And as soon as I woke up, the first thing they took, they did was take it out. This time I made them promise. I even asked Danielle, I said Danielle. Make sure that they have that tube out before I wake up (LAUGHS). So they did. But I would have to, it was all swollen. And then, and then they, the doctor told me he gave me a freebie, he took my tonsils out while I was in there. He said, we'll never be in there again, so we'll take those out, too. So I had, they were infected, my throat was infected. They took a couple of growths out of my throat and my nose, and, and a, so far it seems to have gone the other way now.

01.47.02 It seems to, it seems to be getting better. It's still there, I can still feel it.

JW: You still feel what?

01.47.08 JOE KEENAN: I, I have, I have to consciously at times swallow. I had to learn how to re-eat all over. I had to re-learn how to eat. Over again. I had to learn how to chew, I had to learn how to swallow. Because the food just would not go down. I still cannot drink quickly from a bottle. If I drink quickly from a bottle, it comes out my nose (LAUGHS). I have to, I have to be conscious, I can drink from a bottle.

01.47.30 But I have to be conscious that I am. So fill up my mouth, swallow, as opposed to just drinking back. But in the beginning, you, you didn't know that. And we had some comical moments as I tried to drink from a straw. (LAUGHS) I had to drink from a bottle. But the day, (?) the day it was time to go home, I was in, the doctor came in and he says, all right, I said, I'm gonna drink from the glass. So I drank, I just drank down the whole glass. And he stood and he said that hurt, didn't it?

01.47.57 And I said, yeah, it really did. He said, but you did do it, you can go home. He said, so of course, everybody wanted to know, well, what are you gonna do about eating, and what you

gonna do about drinking? The doctor said don't worry, you won't die. He says, you won't die from not eating and not drinking for awhile. Says, go home, have plenty of water, or tea or whatever, and live on Jell-o for awhile. And he says eventually you'll start to want something. So I, I progressed from water to Jell-o, to soup, to soft food. To back to eating again (LAUGHS).

JW: Learning how to eat again is interesting?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.48.39 END OF TAPE # JK45

02.00.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Learning how to eat, is that a function of having a different pathway?

02.00.14 JOE KEENAN: When, when we learned how to eat, when we're babies or whenever I get, I guess it's just a reflex action. We don't think about it, and we're probably learning back then not realizing that we're learning. How we chew and how we swallow.

02.00.27 But because the pathway was different, and the shape inside my moth was different, I had to, I, in the beginning I would have to consciously swallow, as opposed to just having a mouthful and going for the next mouthful (LAUGHS). I would actually have to consciously swallow, make sure everything was small enough to go down. And, and then swallow and, and then go on. It, it took, you know, I mean, it wasn't a 8-month thing, you know, but in first few days at home, I, I went home from the hospital and I was in bed probably another 4 weeks.

02.01.00 In, in bed at home. You know, they gave me medicine. Actually when the doctor sent me home and he gave me the medicine to take, he gave it to me all in liquid form, because I couldn't swallow the pills. I was putting the pills in my mouth and waiting for them to

dissolve. So he gave me the pills in liquid form. But even now, I find that for instance, right now, at this moment, when, when I talk for any prolonged period of time, I could feel it. My mouth is very dry. I, I can feel like a, as if it's swollen.

02.01.33 I know it isn't, but that's what it feels like. It feels like a swollen effect. And (?) silly little things. I was never in my life a singer (LAUGHS) I was never, nobody was ever in danger of me being able to sing better than them. But now, playing with the baby or whatever, I can't, that's something I can't do. I can't, I guess, pushing the air out in that, in that type of motion, and something I can't do.

02.02.00 We used to, I used to sit down and make believe I was snoring and the baby would come over and wake me up. You know, and I would get scared, and then I'd chase her and all that. I can't make that noise anymore. So now when we play that game, I whistle instead (LAUGHS). But little things like that, that's something you don't think of. And that's how it, how it's, how it's affected me. I, I still feel at times, a, some.

02.02.31 I don't know if shortness of breath is the right word, 'cos shortness of breath indicates that something's wrong. But a weakness maybe. Where I'll just have to, while I'm doing something I just have to stop for a moment and regroup, and then, and then go ahead again. So it's affected me. (~JW~) I feel it right here, right, right in these two spots right here. And the back of my tongue. You know?

JW: How's the sleeping?

02.02.56 JOE KEENAN: Sleeping's (?) has gotten better. I still you know, little fitful, but it's I, I do sleep much better than I had been for the past couple of years. I didn't realize it, but as the past couple of years were going on, it was actually less and less sleep I was getting. I have, if I, if I would sleep for a, an hour and a half, two hour uninterrupted period, I felt very successful. That was good. And I would go through the whole night probably sleeping 3, 4 hours. And now I'm, now I'm doing better than that.

02.03.30 So that's good. (~JW~) They were gonna put me in one of those sleeping machines. To force the air, they call them the C-pack machines, where you have to put them on at night and it forces air down your throat, to keep the airway open. Because apparently what happens is as the airway, when you move your head in a certain direction, it closes more, it cuts off the air

and that wakes you up. So they were gonna put me on one of those machines, and I didn't want that, you know, I didn't want to have to do that forever, every place you go carry a little machine with you so you could sleep.

02.04.02 So that was corrected by the surgery also.

JW: How did your wife go with that?

02.04.11 JOE KEENAN: Well, I, I think we were all a little surprised with the recovery time. We thought the recovery time was gonna be much quicker, and it wasn't. But she was OK with me having the surgery. I needed it. I didn't realize how much I needed it until after I had it. Then I realized how much I did need it.

JW: Was the recovery hard on her?

02.04.36 JOE KEENAN: Well, it was, it was Ok, I locked myself in a room and read books and watched TV (LAUGHS). 'Cos I could still read and watch TV, I just couldn't eat (LAUGHS). But no, I'm, I'm making a joke out of it. But it wasn't, I'm sure it was inconvenient for everybody, in the family. You know, 'cos I was, it was in bed for a month afterwards. I just didn't have the, the stamina to get up and walk around.

02.04.59 I would get up and walk around and go downstairs and whatever, but I, I couldn't really do anything. I couldn't exert myself. And doctor just said let it go. You know, it'll come back, and it did.

JW: How about Joe?

02.05.14 JOE KEENAN: My son? Yeah, he's doing fine. He actually he left the police department. And he's working in, in a union called the Operating Engineers, which was a, an interesting thing for us at home. I guess it's not for everyone.

02.05.31 And it wasn't for him. But I think I took it harder than he did. I know I did, I know I took it harder than he did. But at the time when it was happening, I wasn't pleased with the decision at all, but it wasn't my decision to make. It wasn't my life to live. And it's a, it's the type of

job that you can't do if you can't obey all the rules and, and get along and, and perform the function.

02.06.03 It's, it's not the type of job where you can go in and just put in the time and go home. Because either you'll get hurt or you'll get somebody else hurt. And that's important. So you can't put yourself, it's unfair to put yourself in that situation. It's unfair to those you work with to put yourself in that situation. So I guess he and his, his fiancé had been discussing it for awhile, and circumstances evolved, and that's what he did. But now he's doing a, he's doing, you know, he's doing fine.

02.06.33 You know, making more money, but everybody makes more money than cops. But (LAUGHS) you know, he's, he seems to be happy. And that's good. I wasn't so sure. I know Karen loves the job. And I know she enjoys it and she likes what she does. I never really was convinced he did. I wanted him to, but I was never really convinced that he was enjoying it as much as I thought he should be.

02.06.59 And then now we don't have to worry about that any more.

JW: How was that moment for you?

02.07.16 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) I didn't agree with his decision. And (?) if you want to ask me for advice, and then don't ask me for advice if you don't want to do what I tell you (LAUGHS). Maybe that's wrong, but if you don't want to hear what I have to say, then don't ask me.

02.07.31 I won't tell you, you know, I won't butt in. But if you're asking me what I think, I'm gonna tell you what I think. And I didn't think he, you know, the situation, but it, I was wrong, you know, you know, I was wrong. And he seems to be much happier. He's doing better. And I guess that's really what matters.

JW: Did you think he gave it enough of a shot?

02.07.51 JOE KEENAN: Well, it was almost three years. You know? So. So I, that's, that's one of the things I said to him, I said Joe, you're throwing away 3 years. He said I'm not throwing away 3 years. It's the next 17 years I don't have to do. So it just depends on how you look at

it, you know? And I was looking at it with my right hand, and he was looking at it with a left hand. And that's, and my, you know, it's funny, when, when my daughter, Karen, hit me with the bombshell that she wanted to go in the police department, she had, I never thought she would do that. She had, you know, graduated college and she had a, she was an economist and still not quite sure what an economist does. But she was an economist, and she was in (~JW~) and she was out working.

02.08.31 And I thought she was, you know on her way to greater and better things. And she came home and she said I'm miserable. I can't do this. I can't, you know, do this office 9 to 5 sitting here doing papers and looking at computers all the time. She said, I'm gonna go in the police department. And then the, in a way that was partially my doing, and in a way it, it surprised me because I had always encouraged all three of them, you know, take the test. You never know what's gonna happen. Take tests, take government test, take state tests. You know, you have it in the bank.

02.09.00 You throw it on the side. And if you don't want to do it, you don't do it. So she pulled this out and said that she wanted to go in the police department, and I, and we've, I think we've discussed this. And at the time, I was, I was working up at (?) the recovery in the landfill. And we had these two young officers who were working in the office with us, two females, two young females, who were probably 22, 23 years old.

02.09.29 So I really wasn't discussing it with them (LAUGHS). But I was discussing it with my peers. And I, and I said to them, you know, I don't know if she's gonna like this. I don't know you know if it's the right move. And one of them said something to me. She said, said Sarge, I don't know what you're worried about. She said, if she doesn't like it, she leaves. And that was like such a sacrilegious thing to say. We all turned around and looked at her, and we said how can you leave? I mean, how can you take this job and then if you don't like it, leave? If you don't, if that's the way you're gonna look at it, then don't take it to begin with.

02.10.01 And, and that's pretty much happened here. And Karen told me, she says Dad, it's only a job. And that was like another sacrilegious thing to say. It's not only a job, it was a, it you know, it was a way of life for me. But it wasn't a way of life for the, for the young people now. It's not, it's different. It's different. And he tried it, and it didn't work. So now he's trying something else, and it seems to be working. He's doing very well. In fact, he's working down in World Trade Center 7, down, in the new building down there.

02.10.33 He's gonna, he's, he's learning how to be an operating engineer.

JW: What is that?

02.10.39 JOE KEENAN: That's another good question. I'm not exactly sure. They're the people that run the plants in the buildings there. They're. I'm not exactly sure.

JW: They're involved in the computers?

02.10.56 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) they run the power plants in the buildings, that's what they do. And Jane's, my wife Jane's brother does it. And he's been doing it for years. And I asked him when all of this was going on, I said, he, 'cos he told me I'm gonna go work with Uncle Jerome and his union. And so I said, I, I'm not asking you your business. I said, I just want to ask you a question. You know, you make a good living? And he says I do very well. And I said ok. You know, I don't want to, I'm not, it's not for one, for me to ask him what he makes. You know, that's not, not something you do. But I said, you make a good living, is it ok? He says, I do very well.

02.11.32 He'll be fine, don't worry about it. You know, and as it works out, he (?) wound up working for the same owner that his uncle's working for, so it, it paved the way for him a little bit. And he's been doing that since I don't know, I'm gonna guess May? You know? Probably about May.

JW: Did he get put on a leave?

02.12.03 JOE KEENAN: Right, right. He. That's something that the police department does. It's employee relations is what it's called. And he said it's a department within the police, there's a unit within the police department called employee relations. And when a police (?) officer has a family problem at home, they'll evaluate his problem and they'll allow him to have work time fixing that problem.

02.12.31 Years ago, we had a fellow in when I was in highway patrol whose children had died in a, in a car accident. And (?) traumatic thing no matter who you are. And the police department

assigned him to his home, until he got better, until he could, you know, come in, and of course that's a, you know a, a drastic explanation. But if you have a parent, there's a, there's one fellow we know from the neighborhood whose father was living in Virginia who was terminal.

02.13.00 And he was going back and forth, he, he'd work a few days, he'd drive down to Virginia. He'd work a few days, he'd drive down to Virginia, back and forth. Until the doctors finally told him look, he's, your father doesn't have but a couple of weeks. So he called the police department, he explained things to him and they assigned him there. So that's what they did with Joseph. They assigned him, but it was only for those few days that I was in the hospital. But to, to allow it to be easier on the family, that we didn't have to, that the, my wife didn't have to worry about getting there, because we live in Brooklyn, and hospital was uptown Manhattan.

02.13.31 And for those who don't (?) know the distance, it's inconvenient. It's not close. It, it would have been an effort for her to be back and forth. So they assigned him, and you just, you call in the morning and say I'm at work, I'm alive, I'm awake, I'm alive and you call back at night and say ok, I'm, I'm finished. So (?) it's a nice thing. They all, they'll consider it for individuals on an individual basis. You have to call them up. Your, your boss has to, you tell your boss and then he calls employee relations and they'll assign you.

02.14.04 And it, it's a nice, a nice thing that the department does. That probably a lot of people don't know about. They also provided a room for me in my house. They, they sent a, a emergency service unit over to my house and they rearranged the room, took down the bed, put a hospital bed in for me, put a table in and, and, and I was, I was able to use that for as long as I needed it. And when it was all over and I didn't need it anymore, we called them up, they came back and took it.

02.14.31 So it's a nice little, a nice little thing that the department does for their employees. They do a lot of things that are tough (LAUGHS) on their employees, and this is a good thing that they do.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.14.45 JOE KEENAN: I can't grow the moustache back in, in an hour while I'm here (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What happened after the hospital?

02.15.08 JOE KEENAN: I didn't realize it was as extensive as it turned out to be. Probably because it came upon me gradually. Each, each few months I guess I was losing a little more and not realizing it. And then, when it was, when I felt better after the surgery, I realized how, how involved it had been.

02.15.30 I didn't, I don't think they really know how involved it is. I still go for treatment. Every six months I still go get CAT scans on my lungs. They, they found a few spots on my lungs that they're tracking. They don't think it's a major concern. And it hasn't changed in a year. So they keep tracking. In fact, I just went. I think I went in July and they gave me an appointment to come back in December to have it done again.

02.16.00 So they, they're still tracking us. They, I still see the doctor. And so they're keeping an eye on it (~JW~). It's good.

JW: Did you think the surgery would be the end of it?

02.16.16 JOE KEENAN: I, I thought it would be that, ok, yeah, you know, your finger's broken, they set it and now it's fixed. I thought that's the way it was going to be. But it really isn't, because I guess it's not, they're not exactly sure what we have, or, or what was in the air, or what, what happened to people.

02.16.31 Now my, my partner. He developed a breathing problem almost immediately after, immediately after we stopped working there. And I went a couple of years without it. So and we were right next to each other the whole time. So it's, I guess it's a difference between how your body make up, whatever.

JW: How's he doing?

02.16.54 JOE KEENAN: He's, he's doing fine. Now, but he was, he was actually on a, that little oxygen bottle for awhile, you know, and he was on steroid treatment, and he was in bad shape. He was a, actually he was a big runner. And he used to run miles a day. And he said I can't go to the corner and mail a letter. He was pretty much confined to the house. And now he's, now he's better again. He's a, he had a, a, he told me the numbers. I don't recall the numbers about a lung capacity. And he was always below normal, below normal.

02.17.28 And now he's right at, right at the (?) the normal levels. So he says that was good. It was an improvement. So he's doing much better now.

JW: Do you expect your treatment will be the same?

02.17.41 JOE KEENAN: I guess it'll continue a little while longer. Doctors are not sure if they want to do more work. He says he'd gonna wait and see. In fact, I have to go back soon, and then he's gonna, he said he might want to do another little scraping, he said it wouldn't be as invasive this time.

02.17.58 And he'd, he, I guess it's a little more swollen than he had anticipated or he could have been a little more extensive in the beginning. I, I'm not exactly sure. But he said they're gonna reevaluate it again and see.

JW: In the bigger picture, did this seem to be a confrontation with morality?

02.18.29 JOE KEENAN: I, I don't know if it was that extensive. It was uncomfortable, and it was an uncomfortable feeling and, and when the doctor said, see I'm a pretty good patient. When the doctor tells me to do something I do it. And in fact, one day I had a doctor tell me, he says, you know, you're a great patient. When I tell you not to move, you don't move. I said I'm not a good patient. I'm a big coward. When you tell me don't move, I don't move. (LAUGHS). 'Cos I don't want to know what's gonna happen.

02.18.57 And when the doctor said it had to be done, and they said if we don't do it now, in five years you'll have problems, well, I don't want to have problems in five years, (?) if you want to take care of it now, let's take care of it. And that was the way I approached it. I want to, if

they think they can fix it, well, let's fix it. You know, let's not wait another five years, and then have two problems to fix.

JW: Is that the way you approach most problems?

JOE KEENAN: I guess so (LAUGHS). Slow and steady.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Did you have a moment where you thought?

02.20.00 JOE KEENAN: I, I think that I was annoyed that it happened, because you know, it, you know, I wasn't sick before and I'm sick now. But I didn't think it was gonna kill me. You know, I, I didn't think it was that extensive. And I don't think it is. It's just I have an illness right now and it has to be corrected. And they're correcting it, and I think they have. I think they got it under control.

JW: Have you considered how massive job was that you had to do and is there any anger?

02.20.49 JOE KEENAN: You know, I don't think so. I, I don't think there's anger. I think it's, again, you know, I know I said this before, I don't want to sound trite about it. But it was somebody was had to do it, it was me. I was there, I did what I was supposed to do. And this happened. What I, do I wish it hadn't happened, of course. I wish I wasn't there doing that work to begin with.

02.21.10 But as a result of doing what I was supposed to do, and getting, and getting the work done, I guess we were exposed to and breathed in things that we shouldn't have. And that's not really anybody's fault, that it happened. It was just a, we were there. Those who were across the street at that particular time, or outside the radius of, of this being affecting them, they don't have the problem.

02.21.35 We were on the wrong side, and of course, they were people who were closer who have more problems. So, and if, if there's any anger, or if there's any I wish this hadn't happened, it

goes back to the people who did it to begin with. It doesn't go to, I don't believe there was a, a, a great conspiracy about the air quality and, you know, and Christine Whitman should be fired and arrested and, you know, people were holding back information.

02.22.03 I, I don't believe that. Maybe I'm, maybe I'm looking at it through rose-colored glasses and I don't want to see that. I don't think anybody after-the-fact wanted anything to go wrong. Were there mistakes made? Sure, there were. We made mistakes. You know, we made mistakes in the, in the recoveries and the clean-up and all of that. But nothing was intentional, and whenever we found out something was going the wrong way we, we changed and, and fixed it.

02.22.28 So if, if people are asking were there mistakes made and as a result of that, people are sick? Yeah, yeah, and unfortunately, I, I was in that group. What are you gonna do? I can't change it.

JW: The anger goes to the origin of the event?

JOE KEENAN: Right. It always goes back to that.

JW: Has that subsided?

02.22.56 JOE KEENAN: Yeah. I think (?) it's subsides because you put it away. You put it in the little corner of your mind and you leave it alone. And you don't, it's, it's not as fresh so therefore it's not as prevalent in your thinking. But probably the feeling hasn't changed, and I'm probably still if, if angry is the right word, I'm probably still as angry about what happened today as I was then. It's just now it's not as overwhelming in my life as it was five, six years ago.

02.23.29 Other things have taken its place, and I've moved on. (~JW~) We, I think that cops have a great capacity to do that. We, we move on from situations, we're in a situation. We see it, we know it's going on. But we really not there. And we just do what has to be done and then we leave it and we go to the next thing. And I think that's what I did. I hope that's what I did.

JW: Last night was different?

02.23.59 JOE KEENAN: Yeah. Because it was, it was brought to the forefront again. It's, if it's that little piece that's sitting in the back of your mind, that something kicked it and it came to the front. And when it comes to the front, I still feel the same way about it. And, and that was a, but you know what, though? Those people last night, no matter how stupid they were, or how wrong they were, they didn't do to me what happened. You know, they didn't, they didn't make me sick, you know? If I had them in the hospital that day, though (LAUGHS).

02.24.29 But you know, that so I'm not, it goes back to the, that, that triggered an emotion, probably, but it didn't, it triggered the emotion from six years ago. You know, you, no matter what you say, you know, people will say where were you when Kennedy was killed? Where you when the Mets won in '69, you know, all those, all those things, where were you, where were you? Well, I know exactly where I was. And I can still picture it, and I, and I know what I was thinking at the time.

JW: Tell me?

02.25.00 JOE KEENAN: Well, I, I told you. We were standing on the roof of our, of our building at work. After the, I was in my office, writing a report. I was getting a report ready for the chief. And one of the detectives came in and said a (?) plane just hit the World Trade Center. And as everybody else thought, I thought it was a little Piper cub. You know, that got lost and hit the World Trade Center. And then when we turned on the TV, we saw that it wasn't. I said wow, so we went up on the roof. Because we can, we have a direct sightline. We're half a mile away. We have a direct sightline.

02.25.31 And we could see the building burning, and nobody knew what was going on. Nobody had yet understood the magnitude of what was happening. Now what had happened, 'cos it was still happening. And while we were standing there, trying to decide what to do because communications had been lost, trying to decide what to do, we saw the second plane come. And I'll tell you, that plane came so close to us, not that we could see faces, but we could see right in the windows of that plane as it came right over us.

02.26.00 And when that second plane came over us, we knew what was gonna happen, 20, 30 seconds before it happened. However long it took for that plane to get from where we were to the, to

the tower. We knew exactly what was gonna happen, and we just watched it happen. And then we knew, all right, time to go downstairs and you know, being detectives, we were in suits and ties, and time to go downstairs, change our clothes, and get over there. And that's what we did.

JW: What about the idea of memories fading?

02.26.43 JOE KEENAN: I don't know if that memory will fade. I remember who was standing next to me. I remember where I was standing on the roof. I remember who was downstairs in the locker room. I remember all of it as if it just happened ten minutes ago. It was, it was a female detective standing next to me, and I remember her squeezing my arm, she hurt me when she squeezed my arm, as the plane came over.

02.27.04 And she said, oh, no, 'cos she saw it first. I was looking this way, and she was standing on my left, talking to me, and she saw the plane over there. And she squeeze my arm and she actually hurt my arm when she squeezed me. And she said, oh, no, another plane. And we all turned and looked, and there was the other plane. And then we just watched it go across the river. So I, I don't know if that will, just as I do remember when I was when President Kennedy was killed, I think I'll always remember where I was at that moment.

JW: It's the philosophical thing?

02.27.45 JOE KEENAN: My mind took a picture, I think.

JW: Say again?

02.27.48 JOE KEENAN: My mind took a picture. (~JW~) And every once in awhile it takes it out and looks at the picture. And usually the picture's just sitting back there in the, in that album in the back of my head. And last night, it brought it out again. And so I looked at the picture again last night, and got angry at those stupid people who were standing in the street.

JW: How is Karen?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.28.18 JOE KEENAN: Well, she moved within the department (~JW~) she moved to a new assignment (~JW~) she's working in narcotics now. (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS RE: American Gangster)

- 02.28.51 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) she works in a team. She works in a narcotics team, and they have an area in Manhattan. And they have a responsibility for you know, working up cases and trying to have the street narcotics lead them to the people who were selling it, selling it to the street people bringing it, so that's what she does. She's an, on an investigative team. And they send people out into the street, and they do you know, they do surveillance and back up all those people in the street, and then follow it up with search warrants and investigation afterwards. And she seems to be good at it. And my, my spies report back that she's doing her work. And that she's doing fine.
- 02.29.30 And it's a lot of work, though. I don't think she realized how many hours she was going to be putting in. And when you work on a, when you're working patrol, the worst thing about patrol is that you're working on patrol. But the best thing about patrol is that it's pretty regimented. You know exactly when you're going to be working and where you're going to be working. But when you're working in an investigative position, you pretty much work as the investigation goes. So there were times when you could be driving home in your car, and your phone rings, and you just turn around and have to go back, because the case went in a different direction.
- 02.30.04 Or, or Jim Whittaker, who we've been looking for for three months all of a sudden is walking down the block. So I don't think she anticipated that it would be to that extent. And it's a little difficult to get used to that type of hours. It takes a while. So she's working a lot of hours that are irregular hours. And that's a little difficult. Other than that, I think if she didn't have the problem with the irregular hours, that it would be fine.
- 02.30.33 But she's having difficulty getting used to that.

JW: How is her husband to be?

02.30.41 JOE KEENAN: Well, he's fine. He last we spoke he was in transit bureau, is that correct, I believe?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.30.58 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) now he's home and he's back in the department he was working in the transit bureau, and since I think probably around, I'm gonna guess, May, April, June, oh, actually I know exactly when it was. We were in Washington, it was in May. He was transferred to highway patrol. So he's in highway patrol now, he went to school for highway patrol for a few months, and now he's working in the Bronx.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How is your feeling about him?

02.31.44 JOE KEENAN: It, well, it's, it's something that probably, well, it's something that's not discussed. We leave it alone. That was an experience he had that when and if he's ready to bring it out into the open, he will.

02.31.59 And it's not the type of thing, you know, little kids will always come up to you and say oh, can I touch your gun? Oh, did you ever shoot anybody? But adults wouldn't do that to you. So that's pretty much where, you know, that's the way I treat him. I mean, he's a, he's a fine guy. He, he seems to be, he's a good worker. He's good to Karen and that's pretty much what's important. And he lived through an experience. Yeah, he got the support from his family at that time, and we, we supported him as much as we could, but we weren't as involved with him then, you know.

02.32.34 They were only just, they had just known each other then. But if it's a situation that he at one time will be want to talk about he'll, he'll do it. I remember my father never spoke about the war. My father from World War II. You know, he used to come in, we'd be watching the war

movies on TV. He's all right, time to go to bed. And we said, we're watching a movie, he said, we won, and he'd turn the TV off (LAUGHS). Go to bed (LAUGHS).

02.32.59 So he never spoke about it. So it's something I guess that he's lived through, and when, you know, he's at rest with it, he's comfortable with where he stands, and you know, now he's a police officer. And that's what he does.

JW: What about the war and your feelings these days?

02.33.24 JOE KEENAN: I wish it was, you know, I wish (LAUGHS) war isn't simple, but I wish war was simple. I wish, you know, when two ten-year olds are standing on the corner and they're fighting over something they, they fight until one of them doesn't want to fight anymore, and then it's over? I wish it was that simple. But it isn't. And unfortunately, you know, it looks like politics has reared its ugly head. And it's gotten in the way of the war effort. And you shouldn't, you shouldn't go to war unless you're ready to go to war and finish it. Whichever way it is, you win you lose. If you win, that's good.

02.33.59 If you lose it's not good. You know, it's, you know, what, what's the difference between a patriot and a terrorist? Well, one won and one didn't. You know, you have a revolution, and if you win, you're a patriot. If you lose, you were a terrorist and you're put to death. You know, this. But unfortunately I don't think the government's allowing the, the I, I don't know, I'm, I'm not that well-versed in it. So I don't want to sound pompous, but when you, when you need your electrical switch fixed, you call an electrician.

02.34.29 Well, if you need a war for it, you should send soldiers and generals and let them do it. Politicians should stay out of it. They should decided to yes or no, we're going to do this, and when they decide one way or the other, then they should let the people who know how to do it, do it. And that's not the case. But I also believe, and I really have nothing to base it on, but I also believe that we are not receiving correct information about what's going on.

02.34.56 I think there's a lot of good going on over there. Every once in awhile you read stories about the schools being built and neighborhoods where people are walking in the street. And you never, you don't see that every day. You only see the bad stuff every day. So I don't think the, and no offense, but I don't think the media is handling it properly. I don't think they're, you know, it's, it's easier to sell bad news than it is to sell good news. Nobody wants to read

in the paper that you walked your dog. They want to read in the paper that the dog bit you. So I, I think that's part of the problem, too.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.35.40 END OF TAPE # JK46

03.00.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What about the empty nest?

03.00.48 JOE KEENAN: I, we're not there yet. But we're preparing for it. (LAUGHS). I, I (~JW~) He's holding on (LAUGHS). I joke with Joseph and he says, you know, I don't mind you measuring my room, but do you have to do it while I'm laying in bed?

03.01.04 And I tell him, hold the end of the tape (LAUGHS). So I can measure his room. Empty next. I don't k now what it's going to be like. I think we're pretty much there, anyway. People who have children who are (?) I mean, my youngest is 25. So even though they might live at your house, they really only sleep and eat in your house. They don't really live there. They're in and out on their own schedule.

03.01.27 And as long as you're just let me know where you are or where you're going to be, are you coming home tonight or that type of stuff. So I, I guess we're on the fringe of that anyway. The empty nest will take full effect, of course, when they're, both married and gone. But I think we're pretty much well on our way. I think we've even turned the corner and, and gone back again, because now we have the baby, you know, and, and she's with us a couple of days a week. So we, we focus on that, and that's pretty much puts Joseph and Karen out of the way (LAUGHS).

03.02.05 But I send the baby up, I say go wake up Uncle Joey, he has to go to work. Goes upstairs, wakes him up. (LAUGHS)

JW: What about Joe's decision?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.02.34 JOE KEENAN: It was just, we're all different people, I guess (~JW~) Yeah.

JW: You'll be ok with it?

03.02.42 JOE KEENAN: I, yeah. Yeah. I'm, you know. What do you really want? I mean, you know, you have two little ones, you said your daughter's just starting nursery school. And what do you really want? You want them to grow up healthy, and you know, again I'm sounding stereotypical. You want them to grow up healthy, you want them to be happy.

03.03.00 You want them to work and be able to support themselves and move on. And they can start their little group. Well, that's what I want. And if this is the way that's, that if this is what's going to make that happen, fine. That's Ok. You know, you have speed bumps. It's a speed bump in life, and now we hit the bump, we all jumped in the car, and now we're on smoother road again. So we'll see what happens.

JW: What about Freshkills and the controversy about the recovery?

03.03.42 JOE KEENAN: I've read it occasionally. (~JW~) I think the controversy's unfounded. I know what we did up there, and again it keeps going back to, and I don't want to you know, what do people want from you? How much more, what could have done that wasn't done? Intentionally.

03.04.01 Maybe there could have been things done that weren't done, but we didn't know about it, or, or we weren't aware at the time. But there was never an occasion where somebody would come up with an idea and say, or, or, or the family group would come up with an idea that was reasonable, and we said oh, we're not gonna do that. You know, that'll involve manpower and money. Never an issue. Never an issue. Whatever, whatever the prevailing thought at the time as to what was right and what needed to be done, that's what was done.

- 03.04.32 In hindsight, everybody's smarter in hindsight. I'm always smarter the day after. But I know that we did what we were supposed to do, when we were there. I know that. And are there remains still lingering? Are there remains in the air anywhere? Probably. You know, did we search everything that came? Yeah. Did we do our best to find everything? Yeah.
- 03.05.00 When it (?) when there became an issue at the end, and they said, well, you're leaving the ground where you had all this, you know, debris, and there could have been remains in the debris, and we know we had cleaned and searched all of that, we then went down, under the ground, and picked up the ground that was there before we got there. And searched that. So we were searching what we knew we weren't, where we knew we weren't going to find anything. And we didn't. You know.
- 03.05.28 I understand, I don't remember which building it was, but I remember. I, I remember in the past year that they found some remains on a building in, in Lower Manhattan. Is that wrong? Sure, it's wrong. Were those, did somebody know those were there and decided to leave them there and said no, we're not gonna find those, we're just gonna let it go? No. You know, these things, you know, we never, never in the history of the world before has there been a recovery of the magnitude that we performed.
- 03.05.57 So did we have a blueprint? No. Did we have a textbook? No. Did we wing it? Yeah. And you know, as we did it, we got better and better at what we were doing, and we got smarter and smarter at what we were doing, and we did what we thought was the best at the time. We make mistakes? Probably, but you know, history will tell us what those mistakes were. Time will tell us what those mistakes were. And then the next group that does it won't make those mistakes. But I understand that some people are still hurting.
- 03.06.31 I, I didn't lose a member of my family. I lost friends, but I didn't lose a member of my family. So I can't speak for them. And they might not have closure, and they might still have a lot of pain from that. And that's sad, and it's true, and they have that pain. And they're looking for ways to, to alleviate that pain so that they can move on. And I think that what, what the city has to do and whatever agencies are, they have to listen to these people and they have to try to help them.
- 03.07.04 And do what can be done. But you know, one person to another, we did what we could. We didn't, no stone unturned. We, there was no stone unturned when we left up there. Now, now I understand there's controversy, they want to close it, they don't want anybody to go up

there. It's sacred ground, fine. That's what they want, if that's what the, the city decides, fine. Close it off. Let it grow back to nature, make it a park, fine.

03.07.30 If that's what you want to do, make it a memorial, ok. I don't say that they have to build houses there. I don't think they should, probably if you force me to make a decision, they probably shouldn't. But it's not because, it, it's not because there are remains there. Are there ghosts of souls there? Maybe. But you know, we, we did what we could to find everybody we could, and to find as much as we could.

03.07.58 We found over 85,000 pieces, 8500 pieces of, of remains in the landfill. That's a lot. It's a lot.

JW: What about your friends?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.08.27 JOE KEENAN: As you, as you go on, you, you find them more and more. I had a fellow who lived around the corner from me, as we were kids, not kids, as teenagers. And then I was in the service with him. And he and his daughter both died there. Now, had I seen him in a while? I hadn't seen him in awhile, but he was a friend of mine and it was somebody I knew. And then the people from work, you knew a lot of people from work. I mean, I probably knew half the guys who died at work. And then my, my children had friends who were there.

JW: What was the number?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.09.00 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) altogether, I think we had (STOPS) we either had 37 or 23 in the Port Authority had the numbers backwards. But of, of the people, we mentioned before we, we were talking about my society before. We had two guys in my society who were there. You know, one was the guy who carried the flag in our, in our honor guard. And the other one was our, our cameraman (LAUGHS). Actually was a, that was his job in the police department. He was in the video unit.

03.09.30 And he was actually there videotaping the incident as the buildings fell down. They fell down on top of him. But he was an actual friend. He wasn't just a guy I knew from work, and then my children knew you know, people from the neighborhood who worked in the building or who were (?) young firemen, young cops. So you know, they, they talk about wherever you go in the country, like six people removed from somebody who lives in Brooklyn, you know, we talk about that in Brooklyn.

03.10.01 And, and it's, I guess it's similar in this situation. I, I know you who had, and you knew him and he knew, he had a brother and that type of stuff. And even to this day, sometimes you'll run across somebody and they'll say, somebody'll say oh, you know, his brother died in the Towers. And I'd say oh, I didn't know that. So it, it touches every, I don't think anybody who lived here for any length of period, any length of time didn't know somebody who was there.

JW: What discoveries have you made over the last six years as they might relate to 9-11?

03.10.59 JOE KEENAN: I don't think so, because that was a, a secluded period of time for, from when it started 'til when it ended. It was, you know, that nine month period of the, the day that it happened, and the 9 months of recovery afterward. And then that after that, it just ended. It wasn't as if the day after it ended, we found, you, you would do something else that would add to it or subtract to it.

03.11.29 It just ended. So I think that that period of time, is, it was almost like a, a sporting event that's over. Well, it's over, there's nothing you can do to change the result. That's over. Maybe you'll go on and do other things. But that particular period in time for me is, is pretty closed. It's, it's encapsulated. It's, it's, it's not going to change. Again, you know, I wish it hadn't happened, I wish I wasn't there.

03.11.57 I wish I was living some place else when it happened. But it, you know, it wasn't that way.
(~JW~)

JW: What about the personal issues you've had to deal with?

03.12.11 JOE KEENAN: Yeah, I guess it is continuing, you know, if you look at it, I was looking at it more along the lines of, of the incident itself (~JW~) but I guess (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: If this was our last interview, what would you say?

- 03.12.28 JOE KEENAN: Goodbye (LAUGHS). I, I would say (~JW~) I would say I hope people learned from what happened, and I know they haven't. I hope it, I hope, I, I would wish that it had changed the world and I know it hasn't. I know those, the problems that were present before and created this incident still exist. And probably will continue to exist.
- 03.13.02 Might there be solutions to them? Yeah, but the problems will still be there, and I just wish they weren't. Nothing that you touch in your life, every single day affects the next day, and affects the next day. Everything you do today, even though it might be as, as simple as going to the store at 2 o'clock as opposed to 3 o'clock, means that you walk down the block with different people are there, or different traffic pattern.
- 03.13.30 And because you didn't leave the house at 2 o'clock today and you left at 3 o'clock, you didn't get by that car that went up on the sidewalk at 2 o'clock. So everything you do today affects what's going to happen the rest of your life. And that's it's like a building block process. And maybe a reverse pyramid, and it gets, 'cos you start off very small, and then, all the, all the things that you see and, and experience and learn in life, all affect you. And this is something that affected us on a grander scale than most.
- 03.13.57 On a grander scale than anything else that'll ever touch us. But it's just now I guess it becomes part of your life, as opposed to something that happened to you during your life. And maybe that's where I am right now. Would, would I have had the medical problem I have now if this didn't happen? No. I wouldn't. But those people wouldn't be dead either. And they are. You know, so these things, you know, it's happened, and, and life goes on, and everything, all the scars are there.
- 03.14.29 Scars heal, but they're still there. You get a cut, it heals over, it becomes a scar. And it doesn't hurt you anymore, but the scar's still there. And that's what this is. It's something that's gonna be with us forever.

JW: What about the events at Ground Zero?

- 03.14.47 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) I think that they should build there, and they should, they should (?) the Joe Keenan plan for recovery? Set aside a portion for a fitting memorial, whatever that is. I don't know what that fitting memorial is.
- 03.15.02 But set aside a portion of it so people will always know what happened there. And then rebuild it, and get, get on with, with the business of life and, and if, even if it's just for such a simple reason to show you that you can't stop me from doing what I do, you know, just because you hurt us. You hurt us. But we're gonna go on with our life and continue.
- 03.15.28 We'll not forget, don't ever forget, you know, and have your, have whatever is proper. I don't mean to minimize anything, but whatever is proper and should be done, that's what should be done. But the, you know, build up Ground Zero, get it back to what it was, and, and it, it'll be good for everybody. It'll help everybody heal.
- JW: Where do you think we are in the healing process?
- 03.16.11 JOE KEENAN: The healing as far as correcting the condition or how people feel? As I said, I don't think we've corrected the condition. I know the, was there a shift in power? Maybe. You know, are you the stronger kid on the block now, and I used to be? Maybe. You know, but that, that hasn't, that hasn't changed people's feelings.
- 03.16.34 Now the, if you're talking about the feelings of people who were victimized, that's a whole 'nother thing. I think that, I hope that most people, I think that people who didn't lose family members have probably healed and continued on with their life. Losing your family member in that incident is the same as losing a family member in any other incident.
- 03.16.59 You're going to remember them, and you're going to feel bad about it. It's gonna be, when you lose somebody tragically and suddenly, as opposed to an illness, if you lose somebody through a, a catastrophe, as opposed to an illness, it's different. It's (?) a, more frightening. It's more of a, it's more, more trauma. And those people will always have that, the same as if, if you, you're a victim of a, of a motor vehicle accident or a, or a victim of a random shooting, or a, those people who are on the bridge that fell down last month.
- 03.17.36 How do their families feel? Do they feel any less worse than the people who families who died in 9-11? I'm sure they don't. They feel just as bad. And rightfully so.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.17.52 JOE KEENAN: It's just as tragic to them. If only one person dies, but it's you, it wasn't a good day (LAUGHS).

JW: Where do you think you'll be a year from now?

03.18.17 JOE KEENAN: I think I'll be better than I am now. I hope so. I think I will be. And we'll be post-weddings (LAUGHS).

03.18.30 You know, so that'll be, what's it gonna be like you, you spoke before a little bit about empty nest, what's it going to be like? I don't know. I'm not there. You know, I, you know, we're partially there, but we'll have to wait and see. So a year from now? I don't know. I think it'll probably be, if you would ask me that question last year, I would have said I don't know. But now, it's probably not much different than it was last year.

03.18.58 And a few medical procedures a little bit of this, a little bit of that. And next year'll probably be the same thing. Not much different.

JW: Any stories from the year that come to mind?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.19.39 JOE KEENAN: In fact, just the other day, my wife was trying to, I keep calling her the baby, she's 2 years old. She's (?) halfway, are you a baby, aren't you a baby at 2, I don't know. And was calling her, and the baby wouldn't respond, and she said Alyssa, I'm calling you. And she turned around and she said, Grandma. I'm talking to my friend, Pop.

03.20.03 So that was, that's our latest joke at home, she was talking to her friend, Pop. So I'm her friend now (LAUGHS). So that's a, you know, and I'll take every opportunity I get to remind my wife of that (LAUGHS).

JW: What about the moustache?

03.20.18 JOE KEENAN: Well, the moustache came off in the hospital. I had it for many years. My children have never seen me without it. Most people who I know probably haven't seen me without it. But when I was in the hospital, after the procedure, I was, I was bleeding for a couple of days.

03.20.33 Afterward. And it was just in the way. You know, it was, it was difficult, it was uncomfortable. So I shaved it off at that time. And it somehow hasn't grown back, I don't know. I just kept it off.

JW: You gonna keep it off?

03.20.48 JOE KEENAN: For awhile, probably. I don't know. It's you know, it's funny. I remember years ago when I was a, I must have been 12 or 13 years old. And I didn't really mean it in a bad way, but I was watching my father shave. I guess he was going to work. And I, and I happened to ask him, I said, Dad. What's it like to be bald? 'Cos he was bald. And he looked at me, and he didn't yell or anything, and I, and I remember, and he looked at me and he said, it's not so bad.

03.21.11 You only see yourself once or twice a day when you look in the mirror. And it's the same thing with this. I mean, whether I have it or I don't have it, I really don't see it as much as you do (LAUGHS). So it's not as much of an issue to me, as it is to those around me (LAUGHS).

JW: Does your family like it?

03.21.28 JOE KEENAN: Oh, yeah, they, they want me to grow it back. So, yeah, but to be honest, you know, before I became sick, I was thinking about shaving it off anyway. So it gave me a good excuse. So in four years, when they see this tape, they'll, it'll either still be off 4 years from now, or I'll have relinquished and grown it back. But they'll know why (LAUGHS).

JW: What about Katrina relief?

03.21.59 JOE KEENAN: We, we haven't been that involved with it since we did our fundraising and I still see the people from New Orleans. In fact, I just saw them just saw them in August, a few weeks ago, I met with them in Milwaukee. We had a, a convention in Milwaukee, and they were there, and in fact we're probably, Jane and I are probably going to go down there in December. To go to a Christmas party with them.

03.22.27 But we, we had that national fundraising, and we were involved that way. And then after that ended, I wasn't really (?) Katrina-involved after that. You know, I, I still talk to them, but we, you know, as we (~JW~) we raised, we raised money and (?) we passed it on, but as we speak with them, it's pretty much on a personal basis, and then somewhere in the conversation we'll come up, well, how are things going down there? Well, we, you know, they're building. It's getting better.

03.22.57 But it's not really a, a, the focus of our conversation.

JW: Have you added more maturity to your life over the year?

03.24.33 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) not being in the police department anymore, not, not being active, I've sort of separated myself from all of that daily decision-making. And now I'm pretty much just trying to, it's not that my life's not full. I don't know how I used to take care of business when I was working, because I'm so busy now, that I never have time to do anything, and I used to work all those hours every week.

03.25.04 And still be involved in other things. I think my life has just turned a little bit. And gone in a different direction. And it's slowed down. And I don't know. And you know, it's funny you should say about the maturity because I, I think I've pretty much had that curse since I was younger. I always remember being the one when we were younger, who would you know, was responsible for making sure everybody got home, you know, and you know, let Joe hold this, and let Joe hold your keys, and that type of stuff.

03.25.35 And I guess I was never very adventurous. So I was always the safe one. And it has, and that's, and that's developed over the years, and organizations that I'm involved in or (?) family they usually ask my advice on something. And they'll say the guys, the guys in our, in our organization will tease me, they'll say ask Father Joe.

03.25.59 He'll give you an answer. And it's a compliment, I know that. But at the same time, it's almost it's, it's a little bit of an insult while it is a compliment, it's a, it's a compliment because they respect, they're asking me and they respect what I have to say. But it's a little bit of an insult because they don't think that I'll do anything wrong (LAUGHS). That they think I'll come up with the right answer. And just because I give them an, I tell them, look just because I'm telling you this doesn't mean it's right. You know, I, I could be wrong on this. Well, we'll go with that (LAUGHS) So it, it's a two-edge sword maybe.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.26.39 JOE KEENAN: (MID-STATEMENT) it's always easier once I'm here. It's a, it's almost an effort when I, when I listen to my voicemails and it's Hi, Joe, it's Jim. I go oh. Again (LAUGHS). And then when I finally let you catch me and I come here, it's, it's not so bad.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.27.28 B ROLL – PHOTOS

03.29.26 END OF TAPE # JK47