

TAPE # LC006
Larry Courtney - IV
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

06.01.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How are your daughter and son?

06.03.19 LARRY : They're doing well, they're doing very well. Uh, my son, uh, my oldest son whom you didn't meet, uh, he was there that day, though uh, September 11th. (~I~)

06.03.30 Uh, he and his wife are expecting their first child any day now. And uh, they're in Lake Tahoe, love it out there. And uh, so I'm going to California the last week of July. I thought let them get a little bit adjusted to this baby before I drop in. And uh, (~I~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

06.04.04 LARRY : Oh, I you know, having had the three uh, it was nice to have somebody come later, so. Uh, and I'll spend time with my daughter. She's still in California, loves it. She just got engaged, so. Uh, I said, well, why don't you plan a wedding while I'm there so (LAUGHS) I won't have to make another trip out here.

06.04.30 But there, I think they're planning to get married next May. So I'll go back to California in May. But and then uh.

JW: And you know him?

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

- 06.04.43 LARRY : When I was out there right after uh, let's see I was out there at the end of October, 2001. and I met him then. And he uh, he took me to a, into the bar at the hotel, and he ordered us two brandies and he had two cigars uh, this is when you could still do that.
- 04.05.06 And uh, we sat and had a brandy and a cigar together and he told me that uh, eventually he was, was going to ask Heather to marry him. And how did I feel about that. And uh, I told him to go for it because I thought he was uh, quite a nice young man. So a very stable.
- 06.05.27 And so I do, I do like him and he's, they came out here in uh, April, just before her birthday (CLEARS THROAT) and they were here for just for two days in New York and then they went down to Maryland to see her mother. And uh, then my other son who lives in Maryland uh, and he's, his daughter will be 10 in November, which I can't believe. And he's doing very well, very well.
- 06.06.01 Uh, I actually thought he might come up tomorrow, but I'm not sure. (~I~) Katie, yeah, ten. What a wonderful kid. She uh. Well, he sent me an e-mail uh, it was actually copied to me on Wednesday, I think, Tuesday or Wednesday and uh, he uh, it was actually written to Katie's mother who lives in Philadelphia.
- 06.06.37 And he said I just had to share this with you. I found this rough draft of a letter that Katie had written to a friend. And so I'm just retyping it exactly in her words, and not correcting her grammar or anything.
- 06.06.58 Evidently Katie's best friend was very depressed because she feels ugly and she's picked on at school and you know, they're in that age where I mean, Katie's the same thing. She's tall and very skinny and has this big gap (?) in between her teeth. And so she wrote this note, talking about you know, that you can talk to me, and don't be depressed because they pick on me, too, and they tease me.

06.07.32 And she said, I want you to, to be able to come talk to me any time you want to, and if you want, I'll arrange with Mrs. Carlisle who must be a teacher, I don't know uh, for us to have a little private space so that we can talk sometime. And. I thought, how does this ten-year old have this much you know, compassion and knowledge and you know, willingness to give her heart to a friend to help, you know?

06.08.05 And it just, he just made me extremely proud and uh, extremely proud of my son. You know, he's the one who's raised her and uh, I just think he's done a magnificent job. And he has probably been you know, where you are, wanting to direct things, but he stands back and pretty much lets things happen the way they're supposed to happen.

06.08.34 Not that he's not (LAUGHS) he just has to speak to her and she stops whatever she's not supposed to be doing. So. She's a sweetheart.

JW: That sounds like it's a part of her personality. She was very naturally empathetic. And emotionally open about Gene.

06.09.06. LARRY : And I, I think that's well, it's in the genes, I think (LAUGHS) number one. But her father's very much that way. And uh, so I think uh, she, she just has this innate sense of other people hurting.

06.09.26 And I don't know, I, I think she'll either become uh, councilor or uh, therapist or something because she has such empathy for people. Which I think is just uh, remarkable at that age.

JW: I just want to ask you to project yourself back a little bit, you know, emotionally when we had spoken. We talked about a lot of things, and I would say today if you'd like to talk about that and moving forward since then. I know it wasn't an easy time. How have things been for you in the last several months?

06.10.36 LARRY : Well, that day was uh, very difficult. Uh, but I had my three children there with me. Uh, it was very difficult for them as well, because it was really the first time they had a chance to be together, and with me.

06.11.00 And uh, mourn. And so (LAUGHS) the night before, uh, both of the boys came in, Heather had come in two days earlier, and so both of the boys came in the night before, and we ended up staying up all night talking. We never went to bed before we went down to Ground Zero (LAUGHS). And uh, so we were a little tired, but uh, (~I~)

JW: That must have been really nice?

06.11.36 LARRY : Yeah, well, yeah, because there's, there's with my children's on two coasts, it's, it's difficult. And uh, but anyway (CLEARS THROAT) we went there and then we had the uh, open house afterwards at my apartment, and several people were, came. I think we had about 25 people all in all throughout the day.

06.12.02 And uh, that night we stayed up until like 4 in the morning talking. And then uh, I had to get, get my daughter up to catch an early plane. And then the boys stayed until about 1 o'clock uh, and then they were (STUMBLE) driving back down to Maryland.

06.12.29 And so after they left I was just suddenly sitting in my empty apartment. Just me. And I said to myself out loud, actually.

06.12.58 I said, you know, this is September 12th, 2002. which is the first day of a whole new chapter in my life. And it's not been an easy chapter so far. Uh, (PAUSE) I was fighting very hard for the uh, worker's compensation claim.

06.13.32 And which we won. Uh, and as one of the results of our case, I can't say that we were the only cause but we certainly put a nail in it. Is that uh, it's now state law that victims of 9-11 (?) will include domestic partners for worker's compensation benefits.

- 06.14.06 But it's only for 9-11. So, which I think is very unfair. And so I think I told you uh, last time that it had kind of had become the accidental activist. And uh, in the process I went to Albany and spent a day uh, meeting with legislators.
- 06.14.30 Uh, there was a group of 3 of us uh, Bill Valentine, whom I think we spoke about who was also involved in the worker's comp case, whose partner was killed on Flight 587 in November. And Tom Ryan, who is the uh, president of the Gay Firemen's Association.
- 06.14.57 The only known gay firemen's association in the United States. And uh, Tom is just incredible. He's, he's a wonderful guy. Uh, but anyway we met with legislators about different issues, particularly you know, the, the disparity that I receive benefits and Bill doesn't. Uh, his case was actually denied.
- 06.15.26 Uh, and then Tom's (CLEARS THROAT) platform was the, his partner would not receive his pension, even though they're registered in New York City, and he's a New York City fireman, the pension is controlled by the state. And therefore, his partner is ineligible. So if he were to die in a burning building tomorrow, you know, his partner would just be out. That would be it.
- 06.16.00 So uh, it was a very interesting day. And uh, we actually met with some uh, legislators who were far right Republican leadership. And uh, I was surprised they even took the time to meet with us, knowing what we were talking about. But they were uh, some of them were actually (?) a little surprised at the inequities.
- 06.16.32 Uh, (STUMBLE) because they just hadn't thought about them. You know, heterosexual people don't think about these issues, because it doesn't affect them, you know? The husband dies, the wife takes the marriage license to whatever agencies has to be done and the benefits automatically are there. But that's not true with domestic partnership. Uh, so anyway, uh, I went to Albany and had a really good day.

06.17.05 And uh, I have been uh, working kind of in that vein uh, (CLEARS THROAT) will probably go back, and I can't remember when the session ends in Albany, but we'll probably go back just before the session ends. And talk to them again.

JW: When you say it was a good day, what were the highlights for you?

06.17.38 LARRY : I think uh, the emotional highlight and I'm really sorry I can't remember the senator's name (~I~) but he's uh, I can't remember he's, I suddenly can't remember his uh, department either. But at any rate uh, it would be his uh, committee that would decide things like this uh, whether they came to the floor or not.

06.18.05 And gay issues uh, concerning pensions and worker's compensation. And uh, he's his voting record has been anti-gay all along. He met with us in the uh, senate lobby. And was either an extremely good actor or someone who really listened.

06.18.36 Uh, I'm not you know, I'm not saying we changed his mind, but he listen to what we had to say, you know, and asked questions, and I think I met a lot of people who were, a lot of senators and congressmen who were sympathetic to begin with, uh, Tom Dwayne who is uh, my, my senator.

06.19.01 Uh, is an openly gay person anyway. So I think the, the highlight was meeting him and actually feeling like I got somebody to listen to me. And maybe I just planted something in their mind, not that he's going to run out and buy a gay flag and start voting for us. But I really felt that uh, he, he listened to what we had to say.

JW: That's quite an achievement, to have won the compensation.

06.19.47 LARRY : Well, we uh, you know, we had, we fought for a long time and the decision finally came down in August. That and the decision predated the law going into effect.

- 06.20.06 But he added a paragraph at the end of the decision, that uh, it, that it was now state law anyway. But uh, it was a three-page decision based on what we had presented as facts. And uh, I felt it was very good.
- 06.20.29 And uh, and a good move forward. And of course, you know, financially it's a benefit to me. Because now I receive this uh, worker's compensation uh, for the rest of my life or until I remarry (LAUGHS). Which I'm not allowed to do anyway. So I don't know what they'll do about that if I ever were to enter into another domestic partnership. Uh, I don't see that happening on the horizon.
- 06.21.01 But uh, it's, it's gratifying to win a battle that you really believe in, and it's very good financially, you know? It picked up a lot of the slack of uh, losing Eugene's uh, salary. You know? And uh.
- JW: That's just basic, it helps you out.
- 06.21.28 LARRY : Yeah, yeah it is. It is. I mean, uh, (CLEARS THROAT) if you're a two-salary family heterosexual or homosexual, and one of those salaries is suddenly lost, you know? Unplanned. Then uh, there's a (LAUGHS) there's a shortage there that's got to be filled. Or you make changes. And like uh, we talked about last time uh, you know, I had to move out of the apartment that we had, because I hadn't at that point won the case and, and uh, moved into the smaller one, which I really am now enjoying very much.
- 06.22.08 Uh, it's a little different than when you were there last time. I got some boxes rid of anyway. And uh, I, I'm enjoying this space uh. Uh.
- 06.22.29 On uh, April 29th uh, which was a Tuesday, I went to work and I had for some reason this intense feeling that I needed to make plans for my death, burial, whatever.
- 06.23.01 Uh, 'cos I had talked about it ever since Gene died that uh, I didn't want my children to have to do that, or the executor of my will. And so uh, I made some telephone calls that morning.

And by one o'clock I had finalized uh, purchasing two uh, a joint niche in a garden wall in the cemetery that my parents are buried in Oregon.

- 06.23.36 And uh, also with the funeral home here, that should I die here, uh, they would you know pick up my body and take it and have it cremated (CLEARS THROAT) and ship it to the funeral home. So that's all done, all finished. At one o'clock. (PAUSE)
- 06.24.06 So I went out and had lunch. And I came back and I realized that my, I had turned my cell phone off because my batteries were low. And I thought, well, I better check it. So I turned it on and there was a message so I called the number, and it was a detective from the midtown south precinct.
- 06.24.32 And uh, he asked me if I could come to the precinct. And I asked him if it was important. And he said it's very important. And I said well, the real problem is I am supposed to speak at a town meeting in New Jersey tonight uh, again about my, the case. And uh, I said but, can you just tell me, is this about Eugene Clark? (PAUSE)
- 06.25.05 And he said, yes. And so I made arrangements to go down to the precinct, and I called the uh, Lambda Legal who had set up this town meeting. And told them that I wasn't going to be able to come.
- 06.25.26 And uh, I went to the precinct, and the officer, the detectives uh, told me that the medical examiner had identified Eugene's remains through DNA testing. And that they had actually been by my apartment that morning, but the doorman had told them that it had already gone to work, which is why they called my cell phone, thinking that that was the only number they had.
- 06.25.59 So (CLEARS THROAT) I uh, they offered me a ride home, which was very kind. But I decided that I needed to walk, I needed some air. And it was only on 34th street, so (CLEARS THROAT). So I walked home, just kind of in a daze, not knowing (PAUSE)

- 06.26.30 Never in, in one sense never expecting that they were ever going to identify Eugene, particularly after all this time. But in another sense, hoping that they would. And uh. So I went home and I spent the night just sort of I am not really sure what I did. I know I had the TV on.
- 06.27.01 Uh, but I called in the next day and I took uh, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday off. And Wednesday I made arrangements with the same funeral home here in New York. Uh, to pick up Gene's remains from the medical examiner and have him cremated and uh, his ashes were ready uh, the following Tuesday.
- 06.27.39 Uh, there was uh, as far as they uh, the funeral home knew or the director who talked to me, it was just uh, more or less particles that were identified through DNA.
- 06.28.00 Uh, which doesn't matter to me, you know? He, they, he was identified (PAUSE). And uh, so I elected to have his ashes uh, placed in the urn that the city had given survivors uh, back in November of 2001. And uh, mixed with the ashes and dirt from Ground Zero.
- 06.28.36 And uh, so tomorrow which would have been his 49th birthday uh, I'm having an open house for friends and family who really feel that I think it's more for them this time.
- 06.29.02 They really feel like they have to say goodbye. And they've been so supportive of me that I don't think they've really had a chance to, to grieve themselves. Because they, (STUTTER) I think they were so afraid that I would see it and it would, it would emotionally hurt me that they've kept it all in, or at least away from me.
- 06.29.34 And uh, (CLEARS THROAT) I, I started to see a therapist awhile back. And she brought that point up, that uh, by my not being able to grieve in front of my friends, because I wanted to support them and not make them feel bad, and they were trying to support me and not make me feel bad, it was just a vicious circle and nobody was getting to the root of their pain.

- 06.30.08 So I think tomorrow that's more what it's about. And uh, then in uh, (?) I mean, in August, which is a trip I had already planned uh, like I said I'm gonna go see my son and their new baby in uh, the last week of July. And then the first week of August I'm going up to Oregon. And uh, I will have Gene interred uh, during that week. I was arranging the house today, trying to get it cleaned and get things the way I want them for tomorrow.
- 06.31.00 And I have a (CLEARS THROAT) little table. And I uh, covered it and then I put Eugene's urn on the table. And it was such a final act of actually placing that urn there.
- 06.31.30 I don't know why, because when I brought him home uh, I have a little bookcase that I had his picture on and the flag that they gave us and the urn. And so I put the urn back in that spot. But actually placing it today was extremely hard.
- 06.32.01 Just extremely hard. And it's just a matter of setting it on a table, you know? (PAUSE) I don't know exactly what tomorrow is going to mean for me.
- 06.32.30 Uh, you know, I said I think it's important for other people. Uh, actually my therapist asked me that question, and I couldn't answer, either. I just, I don't know, I'll have to just wait and see tomorrow.
- JW: You've had different moments of realization. What do you think it means in this moment as opposed to before?
- 06.33.48 LARRY : Being able to let someone go in an, purely intangible way, uh, is very different.
- 06.34.01 You know, I after that two weeks or in that two weeks, I realized he was not coming home. And uh, so I was able to spiritually let him go on, in church that day.
- 06.34.28 And uh, my, I have a niece who lives in Beyon, and she knew Gene, we were at their, her wedding and all kinds of things. And at his first uh, at this celebration of life in October, she said uh, Uncle Larry, Eugene's not gone.

- 06.35.00 Uh, she called him Uncle Gene. He's not gone. Uh, he just got tired of you and found some younger, richer person and you, he's in the Bahamas now (LAUGHS). And that's funny that uh, even though I had already let him go and knew that he was not coming back, I guess there's a part of, of you that still maybe, maybe, maybe he is in the Bahamas, maybe he will come back some day.
- 06.35.38 And then to have this happen, this is final. You know, this is, he died at the World Trade Center (PAUSE).
- 06.35.59 And I think it's the loneliest I've ever felt in my life. I have friends and family around me, and I just, it's the loneliest feeling I've ever had.
- 06.36.38 I thought, you know, (CLEARS THROAT) it would be interesting living in an apartment by myself. Uh, first time I've ever lived alone in 57 years.
- 06.36.57 Uh, and I don't like it. I let a young person stay for a couple of weeks, well, he's still there, uh, maybe a couple of months. He doesn't have a job and he doesn't have a place to live. So he's kind of camping out with me until he can get on his feet.
- 06.37.31 And I thought that that would be good for me. And it is nice to have company. But it also emphasizes I don't know, somehow or other, it emphasizes the fact that I, I am alone. Yeah, he's there, but he's not, he's not Eugene, you know?
- 06.38.01 Uh, he's, he's company to talk to, but it's just not the same. And uh, I don't know if I'll ever find that. And I, I said that to my therapist, as a matter of fact.
- 06.38.24 And uh, she brought up a point that I've heard many times before, that couples who have a really good relationship have a good marriage or whatever, and then one of them dies or something happens. The other person is the most likely to have a second good relationship.

06.39.04 Because they know how to do it. And it's something that they innately need uh, and it stands to reason that if you're in a really lousy (LAUGHS) relationship and it ends, you're not gonna be too willing to jump into another one. But (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

06.39.41 END OF TAPE # LC006

TAPE # LC 007
Larry Courtney
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

07.00.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: It's an interesting point you're making.

07.00.12 LARRY : Well, it's just that if, if that's true, then maybe one day I will have (?) a relationship again.

07.00.27 But for some reason it just doesn't seem to, and, and I maybe just all the things that are happening right now. But it just doesn't seem like that's in the cards for me down the road. And I have no, I don't know why, but uh, it maybe it's just like I said uh, the feeling of this intense loneliness and uh.

- 07.01.01 I look at myself and I say, you know, you're gonna be 58 in August. How likely is it that you're gonna find another soul mate or partner at that age? You know, uh, anything can happen, but. I don't even know where to look (LAUGHS). You know?
- 07.01.29 So. I don't know. And as I, I just. It's like I'm just going through a dark tunnel and have no, I don't see any points of light anywhere to go to. I'm just sort of struggling with everything. But uh.
- JW: What do you mean by everything?
- 07.02.04 LARRY : Work. I, I have no interest in it whatsoever. I'm there. You know, from 9 to 5, but I don't (?) really care. I had rather not be there. I need the paycheck, (LAUGHS) so I am there, you know? I do my job and I do it very well. But I, I don't care about it anymore.
- 07.02.32 Uh, I find that the only things that really matter to me anymore are my family, and my friends. Uh, you know, I've been working on my apartment since I moved into it in July of last year, and it's still not done. You know? I still don't have the curtains up that I bought a year ago.
- 07.03.00 Uh, and uh, it's just like well, if it doesn't get done today there's always tomorrow. It's not that I'm procrastinating, it's just that I, I'm, I don't have the interest, I don't have the drive to do it. Uh, when Gene and I were together, we lived in 4 different apartments in that building, the same building.
- 07.03.32 And we would always moving into a bigger space. Within a week after being in the new apartment, it looked as though we had lived there for years, because everything was done. The curtains were up, the pictures were up, the mirrors were up.
- 07.03.56 The, everything was done. And uh, here it is almost a year later, and I'm still (LAUGHS) not done, you know? (LAUGHS) Maybe I was waiting for him to come home and direct. Uh.

He was always (CLEARS THROAT) he was the planner. I was the doer. He just made sure everything got done, you know?

07.04.31 But uh, so now I'm kind of, I feel like rudderless, as I just, I don't have that direction. I think it came out first time I drove my car up to Connecticut. I realized that how much I depended upon him as my navigator. And I didn't have a navigator.

07.05.01 I suddenly had to make sure I knew which roads I was supposed to take and be able to see the signs and make the right turns. Whereas before I had somebody sitting there who would say oh, there's the sign for and you make a right here. So I just paid attention to the road. And suddenly I don't have that navigator. (PAUSE)

07.05.44 And I don't know where I'm going from here. Uh, Croi asked me about New York. (CLEARS THROAT) How I felt about it.

07.06.02 Was it uh, had it lost its luster at all for me with all of this. And actually no, it hasn't. I still love New York. Uh, I think it's a beautiful city. Uh, it's still a little softer than it was pre-9-11.

07.06.30 But it's swinging back to its normal New York self. Uh, but she, we were talking about retirement, and uh, asked if I wanted to retire in the city. And as I said to you before, I don't see how anybody can live in New York City as a retired person. You know, I don't see how you can afford it. It's just too expensive a city to live in.

07.07.02 And then just before this uh, just before coming up, she and I were sitting out in the courtyard, and uh, she was telling me about a road trip she took to Georgia. And that, how much she loves Savannah. And I remember being in Savannah and how much I loved it. Uh, and in Charlestown, just loved both of those cities.

- 07.07.31 And just talking to her in the courtyard made me think, you know, that it might not be a bad (LAUGHS) place to retire. Uh, but I'm. my job is here and uh, until I retire, I need to work. And I don't want to leave the city until it, it's been rebuilt downtown.
- 07.08.06 Whatever has, is that's going to be there. Uh, I liked the design that was selected. That was my favorite of all the designs. Uh, not that it will look like that particularly. But that concept, I liked best of all.
- 07.08.34 Uh, well, the others I thought were all just ordinary buildings on a site. Uh, and the one, the two finalists, the one I did not like uh, had two towers, all honeycombing and, and connecting with this thing, and I, I just thought it was ugly, really ugly.
- 07.09.04 And uh, I like this one because it soars. Uh, I, I'm a patriotic American (LAUGHS) and I, I feel that you know, rebuilding is our spirit.
- 07.09.30 That's what we do, that's what America does. And uh, New York in particular has to do that. And the Pentagon is all finished uh, at least the outside. I don't know if they've finished all the inside, but they've (STUMBLE) rebuilt the Pentagon. So it's time to rebuild Lower Manhattan. Uh, uh, and I just like that design because it, I, I liked the way it came to a curve at the or not a curve.
- 07.10.03 But uh, came up at the top uh. And of course it, that, that doesn't say anything about the memorial that's gonna be built, because there's still, that's still, they're still accepting drafts for that. But I know that uh, you know, I have to stay here until I see that completed.
- JW: New York for Gene?
- 07.10.34 LARRY : For me. Uh, I don't know, maybe that's part of my healing process. You know, that's a big wound down there, and it's, it's just like I'm wounded. And as I heal, that area is gonna heal.

- 07.11.01 And I feel such a kinship with it. I had worked for (CLEAR'S THROAT) several years in a building across the street from the World Trade Center. And my office window faced the two towers. And Gene and I used to meet for lunch quite a lot.
- 07.11.25 And uh, I always loved being there, and then my office relocated to midtown. Uh, in February of '99. So I wasn't down there that day. But uh, I always loved that area. Gene and I actually thought about, well, we looked at an apartment close to Pace.
- 07.11.58 And they built, they, well, they didn't build, they turned some commercial space, several (?) buildings into commercial, from commercial use into residential. And, and they did a beautiful job with loft apartments and things like that. And Gene and I actually talked about moving down there. Uh, two things uh, it was even more expensive to live down there than it is in midtown.
- 07.12.32 And being in midtown we were in the middle of everything. Being in Times Square you're you know, five minute walk from any theater. And now I've got 38 movie screens on the corner across the street from me. So uh, I, I had, don't want to move downtown, but I still love downtown. And the Battery Park area is beautiful. Uh, and I just have to see that finished.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: That's an interesting connection. Some people might say they're just buildings. But you said spiritual?

- 07.13.48 LARRY : Well, I think it is spiritual for me. Uh, and I hadn't, I don't think I had really connected it until uh, yesterday when I was talking to Croi.
- 07.14.02 Uh, that that was a part of the draw for me to stay in New York. Uh, taking Gene to Oregon is gonna be a final moment, but seeing those buildings go up or whatever goes up there, and watching that, is gonna be a very healing thing for, for Manhattan and for me.

- 07.14.37 Uh. I go down every once in a while. And uh, stand in front of the plaque that's there. And I always cry.
- 07.15.07 And I think I will until it (?) up, until it's done. And maybe even after (LAUGHS) I don't know. If I go. They're always talking the memorial has to have gardens and benches and places for people to come, and.
- 07.15.37 Uh, I know that that's gonna be tough to, to do as well. But by that time, maybe (?) maybe (?) as its, as it's constructed and built that, that the healing will, will be much easier.
- 07.15.58 Although I, uh, remember distinctly a friend of mine who lives in Oregon. He, he was my best friend and I was his best man at his wedding and. He was in Vietnam. And uh, he always wanted to come to DC. I was living just outside of DC at the time. This was even before I met Gene.
- 07.16.28 And uh, (CLEARS THROAT) he wanted to come to DC because he wanted to see the Vietnam memorial. And it was just something he, he was driven to see. And uh, so he came out and we drove down to DC. And it was probably about 10 o'clock at night. And uh, we went to the memorial.
- 07.16.59 And I was so touched, because he just walked along the memorial with his hand touching the names as he walked. And he sobbed. And this is not a man who cries. And I think, now I am a man who cries a lot.
- 07.17.26 But looking back at that incident and how important it was for him to be there and actually touch that wall, having lost friends in Vietnam, I think it's, it's that important for me to see this memorial finished. And to actually be there.

07.17.58 Uh, you know, I'm gonna lay Gene to rest in Oregon with my family and with me eventually. But there's still a part of him that is always going to be there. And that's the last place he called me from. And now I know for sure that he was there.

07.18.33 So it is, my emotions, my spirit, whatever, they are in, entangled in this rebuilding process.

JW: What are you thinking?

07.19.02 LARRY : I was just thinking that's good for me (LAUGHS). Just to realize that, just to, to actually put it into words. Uh, 'cos it's something I guess you know, I've been tossing around in my head, but to actually put it into words. Uh, is good.

JW: It's a kind of finality?

07.19.50 LARRY : Oh, definitely. Yeah, just and, and I don't know why, because I, I, I picked up the urn at the funeral home, you know, I brought it home. I, I've held it before. Uh, but just placing it on that table, I, I don't know why. It was just so (PAUSE)

JW: You're also offering it up others?

07.20.29 LARRY : Yeah. And (CLEARS THROAT) and it is important for them. It's.

07.20.58 Just thinking about that, what you just said uh, it's (?) it's gonna make a really final to have others acknowledge. (PAUSE)

07.21.35 I got uh, a surprise this morning. Uh, I was having coffee and talking to this young man who's staying there and suddenly I, the buzzer rang. That there was a delivery. And I hadn't ordered anything.

07.22.01 Well, I had ordered some stuff that was to come later in the day for tomorrow. But I certainly hadn't ordered anything for the morning, so I had no idea what it was. And uh, it was this gorgeous, it was a gorgeous bouquet of white flowers, all different kinds of white flowers.

07.22.28 Uh, it was from the Board of Directors of Conscious Contact of New York. Now I am (?) on the board of Directors for Conscious Contact. And uh, it's an organization that disseminates information to people with HIV and AIDS uh, services where they, what they can do. And uh, it just took me so much by surprise, I just. I had no idea.

JW: I was struck by your comment about how lonely you're feeling right now. There is a great intensity and connectedness that occurs, and a reevaluating and a deepening of relationships. Does tomorrow's offering Gene make you think on the other side of that day that there will be a greater feeling of loneliness?

07.24.43 LARRY : Oh, I think so. Uh, and I think uh, you know, you mentioned your mother. And uh, you know, I lost my mother just two months after Gene died.

07.24.58 Uh, and we were extremely close. And uh, I think this, this finality tomorrow, this offering, this whatever it is (CLEARS THROAT) just emphasizes the point that uh, I don't have him. I don't have my mother to talk to.

07.25.28 Uh, it's just, it's just me. I shouldn't, shouldn't probably feel that way because I'm, I'm like I said, I'm surrounded by family and friends. And that's good on that level, you know?

07.25.57 But there's, there's an emotional level that can't be, they can't even begin to touch. Uh, as, as much as they want to, to help me and keep me from hurting and whatever. But there's a, there's a void they can't fill. They couldn't possibly fill it. Uh, and I guess tomorrow it just, just makes that void so real.

07.26.37 Uh, touchable. And that hurts. (PAUSE) (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: There's an interesting connection of fate. It's remarkable that on the same day you made this decision you felt drawn to have to do. Do you attribute that to anything?

- 07.28.32 LARRY : I do, I do. Uh, I talked to a couple of different people about this. Uh, I'm a spiritual person. I believe that Eugene is in a better place. And that he's still, I talked about him being the navigator and the director, and in some ways he still does that to me.
- 07.29.03 Uh, I feel that he was not going to allow me to find him until I had a place to put him. And the drive that particular day was because he had been identified.
- 07.29.32 I didn't know that. As a matter of fact, when I, I called after I received this notification in the next day or two, I called the Oregon cemetery where I had made the arrangements, and told (STUTTER) the lady that I had been working with that his remains had been identified that same day.
- 07.30.04 Uh, and she just started crying. Uh, (PAUSE) (LAUGHS) Several people uh, one of his co-workers say uh, very funny little short black lady that I, I have fallen in love, I didn't know her before.
- 07.30.37 Uh, she and Gene used to go down and have cigarettes together and that kind of thing. She was actually injured quite badly that day. Uh, she was trampled and uh, but uh, I called her to tell her that Gene had been identified.
- 07.31.02 Because I knew she would want to know. And I told her about the circumstances and what the day had been like. And I don't know if I can say this on camera but she said, you know what he said? He said, you are not putting some other bitch in my spot. That's where I go (LAUGHS).

- 07.31.28 And I said, oh, yeah, that's what he would have said all right. That's what he would have said. So I just have to believe that a higher power of some sort directed that day. And the fact that it was so close to what will be his 49th birthday tomorrow, or would have been.
- 07.32.06 So along with the food I ordered for the open house (PAUSE) I ordered a birthday cake.
- 07.32.32 Uh, I had them write on it uh, Happy Birthday, Gene. Go with God. (PAUSE) So we will celebrate his birthday tomorrow.
- 07.33.01 He'd be real upset to see me sitting here crying. Uh, because that's just not what he would have wanted. The first uh, get together that I had for Eugene after in October was a celebration of life.
- 07.33.36 Because that's what the both of us had talked about. Uh, that when, whenever we went we didn't want crying and tears. We wanted people to remember who we were or what, what life was for us. Which we, we tried to do at that gathering.
- 07.34.00 Uh, and I know that's what he would want tomorrow. But I know that's not what it's gonna be. There will be some of that. But I have never met a person, well, I shouldn't say that, well, maybe one other person, who has, had, has such a zest for life.
- 07.34.41 Gene loved living. He loved living in New York. Uh, in New York as a gay man, uh.
- 07.35.03 And it just, it just doesn't seem that, that can stop. That much living just can't stop. So it has to be somewhere. (PAUSE) So he directs.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: And you're carrying a lot of it. It's interesting that you carrying (?) positive with me. It raises this question. One of the first assignments my college teacher gave me was what's the meaning of god? And I determined that it is uh, largely what you carry within you. That

it's not one thing as much as it's within everybody. As I hear what you're saying, connecting to there's so much life out there and how can it be gone, I sense that you're carrying a lot of that energy.

- 07.37.34 LARRY : Maybe. Uh, maybe the, maybe the only way I'm moving at this point. Uh, with my mother, my mother was uh, 86. And in bad health for the last couple of years. And so you know, and she was ready to go.
- 07.38.01 And she was ready to be with my father who had preceded her by 10, 11 years. And uh, so it was easier and not that I don't miss her. I sent flowers for Mother's Day just like always.
- 07.28.25 But it's something that you can accept in the aging process and, and you see the life beginning to go. But when you have a man who was 47 and just so, so much life left, you know, uh, (CLEARS THROAT) but you, you may be right in that, uh, from somewhere that energy's still keeping me going.
- 07.39.12 Uh, from within or without, I don't know. But uh, my therapist asked me a question. I, guess I shouldn't talk about what goes on in therapy, but.
- 07.39.32 Uh, she asked me if uh, what well, number one, why I started to go to see a therapist. Because I'm, I can't sleep. And I don't, I don't care if I eat or not. Uh, and depressed. So she asked me of course the question I'm sure that every therapist who asks, sees a depressed person, have you ever thought of suicide?
- 07.40.04 I said, of course I have. Of course I would like to stop it, I would like to stop hurting. But by my doing that, I would cause others to hurt. My children. And my friends. By me being that selfish, it would hurt so many other people and I, I can't do that.
- 07.40.37 Mentally, I can imagine it. Physically I could not do that. And I just, that just, it, it just isn't uh, a thing that uh, that is, is possible. It's just not a viable solution to anything.

JW: Do you see the potential for light?

07.41.22 LARRY : Oh, I think it's, it's got to be there somewhere. It's got to be there. Uh, and I don't think you know, if, if Gene is still a part of me and if he's directing in any way, he would not want me to be in a dark tunnel for any period of time. Uh, I, I don't know uh, I'm, I'm sure that there has, that there will be a time when I can say yes, there's light and uh, and I'm all right or at least at peace.

07.42.08 Uh, I just don't see it at the moment. And (?) you know, I just, I don't know that meeting somebody else is what that means or whether I can just come to peace with being alone and having my friends.

07.42.42 And I have several friends who are in their 40's and 50's who are single. And they talk about uh, one friend, she's always talking about trying to, she's got to meet somebody soon and get married 'cos she's 40, you know?

07.43.06 But she's, she's very happy, she's very active. She does a lot of you know, goes to the theater and does a lot of things, and uh, several of my other friends are single, and they're very happy being single. So maybe it'll come to a point that I'm, I'm just, I can be that, or I can be at peace with being single uh, and, and be Ok.

07.43.37 Uh, I hope. That's my hope (LAUGHS). Uh, but I don't, I don't know that I see it yet. You know? (CLEARS THROAT)

JW: Have you had any shining moments, even a conversation, during this time?

07.44.24 LARRY : That's a hard one. Well, I, I don't mean to say that I haven't been doing things or enjoying things. Uh, I, I decided that I had to go see Les Miz, Les Miserable one more time before it closed, because it was one of our favorites, and we had seen it three times, or four. With the (?) as they change casts.

- 07.45.00 And uh, ironically it closes tomorrow on his birthday. But I had decided not, I knew it was closing on May 18th, but for some reason that didn't click with me. But uh, about a month ago, uh, I had met this uh, person uh, at a charity event.
- 07.45.31 And we had kind of clicked and you know, we exchanged numbers and that kind of thing. I lost his number immediately. And uh, about 2 weeks later he called me. And so I decided that this would be a good opportunity uh, to go see Les Miz. And uh, and so and he had never seen it.
- 07.46.00 So that, that was, that was something, to see kind of see it again but new, because he had never seen it. You know, he, his reactions were as, almost as interesting as what was going on on stage. And uh, and then having dinner with him afterwards and, and uh, a very bright, articulate guy that you know.
- 07.46.30 Uh, obviously not going anywhere other than that, that show and dinner. But it was a, it was a really good, that was a good evening. I did enjoy that very much. And I've enjoyed you know, I, I was supposed to speak at this town meeting uh, I've enjoyed any, any of the activism that I've done.
- 07.46.06 Very, I mean, it's very little, very little. But I've enjoyed being involved in it. Uh, and I could see myself doing something, and going to work for an organization like uh, (CLEARS THROAT) National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
- 07.47.29 Or uh, Empire State Pride Agenda. Or even Lambda, although I'm, I'm not a lawyer, but they (?) they're not all lawyers who work there. Uh, and I think I, I could be very happy doing something like that. If I had you know, the money that I didn't have to work, I would be very happy working for Conscious Contact in New York on a full time basis and, and really being out there and uh.

07.48.04 And I think it would, I think Gene is proud of me of what I've done so far with that. And I think he would be, be proud of me for doing that. Uh, and that's important to me. Uh, I've done some stupid things. (STOPS)

07.48.34 END OF TAPE # LC 007

TAPE # LC008
Larry Courtney
May 17, 2003
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/Director
PROJECT REBIRTH

08.00.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: (?)

08.00.11 LARRY : The, the network called Lambda, and wanted myself and my lawyer to come on to the Today show. And uh, so it was the very next morning. And they said they would send a car to pick me up at 7 o'clock.

08.00.34 No uh, the car was to be there at 6:30, because we had, we were supposed to be on at 7:08 or something like that. They're very particular (LAUGHS) but you know that. Anyway, the car got lost. And he didn't pick me up until 7 o'clock. So I'm frantically on my cell phone calling my lawyer, who's not picking up because he's in the studio already.

- 08.01.05 So we race into the studio, and they tell us that they had switched segments around so our segment was next. And as we were running down the hall, they're yanking my glasses off and applying powder to my shiny nose to get me into the studio.
- 08.01.29 And I literally we walk into the studio, I meet Katie Couric and she immediately has us seated and we're wired and we're ready, we go, you know? I didn't get any of the green room thrills or you know, I didn't to see the, you know, all the background. But and it was so quick that, that uh, I have a tape of it now uh, my daughter actually taped it.
- 08.01.57 And I (?) I just, it was, happened so fast that I hardly remember being there, you know? But uh, she ws very gracious. And uh, you know, was very interested in what, why the worker's compensation board was doing this. And Katie obviously does research or her staff does, because she had, she read a quote from the Worker's Compensation law.
- 08.02.30 And uh, you know, of course my lawyer uh, the, the law stated uh, married spouse. And Adam, my lawyer, said that married spouse in Worker's Compensation is not necessarily defined as heterosexual man and wife.
- 08.03.01 It's not a legal, it doesn't say a legal. Anyway, there, there was all this legal wrangling going on. And uh, so I felt the interview went really well. And uh, and it was nice to, you know, to actually meet Katie Couric and uh, she gave me a kiss on the cheek as, on the way out. And then I met Matt Lauer out in the hall.
- 08.03.32 And uh, so it was a very interesting experience. But I was in and out of there in approximately 8 minutes (LAUGHS). And I was outside again, you know?
- JW: What would Gene think about you being an accidental activist?
- 08.04.55 LARRY : First off, you're crazy. You, you have no skills, you know? Uh, you don't even speak well, you know? Uh, but he'd be proud. It's. that's one thing that I know in our

relationship. We were proud of each other's achievements, accomplishments. Proud of each others as individuals.

08.04.32 Uh, so I know he'd be proud of what I'm doing. What you know, it's not much, but it's a little step. And uh, but I know he's, I know he's laughing about it. (CLEARS THROAT) because he, he would have been the one who would have been out there.

JW: You have described yourself as the introverted one. Has that changed for you?

08.05.16 LARRY : Well, I'm a little more extraverted. I'll put myself out there a little more. Uh.

JW: Why?

08.05.30 LARRY : Maybe it's that energy we talked about before. Uh, when Gene was alive, rejection was a big deal for me. Uh, if I was rejected for whatever, whatever, I could be devastated for days. And you know what? I don't care anymore.

08.06.01 If I make a mistake or I am rejected for one reason or another, Ok. It (?) isn't, so I'm not afraid to take the chance. Not, and I'm not saying that I'm you know, ready to go bungee jumping, but I, I'm not afraid to put myself out there a little more.

08.06.33 I found out that for now, I have a compelling story to tell. And maybe it will help change some things. And I'm willing to do that. And if, if people you know, reject me for one reason or another, I, I am not, it, is, it doesn't defeat me like it used to.

08.07.07 Uh, and that goes for having the courage to ask somebody out. I'd never been able to do that. I have always been approached. Gene uh, well, Gene didn't approach me, but he was introduced to me and we sat and talked.

08.07.31 And uh, but I, I have, I remember in high school, I would agonize for days before I had to call somebody to go to a dance or a game or whatever. What if she says no, you know? Uh,

I found myself at least three times asking someone if they'd like to go out. And being told no.

08.08.08 And I'm not (LAUGHS) you know, I'm not uh, I'm not in the dung heap, I'm Ok. You know? If, if they didn't like me, or there were other reasons, it doesn't matter. Uh, I'm Ok. You know?

JW: What do you suppose that's from?

08.08.40 LARRY : Uh, part of it is being out there a little bit, you know? Being in front of people with speaking uh, you know, I, never in my life would have thought I could do an interview with Katie Couric.

08.09.01 You know, I, I think I thought I would fall apart. But uh. Having been asked to speak several times, and finding out that it's ok to do that, you know? Because you are putting yourself out there.

08.09.27 And it's very, every opportunity, for instance, in Albany, for those people to say ok, I heard what you said and you're an idiot, you know? Or you're, you're the opposite of homophobic, I don't know what that is. But uh, is there a heterophobic? (LAUGHS) But that, that wouldn't bother me, either.

08.10.03 Uh, maybe part of it's is just the exposure, which I never had. Uh. I'm, I'm really not afraid if I make a fool of myself. And I've always been, all my life.

08.10.29 I've been afraid I'd do some foolish thing. Half the time I couldn't raise my hand in class, even though I knew the answer, but I'm afraid I would be wrong. And, and I couldn't do it. So I'm just not afraid of, afraid of it anymore.

JW: Did you do some stupid things this past year?

08.11.01 LARRY : Well, I told you I asked a couple of people out, and been rejected. And then I'll ask a couple of people out and been accepted. And that was, they were stupid things (LAUGHS). That, (?) those did not work. Uh, but basically and not, nothing too serious, uh, you know?

08.11.32 Uh, keeping a car in New York, that's a pretty stupid thing. But uh.

JW: You mentioned a period of time that you felt like you postponed your brief?

08.11.55 LARRY : Yeah, well, when (CLEARS THROAT) when my mother died, uh, well, uh, it started a little before that. Uh, I had received a Christmas card uh, Gene and I received a Christmas card from an old friend. And I had actually dated this guy before I met Eugene. And he broke it off and you know, then about almost a year later I met Eugene.

08.12.32 But anyway we had, we had remained friends. And Gene and you know, they all, we all knew each other. He had a partner and we all, we had been to their house, they had been to ours. So I got this Christmas card addressed to Eugene and I. but it was only signed by him. And so I thought, well, John doesn't know that Gene had died.

08.13.04 So I called, and I told him. And uh, we talked for a while on the phone and then he told me about leaving his partner. And they'd been together 12 years. And uh, so we called back and forth a couple of times.

08.13.32 Uh, so it was set that I was going to drive down to see him and his mother uh, the first weekend of December. And so at 6 o'clock that morning, just as I, just about the time I was getting up to get ready to go, my brother called from Oregon to tell me that Mom had died.

08.14.04 So I of course (CLEARS THROAT) immediately called the airlines and got a ticket to go back. And uh, then I remembered (LAUGHS) I was supposed to drive to DC. So I called John and explained what had happened, and he said he you know, obviously understood (STUMBLE) and uh, he sent me a poem that he had written for his mother, e-mailed it to me.

- 08.14.36 And uh, while I was in Oregon uh, you know I made the arrangements for Mom's funeral, and uh, uh, went through that. And then but and I was staying with my brother, who had just lost his wife as well.
- 08.15.00 So a lot of grief in this house. And uh, John called me on my cell phone almost every day while I was there. And finally he was you know, I have, I'm spacey, I didn't know what was going on. And he asked me you know, when, when was I coming in, what was you know, where, where was I. So when I got off the plane in Newark, he was there.
- 08.15.30 And he said he just, there's no way he could let me go back to my apartment alone after what I have been through. So by Christmastime, we had kind of rekindled something, I thought. And he and his mother wanted to move to New York.
- 08.15.59 And uh, she's a, she's a hoot. And so we decided that we would try to find two apartments close together. We couldn't find two apartments close together that we could afford, but we did find a brownstone, a whole brownstone in Harlem that had been completely renovated. That the three of us could afford together. So we took it. And they moved up from DC.
- 08.16.31 And I moved out of my apartment and shared this house, which was beautiful. Uh, she didn't have a separate apartment, but she had a whole floor to herself. And then, you know, we had the living room and dining room downstairs and, and uh, we shared meals and all of that. And the decisions were all made by John and Billy, basically.
- 08.17.04 Billy's his mother. I should disguise their names (LAUGHS) but. Uh, and partly because I was incapable of making decisions at this point. I had, the last decision I really committed to was putting together my mother's funeral and burial. You know? And, and that took everything out of me that I had.

- 08.17.32 So I was glad to go along with this, because I (LAUGHS) I didn't really have to decide anything. And both of them were home all day, so they did everything in the house. Got it all set up, it as beautiful.
- 08.17.55 Uh, but after uh, it got more and more, it became more and more clear to me that they did not want to hear about Eugene, they did not want to be a part of that grief that I was going through. And it got to the point where Eugene's picture was put back on a little table in the den, almost behind a chair.
- 08.18.35 And that's, I began to see that I, I, I had not, I had not fallen back in love with this man. It was a convenience at the time. Uh, I did have to move out of my apartment, and it just so happened that this came along and, and it was Ok.
- 08.19.03 And I thought it was, it would be Ok. But I discovered that when I got stronger and was starting to make my own decisions, they didn't like it. Because they were very controlling people. And it came to a point that I said I had, I can't do this.
- 08.19.32 I have to leave, and I found another apartment. So during that six month period, I just, I just feel that you know, you hit the hold button on grief and caring and pain. Because other things were being taken care of.
- 08.20.01 (CLEARS THROAT) And so it wasn't until I moved out of there and moved back into my own apartment that I started to really get in touch with that pain and that grief. Uh, and I don't, I don't have anything bad to say about them.
- 08.20.31 They, they're really nice people, very nice people. But they had plans that I didn't, I couldn't go that way. I just couldn't go that way. And there was no sense of me living in a situation like that. Uh, and so I uh, like I say, I just feel that during that period of time, uh, I wasn't (?)

08.21.03 I wasn't in touch at all, well, I shouldn't say at all, but I, there was no way I could, I could let it out. Because it just wasn't acceptable. There were a couple of times when I did, and I got, I heard about it, you know?

08.21.27 So uh. It was, it's like the movie *Girl, Interrupted*. There was this period of time when I just, I, and to be honest there's, there's uh, a lot of things I just simply don't remember about that six month period, because I think I was letting myself just kind of go away.

08.22.00 So that I didn't have to deal with it. After leaving there, all of my friends said to me why did you stay so long? We saw it, you know, at the very beginning. And I said, well, I just, it just took me that long to, to be able to navigate again, really.

08.22.29 And as I said, I'm not the navigator, but uh, to be able to, to make some choices in my life that were important. And one of those choices was that I had to be (?) to get in touch with that pain and that grief or it'll go on forever. Uh.

JW: So you have to go through it?

08.22.58 LARRY : You, you have to go through it. And you know, shortly after I moved back into the apartment uh, which was the end of July, then there was September 11th, 2002 that came up. And then being alone in the apartment. And uh, it was really overwhelming.

08.23.30 And I, I don't think I mean, if I had had that six months to (?) try to get in touch with what was going on, I maybe would have sought therapy earlier or something. Uh, well, I, I don't know what would have happened.

08.23.57 But I, I, I do know that that was six months that was uh, not wasted but six months of a mistake (LAUGHS) I think. Uh. Mistakes can be corrected, and I did that, but it, it was a high cost.

08.24.30 Uh, both physically, financially and emotionally. Uh, and it, it just, it did, it just set me back that, that far. Any healing process is, is a process. And uh, I don't remember who asked me this specifically.

08.25.05 But they said, and this is in reference to Gene being identified, this must feel like the scab has been torn off of your wound, just as you thought it was beginning to heal. And now you have to let that scab reappear and, and.

08.25.31 And uh, that's what it was like when I finally was back in my own place after that six months. It was like that, the wound had been just covered and, and not wasn't healing, nothing was happening. And then it started, it started to heal.

08.25.05 It's not there yet (LAUGHS). But uh.

JW: Did finding Gene's remains feel like the scab's been pulled off?

08.26.17 LARRY : Yeah, once again, once again. I felt, I just felt like, again, I saw that airplane hit his building.

07.26.37 And it was just, it, when I got that detective's message, it was just like somebody had taken a baseball bat and hit me in the stomach. It was (?) so intense and I was at my desk in my office.

08.27.07 And I just completely lost it. And uh, it took me about ten minutes to get myself together before I could even go tell my boss that I had to leave. Uh, today uh, like I said, was another tearing.

08.27.35 But I think (?) I think tomorrow will start the process over again. The healing. And I'm hoping that. I'm hoping that for not only for myself, but for all of the other people who have been so supportive and, and probably put their grief on hold an awful lot.

- 08.28.07 Uh. I've had people ask me uh, do you believe that people who have gone uh, will come back and talk to you?
- 08.28.32 And I said, well, that's not something I necessarily believe in. I said, I wish (?) it would happen. Uh, but I don't necessarily believe it would ever happen. And uh, there are times when I find myself just intensely not praying but just intensely wanting to talk to him.
- 08.29.06 Uh, all the years we were together, I never, Gene was never in any of my dreams. I had dreams about my family, friends, dreams about I don't know what (CLEARS THROAT).
- 08.29.34 But I never remember Gene ever appearing in one of my dreams. And I always thought that was odd, you know? I know I had, dreamt about my father and I know I dreamt things with my brothers and sisters and cousins. And why hadn't I, I never had a dream about Eugene.
- 08.29.59 Maybe because he was there. You know? I don't know. But about a month ago, and this is before Gene was identified, and I wasn't sleeping well at all. Uh, if I got four hours of sleep in any night uh, that was a lot. And never in one lump.
- 08.30.34 And I suddenly woke up about four in the morning, and I realized that Gene had just come in the door. That's all. That's all I, all the dream there was because I woke up so quickly.
- 08.31.01 And I don't know whether because (CLEARS THROAT) I saw him coming in the door, and I wanted it to be true so badly that I, it just forced me to wake up expecting him to come in the door. But I, I thought that was odd, that in those 14 years there was never a dream about him and then not too long before he was identified, he came in the door.
- 08.31.33 I, I don't uh, that may have been the actual day that they began testing the DNA, I don't know. It's be interesting to find out any correlation. But it was all right because uh, at least one time (LAUGHS) he came in the door.

- 08.31.58 I have a friend who is a Wicca, or claims to be. Said his side of the family, one side of his family is Wicca and the other side is Roman Catholic. Wicca uh, are white witches. Supposedly. And he believes that he (?) can make, bring Gene to talk to me, not that and he said not (?) he would not speak a word uh, you know?
- 08.32.38 Well, I, this sounds like séance stuff to me (LAUGHS) and I'm, I'm just not going for it, you know? But uh, he says, I think it, I think it would be a very healing process if I did, but I don't think I want to go that road.
- 08.33.01 I think if Gene wants to talk to me, he will (LAUGHS). And he, I mean, not verbally but I, I know that you know, he's, he's there. Yeah.
- JW: Any thoughts for the future?
- 08.33.28 LARRY : (LAUGHS) Well, I made my all my prearrangements for burial so (LAUGHS) that's one thought. Uh. I'd like to live closer to my kids, but I, I can't at this point, and I think even if I, when I retire, let's see I'm, I'll be 58 this year, so I've got about 7 more years, I think.
- 08.34.01 Depends on, if the social security keeps pushing it up so (LAUGHS) I may, it maybe 80 by the time I get to 65. But uh. It's,, it's just so hard. I, I look at my brother who is retired. He's 12 years older than I am. Great guy.
- 08.34.29 And uh, he and his wife, when they retired and sold their business, they bought a RV. And they just started out and they set out and, and they'd be gone for a month and then come home and then couple of months or whatever, and until she got sick uh, they did, they traveled all the time. And uh, just at the drop of a hat. Some, you know, somebody say why don't you come to you know, Reno?

- 08.35.02 Ok, we'll be there tomorrow. So I really admire that, you know, and I admire him even more now because after she died, he sold their RV, but he bought a different one. And he's going to Alaska this spring.
- 08.35.26 Well, he leaves first of June, yeah, and he's gonna be gone until the first of August. And I really admire that, just you know, take off and I would love to be able to do that. Uh. I don't know I, uh, in the future I, I want to have time to travel. Uh, it's a lot of the United States I (?) haven't seen that I'd love to see.
- 08.36.01 Uh, overseas there's uh, you know, I've never been to Italy uh, Greece. Uh, I would, I would like to have the luxury of being able to travel. But I'd always have to be grounded enough because of uh, I want to be around my kids, you know?
- 08.36.29 Or at least be able to travel to see my children. And as my grandchildren grow, you know, I don't want to be an absentee grandfather. So I'm looking (?) forward very much to uh, spending time with my grandchildren. I remember how important my grandmother and grandfather were to me.
- 08.36.57 Uh, my grandmother maybe a little more because my grandfather was busy, he's just busy. Uh, not that grandmother wasn't but (CLEARS THROAT) and she was the uh, guiding light uh, spiritually for me uh, because she was a very spiritual woman and uh, very strong Methodist.
- 08.37.30 (LAUGHS) But just uh, a delight to be around. And uh, she instilled in me uh, a great many, a great lot of who I am, I think. A great (?) my values system. And I want to be around my grandchildren and maybe pass that along. I can already see it in, in ten-year old Katie.
- 08.38.00 And I'm hoping that, and I'm not saying that that was me but I, I know that I raised my son and he raised her, so I think that that is being passed along. And I, but it want to be there to see it. So uh, I guess (LAUGHS) in the future I hope to one day be able to rock on my porch and you know, watch my grandchildren play.

08.38.33 Uh, it'd be nice if that were in Savannah or Charleston, but I don't think that's where my grandchildren are gonna be. So. I don't know. I look, I look forward to retirement, actually. But uh, like I say, that's a long ways away.

JW: Is there anything that I didn't bring you that you would like to?

08.39.19 LARRY : I really can't think of anything.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: How is Oliver?

08.40.09 LARRY : Ollie's fine (~I~) Yeah, he's in Wisconsin, so couldn't be there. Oh, Ollie is chairman of the board of Conscious Contact, which is one of the reasons I know that I got the flowers. But uh, it was just such a shock, you know? But he's doing really well. He's, he's in uh, Wisconsin probably 3 months, 3 weeks out of every month.

08.40.35 And he and his partner are building a restaurant. Well, they had a restaurant and it burned down and so they've rebuilt or they've got the shell up anyway. And uh, this is gonna be a partnership, and Conscious Contact will actually be benefiting from any profits of the restaurant.

08.41.00 Uh, since we are a not-for-profit organization, you know, that money will then be funneled immediately. We, we give scholarships to people to go to camp, and things like that. Uh, particularly a children with HIV. We have uh, a young teenager on the board (?) he's 18, 19 now maybe. Uh, but he founded a camp for children with HIV.

08.41.31 And for a, for two weeks in the summer he and his mother, she runs the girls' side and he runs the boys' side, and they take these kids to camp. And Conscious Contact helps provide nap sacks and sleeping bags and all of these things. And these are mostly kids from the inner

city, you know? Who probably have never been you know, in a camping situation before anyway. And then they get to keep all of this stuff every year.

08.42.04 So uh, and I, that's where my, I mean, there are a lot of other activities we do uh, but or support, I mean. Because we don't actually do them, we just support them. Uh, but that's my bent is that you know, I'm more inclined to being aligned with Justin and, and the kids' camp than uh, say the poetry section that we support as well.

08.42.38 So it's just, you know, but uh, it's, it's a good organization. And uh, Ollie, I don't know how (?) he does it, how he keeps things straight (LAUGHS). But uh, he's uh, and, and he was there for me uh, oh, I forgot to tell you.

08.43.01 He, the night I called him about the identification, and he came over within, by the time I got home, I'd say a half an hour. He was there. Uh, so he's, he's uh, doing well and, and he's trying to get me to go where, where does he want to go?

08.43.33 Is it called Biltmore, the big Vanderbilt estate in North Carolina?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

08.43.50 LARRY : In September. For a couple of days. And uh, since I have this trip to Oregon and everything, uh, I'm not sure I'm gonna be able to go, but.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

08.44.16 LARRY : (MID-STATEMENT) the city uh, normally sends me notices when anything's going on, but I haven't heard anything about uh, plans for this year. I, I think uh, you know, this year it may just be quiet.

08.44.32 Uh, I don't know. I don't know whether he, Bloomberg, plans to mark that day or not, with the city deficit (LAUGHS). I don't know if he can afford it. But he wants to throw a party

for the, or a parade in the Canyon of Heroes for soldiers coming back from Iraq. I don't know how he's gonna afford that, either.

08.44.59 But uh. Yeah, I (CLEARS THROAT) I wanted to be here on the 11th. I, I specifically didn't plan my trip so that it would interfere with that. Uh, I don't, I don't know what I'll do, but. (~I~) It is. Uh, I'll, I'll be, go down to Ground Zero at least you know, whether there's a ceremony or not.

08.45.34 Uh, I don't know why. You know? Uh, I've always felt that you should celebrate people's birthdays not their death date. And I find that my, I've changed my mind a lot about that. Not that you celebrate it.

08.46.59 But I think that uh, remembering the day of their death is, is almost as important as their birth. So for a while, September 11th will be important.

08.46.37 And I'll look forward to it. (LAUGHS) But I think it'll be OK. The.

08.46.59 Gene will be laid to rest before then, and uh, so I think uh, I'll be able to handle September 11th a lot better than I did last year.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

08.48.24 END OF TAPE