

TAPE # LC19
Larry Courtney, 05.29.05 San Jose, California
Jim Whittaker, Producer
PROJECT REBIRTH

19.01.03 PICTURE UP - B ROLL, WHITE BALANCE

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW : How are you doing?

19.02.49 LARRY COURTNEY : Very well.

JW : Can we go back in time to the day of our last interview in New York?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

19.03.53 LARRY COURTNEY : (MID-STATEMENT) I know we spent some time together in (?) and uh, I had just moved into uh, a different apartment. And uh, I wasn't quite sure what I was expecting uh, of that time. And uh, I was a little emotional. Uh, about being uh, totally on my own again, as I had been living in Harlem with uh, Wolman and her son for a short while.

19.04.39 And then I was suddenly gonna be on my own again, you know? And uh.

JW : Had it been quite a while?

19.04.50 LARRY COURTNEY : Yeah. uh, well, yeah. 'Cos I moved in with them in February and uh, this was July, I guess. So about 6 months. And uh, I was, I was actually anxious to be on my own again, but I had no idea what it was going to be like. And so I was kind of uh, that day those things were running through my mind of what uh, what to, to expect from you know, the next 6 months, or the next year. And uh, it really wasn't bad.

JW : (?) Oliver was there?

- 19.05.44 LARRY COURTNEY : Yeah uh, Ollie came over to help me, you know, put things away and change things uh, unpack, which is always a hassle. But uh, uh, I'm one of these people that it can't stand to have boxes unpacked.
- 19.06.07 I have to get a, unpacked, put away, the pictures hung, you know, all of that as just as soon as possible. So I think within about a week and a half, two weeks, I had everything unpacked that I could. And I didn't have to store. So uh, and just tried to get you know, get back to a normal lifestyle.
- 19.06.37 I don't know if there is a normal lifestyle in New York, but uh, just, just to uh, put things in order uh, my way. You know? When I was uh, up in Harlem I was you know, had other people to contend with you know, if I and so, moving back into that apartment, you know, I could put the bookshelves where I wanted them, I could put hanging pictures where I wanted them, and really make it you know, my place again.
- 19.07.35 So uh, that day was kind of, as I had, I had to go to work the next day. And uh, you know, all (?) start uh, from a new angle. But uh, (?) it was good. It was uh, you know, it was a good, good feeling to, to be able to start again.

JW : You were there for how long?

- 19.07.55 LARRY COURTNEY : I was there a year and a half, a year and three quarters almost. Yeah. 'Cos I left, I moved back into the apartment at the end of July, and then I left in March of the, the second year. So, and uh, I made some new friends while I was there and uh, there were some new people on the floor that I you know, that it didn't know before.
- 19.08.30 And uh, Just friends out and about, I guess. And uh, at one point I uh, which I made another mistake in my life (LAUGHS) Uh. I took in a homeless person. And who was living in a shelter. And we met through some mutual friends.
- 19.08.59 And it was to be for you know, a short period of time, until he could get a (CLEAR S THROAT) excuse me, find a job. And uh, get his own place and that kind of thing. But he

ddn't look for a job once he moved in. Uh, (?) he moved in with his little bag. That's all he had. And uh, he didn't look for a job, and he just stayed on my computer all the time.

19.09.32 And uh, it finally got just to be distrucive to me. And uh, he, eh was just uh, just using me, basically. And uh, so that had to end. But and I feel guilty about you know, him having to go back out on the street or in a shelter, but uh, you know, there's no way I could take careo f him, you know?

19.10.04 So. And that was uh, that was an interesting time period. So.

JW : What do you mean interesting?

19.10.06 LARRY COURTNEY : Oh, I learned things about uh, homeless people and the streets of New York, and uh, attitudes. He, he was a young uh, street hustler, basically. And uh, you know, I didn't know about all this these things that go on in New York City.

19.10.41 Uh, or on the street. Uh, I didn't know about how dangerous the shelters can be. Uh, and really what few programs there are available to the homeless. But uh, and, and how volatile people can be. Uh, he actually uh, attacked me uh, at the end.

19.11.01 And I had to have the police come and take him away. And uh, so that was that. But uh, it was, it was a learning experience, you know?

19.11.32 During that time period uh, we started, he was also a very interested in the uh, Howard Dean campaign, and so during that time period, we started working on the Howard Dean campaign.

JW : What about that? How did you get involved in that?

19.11.52 LARRY COURTNEY : I (CLEARS THROAT) heard him I can't remember where he was speaking but it was, it was just as he was opening his campaign. And I was very impressed, very impressed. And uh, I was having such a problem with uh, us having gone into Iraq. And with President Bush in general.

19.12.26 And uh, what I heard from Howard Dean I thought was hope. And uh, so I found out that there was a fellow at, at Columbia University who was setting up a uh, group for Dean to uh, help do whatever we could do. And so I started attending his meetings.

- 19.12.57 And became very involved, I became the treasurer of the, of our group. And uh, we (?) named ourselves NYC for Dean. And I bought the web site. And we got the website set up and running and then uh, that was part of my contribution. And then uh, Dean came to New York for a rally. (COUGHS)
- 19.13.30 And uh, at Bryant Park. And so I went to the rally. And I was just terrifically impressed with what he said about education, and health care. And a lot of people thought that I was involved because he had signed the bill for civil unions in Vermont, and that he had a sort of a pro-gay stance.
- 19.14.00 And that, that's not true at all. I mean, he was not anti-gay. But he was basically the spiel was went through the uh, legislature of Vermont, and he basically just sort of had to sign it. But uh, but I was impressed, like I said, with his education and health care uh, and, and inclusion.
- 19.14.31 Uh, which is something I didn't feel that the Republican party was doing. I felt that they were a party of exclusion. And uh, so I liked what you know, what Dean stood for and what he was fighting for. And I supported him 100%, and I bought buttons and tee shirts and hats and distributed them and we did voter registration, we did fund raisers.
- 19.15.06 Uh, anything that, that we could do to get, get his message out. Uh, unfortunately it didn't work. So but I would, I would support him again if he ran again. And now he's chairman of the Democratic Party or the Democratic National Committee actually, so I don't know what he'll do. But.
- JW : Is the part of Gene that's in you coming out evidenced in the Howard Dean support?
- 19.16.37 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I think that uh, it started, really, with uh, Lambda and with my fight for the worker's comp benefits. Uh, I had never done a television interview before or you know, uh, anything like that. And uh, suddenly it was just uh, you were pushed into that 15 minutes of fame kind of thing.
- 19.17.02 And uh, so I, that was the beginning of it, and then Dean was just like an extension of that. And uh, but it, it felt good to uh, be really pro-active, instead of just kind of following along which I uh, with Gene, that's what you did (LAUGHS).
- 19.17.34 You know, he was just out there in front all the time, so. But uh, it felt good, and uh, even though after Dean's campaign and, and I moved, I moved right at the very end of the

campaign, and uh, getting here and, and has kind of well, I, I just haven't gotten into anything here.

19.18.08 Like I (STUTTER) think I will. Uh, and I didn't have really time to be involved in the, in the gubernatorial recall here. But uh, I think that (?) you know I feel very strongly that I'll go that direction. I'll be more involved in, in uh, politics, not that I want, you know, and to just, just in helping uh, but uh, it's just uh, I don't (?) want to just sit around and let everybody else do it anymore, you know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW : Why did you leave?

19.19.51 LARRY COURTNEY : Actually it was uh, it was a boom thing. Uh, in July of 2003, yeah, I get my years mixed up uh, I came to California to see my new grandson who was born in, in May. And I came in July, because I figured they needed some time to kind of adjust to the baby situation and what not.

19.20.24 And uh, so I spent, I spent a week in San Jose with my daughter who, who has moved here about uh, 5 years ago, I think. And then I went up to the Lake Tahoe area to stay with uh, my son and his wife and their baby. And Heather, my daughter, went with me. And oh, and, and my son from Maryland flew in just before we left, and so we (?) the three of us went up together.

19.21.07 And you know, it was this getting acquainted with the new grandson and you know, and he is so adorable. And uh, one evening, the uh, three of us, four of us uh, all three children and myself and my son's wife was there.

19.21.30 Uh, we got to talking. And uh, they, they were saying why, you know, why are you staying in New York? You know, we live clear out here on the uh, the west coast. And you know, you're gonna want to see the baby and all of that.

19.21.58 And uh, so anyway we had this long, lengthy conversation. And I said, maybe you're right. You know, why am I staying in New York now? I have a job, but uh, there's nothing really there for me in New York except (?) I have my friends. (CLEARS THROAT) But uh, so we talked about it quite a bit.

19.22.31 And uh, we finally came up with what we called our two-year plan. That by the end of two years, I would be living in California and my son in Maryland would also be living in California. And I remember distinctly Heather saying, Dad, I didn't think we would ever get you to leave New York.

19.22.58 And my response to that was, well, thinking about it really seriously thinking about it, New York was Gene's town. You know, it was very active, very you know, a lot of theater, a lot of you know, it was uh, although I (?) really enjoyed that myself. But it was really Gene's town. It was his kind of place. And uh.

JW : But you brought him up there?

19.23.30 LARRY COURTNEY : I did, I did. And uh, 'cos he grew up in DC. Uh, I somehow I think that he would have found his way to New York one way or another with, with or without me. But uh, so I, I decided that uh, I'd rather be closer to my kids. And uh, instead of waiting two years, I actually made it in less than a year. Uh.

JW : It was just a few months?

19.24.08 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, we had the meeting uh, or this discussion in July. And then I actually made the move uh, the end of March uh, the following, you know, the next spring. Uh, and it was faster than I expected, yeah. But uh, I just had kind of, I kind of worked things out you know, look at my budget, look at my finances.

19.24.35 Uh, can I do this, when can I do it? You know, do I need to work for another two years and then go, or? And it just, it was just more important for me to, to be around the kids and uh, you know, I'll (?) be 60 this year, and it's not, you know, I don't want to miss out (CLEAR'S THROAT) on Gareth's childhood the way I missed out on my granddaughter's.

19.25.09 And she only lived 4 hours away but uh, with their schedules and my schedules while I was there in New York uh, although we saw her quite a lot, but not as much as I would have wanted. And certainly not as much as I've seen, you know, with my grandson.

19.25.28 Uh, but it was, it was a move that uh, I think was just needed to be made. And uh, I don't look back at it. I don't miss New York. Uh, there are times when I think about oh, this new,

new play is opening or a new musical is opening and I'd like to be there for that. Or my friends in New York uh, but the lifestyle I don't miss at all.

19.26.01 I don't miss the frantic running and pushing and you know, the subways and uh, well, the subways I kind of miss (LAUGHS). 'Cos they're so convenient. But uh, it's, after September 11th uh, something happened to me in that (CLEARS THROAT) I just can't be in a hurry anymore.

19.26.36 It just, you know, people like you go to a doctor's office and, and you have an appointment at 3 o'clock and the doctor doesn't really see you until 3:45. You know it doesn't bother me anymore. I just am not in a hurry. It just and this lifestyle out here is much slower-paced.

19.27.01 Uh, I like walking into a grocery store out here and somebody saying hi, can I help you or did you fid everything you needed or whatever. That's not, you don't get that in New York, you know? Uh, I, I'm really glad I made the move, really glad. And like you said, when the last time we talked uh, I planned to say in, in New York.

19.27.30 That was but uh, you know, part, the real turning point I think was just seeing my grandson and realizing that I didn't want to spend years away from him. And uh, so uh, I, I just made the move much faster than I expected. You know, and I had worked it at the company in New York for 16 years.

19.28.01 So I think it was time to uh, do something else.

JW : What was your thinking on your last day there, even though you were in the heart of New York?

19.29.03 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh, ok, about missing. No I can say occasionally uh, a show opening or I'll see something on, on television about (?) what's going in New York, whatever. You know, I I'm anxious about Ground Zero and how the progress about that.

19.29.26 But uh, having just lived her uh, in a little over a year uh, and not really having, having been here very much in that year but uh, I just am, I really enjoy the quiet. You know, I uh, living on 42nd and 8th, and it was never quiet, never.

19.29.55 And uh, it was an old apartment building uh, with old windows and so you, you heard the sounds of the, the taxis and the fire engines and everything. Here my apartment faces a courtyard, it's quiet. Uh, and I just, I really just feel the, the pace. I mean, if I walk down the

street, I'm not in the middle of you know, a herd that's just trampling along to get to wherever they have to be.

19.30.30 Uh, and now I drive my car to the grocery store instead of walking. Or uh, or, or I take the car instead of taking the subway. Uh, the subways were convenient, I must admit, but uh, (CLEARS THROAT) uh, as for going back, no I don't think so. I don't.

19.30.59 I never say never. Because (?) after the move I made here, which I didn't expect to make uh, but I can't see myself uh, moving back to New York. I, I'm I like the pace here. And I, frankly I don't think I can keep up with this you know, the herd mentality in New York. It just is uh, too much.

19.31.35 So I don't, I can't imagine myself going back, but like I say, I never saw never.

JW : What has happened since you've left?

LARRY COURTNEY : I have. When I first got here, I got here in uh, (~JW~)

JW : What about the trip out here?

19.32.05 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I didn't at first I didn't. I, when I left New York in my car, I drove up to Connecticut, and I left my car there because I didn't know what to expect out here. And I uh, I also wanted to drive across country in nice weather uh, what I thought was going to be nice weather, later in the year than in March.

19.32.32 Or April. And my daughter was getting married uh, the end uh, of May. So I wanted to get out here and kind of see what I could do to, to help them and to get established and what not. And uh, so I came out and I flew out from Connecticut uh, actually from JFK in uh, April.

19.33.01 And uh, I found my apartment and uh, actually had my furniture delivered on the 15th of April on uh, but in the meantime, I was helping uh, Heather and David with their wedding plans. And we had a lot of work to do in their backyard because they were gonna have a party in their backyard (?) uh, two days, uh, two nights before the wedding.

19.33.30 And uh, so just, just keeping really busy with the (?) you know they moved my furniture in and I knew that by the end of May I had to have that apartment in order, because I was gonna

have several people staying with me uh, so I was busy with the apartment. Then came the wedding.

- 19.33.57 And then uh, it was time to come back and uh, or go back and get my car. So I flew up to Portland, to visit with my brother for a week. And then from Portland, I flew back to, to JFK and went up to Connecticut and stayed with my cousins in Connecticut for a couple of days. And then I started the drive across country. And I uh, I said, well, I, at first when I started thinking about the drive, I thought uh, (?) it'll probably take me a month.
- 19.34.44 But uh, I just allowed myself as much time as, as I needed. It was the first time I'd ever been able to do that, you know? I mean, when you have a job that you, if you get two weeks off, and uh, even though I had, I had earned 5 weeks of vacation you know, (?) for several years, you can never take more than two weeks at a time.
- 19.35.08 So I just decided I, there are several things in this country that it have not seen. And I would like to be able to say someday that I,I saw this country you know? And so I uh, went up to Niagara Falls to start with.
- 19.35.30 And uh, stayed a couple of days in Niagara Falls. And then from there I went up to Toronto. And I'm not really sure why I went to Toronto. I just decided to go there. I heard it was a pretty city, and uh, even though it's not like uh, it's part of the USA but it's something that I wanted to see.
- 19.36.00 And then I went uh, over to uh, Wisconsin. And I stayed for a week with Ollie's partner. He, he and his mother live on a nice place in Wisconsin. And uh, Ollie was supposed to be there, but he had gotten delayed in New York and so uh, I stayed a week and then I left.
- 19.36.31 Uh, but that as, that was nice, that was very, very nice. And then I drove uh, through Wisconsin, and Michigan and on into uh, maybe I'm doing that backwards. But and uh, went over to South Dakota to see Mount Rushmore. And go through the Badlands of South Dakota.
- 19.37.00 Uh, And I drove down and, and all this time the weather was beautiful, just beautiful. Uh, then I drove down to Nebraska. And I have two sisters and a lot of family in Nebraska. And so I spent a week with uh, my sisters and my family and uh, and it rained every day. Every (LAUGHS) day, hard.
- 19.37.32 I mean, Nebraska thunderstorms are you know, I mean, you, you can expect hail at any minutes. As a matter of fact my sister (?) had just had uh, an assessment on her roof from the

last hail storm. And it'd torn off a lot of her roof. And, and uh, this, that was just like an epidemic. There was, all these roofs were just shot. Cars had big dents in them from the hail. And uh, so it rained all the time I was there.

19.38.04 And the day I left, I was gonna go uh, I was headed for Oklahoma. And uh, I had one of the worst thunderstorms I can remember uh, just so that I was actually , my car was hydroplaning because it's a little car and, and uh, but still, I mean, it was, the, the rain was coming down so hard.

19.38.32 And uh, I got into Kansas. And I just happened to tune into this radio station that was in the area. And they were giving out thunderstorm warnings with hail the size of golf balls. And tornado watch. And I thought, here I am in this little Miata, out in the middle of the flattest state in the Union. And we have you know, a thunderstorm and tornado warnings.

19.39.01 So uh, I drove through that (?) and I guess about 5 o'clock, I finally found this little town that had, had a motel. And uh, I (?) 'cos I just had been fighting the rain and everything. And so I stayed and the next day it was beautiful. Uh, didn't get the tornadoes, didn't get the hail.

19.39.30 So uh, I drove (?) down on down to Oklahoma City, and by the time I got to Oklahoma City, it was about 98 degrees. And uh, just incredibly hot. But uh, I finally found the Murray Building site, and uh, so I went through that, which was extremely emotional.

19.40.06 And uh, I just sat on one side and, and looked at the chairs for a long time, 'til I was sort of baked. And uh, so then I, I uh, I was going (~I~)

JW : What are you thinking about right now?

19.40.39 LARRY COURTNEY : Those little chairs. You know, my grandson goes to daycare. And I just think about all those children who went to daycare there. That day.

19.41.00 And uh, I thought the whole monument was really incredibly simple and very moving, but just thinking about those little chairs that they have. Uh, that was, that was hard.

19.41.26 Uh, and, you know, that, I mean, that memorial would be hard anyway because of what had happened in New York. Uh, and to think that that was the first really domestic terrorist act in the United States. Uh, it (?) kind of put, you know, kind of put the two together for me. Oklahoma and New York and Pennsylvania.

19.42.02 Uh, And uh, like I said, just those little chairs were just uh, incredibly moving, incredibly moving. (PAUSE) But uh. So I, I left.

JW : What do you mean by putting the events together?

19.42.31 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, sitting there uh, in Oklahoma, was like sitting down at Ground Zero, for me. Uh the emotion was so strong in Oklahoma. And I don't think had uh, 9-11 not happened, I don't think it would have been nearly as emotional for me to be in Oklahoma City.

19.43.14 Although as I say, those little chairs are just heartbreakers. But uh, (?) because of 9-11, and then seeing you know, this site that's just, I mean, there was a building there.

19.43.33 And uh, it just tied those two emotions together somehow. Uh, because I could, I could sit there and look at those little chairs and think about what I had, what I had seen at Ground Zero, you know, the devastation that was there.

19.43.56 And uh, it, it just, it just like I say put, I guess put things into perspective and, and you know, I, I had been so involved in what happened at 9-11 that my mind kind of would think of those 2400 people or whatever final, final count was, at Ground Zero.

19.44.24 And that's you know, that's all I kind of uh, I didn't even think about the Pentagon and Pennsylvania very much. Uh, knew it was all tied, you know, all happened the same day, but uh, I was so focused on the towers coming down and you know, and Gene not coming home that Oklahoma City was kind of like uh, I know that happened, but you know, it's not, it's not the magnitude of what happened in New York.

19.44.58 And it's not the magnitude, but it was when I was witting there it was the same magnitude. Smaller numbers, smaller area, but it was the same kind of act. And uh, you know, it was just, just so incredibly sad to think that someone would do that, you know? Uh, and, and the same rationale as uh, those people who flew the planes into the buildings.

19.45.32 I mean, how incredibly sad that somebody would do that. Uh, so I think that's what really uh, it kind of put Oklahoma in perspective for me. And uh, and it was much more powerful than I thought, than I expected it to be. I, I think that was it. I think I was uh, so, so overwhelmed.

19.46.03 And I hadn't expected it. I expected to you know, look at the, the monument that's there and have, have feelings about it, but I had, I did not expect it to be so strong. And the only reason I think it was so strong is because it was of the tie to 9-11. Uh, it, it was just uh, it just overwhelmed me much, much more than I expected.

19.46.38 Uh, I, I just hadn't kind of set my mind to that. But uh, that's pretty incredible. And I probably would never have gone to Oklahoma. If it hadn't been for 9-11 because I'd still be living in the apartment with Gene in New York, you know?

19.47.10 I doubt that had Gene lived uh, I would have ever made the decision to come to California, because I don't think he would have wanted to come. Uh, that, at least not yet, you know. Uh, maybe when we got older and uh, but if he had lived I, I think that we would, I would still be in New York. But uh. (PAUSE) Yeah, I know we would (LAUGHS).

19.48.11 END OF TAPE # LC19

20.01.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW : Where did you go next?

20.01.00 LARRY COURTNEY : Ok, after Oklahoma I had planned to go down to Texas. And visit uh, my ex-in-laws. I had seen them at the wedding, my daughter's wedding. And they had invited me down. And so I planned to do that and then go all the way down to uh, the almost the very tip of Texas, down at South Padre Island, 'cos I have some very good friends down there.

20.02.01 And, uh, his wife's not, not doing well. And so I thought I'd go down and see her. But I with all the remain that (STUMBLE) I had encountered in Kansas and everywhere and I was hearing on the radio that there was all this flooding in Texas and you know, Houston had floods and Dallas had floods. And I thought, well, I'm, I'm just not gonna do that. I'm not gonna take that chance.

- 20.02.31 So I headed west from Oklahoma. And uh, went through New Mexico and Arizona. And uh, I wanted to see the Hoover Dam. And uh, I even thought about stopping in, in Las Vegas for a couple days.
- 20.03.01 But I decided that uh, I really would rather just get back up to Lake Tahoe to see my grandson again. So uh, I drove through the Nevada desert, I don't know whether that's the Mohave or what it is, but I've never seen anything so desolate in my life. (?) they didn't even have sage brush. Just, it was just incredibly desolate.
- 20.03.28 And I spent a whole day driving through that, but then I got to Lake Tahoe and , and spent another week with the family up there. And then came back to San Jose to kind of start my life. But uh, uh, I've ended up traveling quite a bit. I, I go to Tahoe at least probably every other month and spend a week or 7 days sometimes up there.
- 20.04.00 And uh, and I sort of got trapped up there at Christmas time 'Cos we had 10 feet of snow, so I spent an extra week up there that I hadn't expected. And uh, then after Christmas I came back to uh, San Jose.
- 20.04.27 And my brother came down with his Viand and we took off again for the deserts of Arizona and California. And we spent about 5 ½ maybe 6 weeks just traveling. I had a sister who lived in Yuma and we spent uh, about 5 days with her. But then we just went through the deserts and the Indian ruins and uh, Biosphere 2.
- 20.05.00 Just anything that kind of caught our eye that we wanted to see. Uh, my brother had been to some of these places before, but uh, uh, he was amazed because the desert was totally green they'd had so much rain there. That all the deserts were green and flowers and uh. So I, I really enjoyed that trip. And uh, again (~I~)

JW: You really did like that trip.

LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, I did.

JW: What about the trip was different?

- 20.05.36 LARRY COURTNEY: well, that's, what as part of it. Uh, one of the things I didn't mention about the drive across the United States which I had anticipated you know, since I

finally decided to, to do this, and I had so looked forward to seeing all of these things. But when you're by yourself, and you see something like Niagara Falls.

20.06.02 You see it's beautiful and you know, and then you see it at night with the lights it and everything, and you want to turn to somebody and say isn't that gorgeous or you know, and talk about it and uh, Mount Rushmore, is it as majestic as you thought it was gonna be and but seeing all that by myself, it was OK. It, it's nice, you know, that's pretty. Uh, and with no conversation.

20.06.30 Whereas the trip (STUMBLE) to Arizona my brother and I sitting you know, in the front seats of, of this big RV and talking about everything we saw. And uh, and too, reconnecting with him. His wife died two weeks after Gene. She had cancer. And uh, so it (?) was a really reconnection with him. And uh, which was really good, really good. Uh.

JW: What were the highlights?

20.07.12 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, yeah uh, well, we, we uh, toured the uh, ruins of Casa Grande, the uh, Hohokam Indians. Uh, who lived there until about uh, uh, they estimate about 1450.

20.07.35 And then they just suddenly disappeared, like the Pueblo people. Uh, and he and I both had such interest in this ruins because it was just, it was mud slapped together that was still standing after, you know, and , and they're still excavating they have, they think there's another floor down below what they, the level they are.

20.08.03 But uh, I don't know uh, it was just, it was really uh, almost a spiritual moment because uh, the, the way they had built, it was a 5-story building. Uh, made of mud. You know? And uh, it wasn't even adobe brick. This is just big splotches of mud pressed on and, you know, let dry and then another coat of mud and another coat of mud.

20.08.34 And uh, to see how they uh, did their agriculture and everything but everything about this building was built uh, like the pyramids or, or you know, some ancient cultures that uh, if you looked through a window, the only it was the only place you could look and it was uh, it pointed to like the uh, north star.

20.09.04 Or I mean, there was just, they had all this uh, astronomy going on in the construction of this building. It was place just so and uh, it was fascinating that these people built this uh, so

many years ago. Uh, I'm, I like history anyway. And, uh, just to see that, you know, and, and my brother was just as excited about it as I was, which was great.

20.10.04 And uh, so it was uh, I, I think that was really a highlight. I mean, now we talk on the phone about once a week. And we (?) didn't do that before. I mean, with talked maybe every couple of months or something. But just to find out what, what's going on in his life and, and uh, uh, so I, I mean, he's 11 years older than I am.

20.10.32 And so I was kind of the little kid. As he was growing up. But uh, to be able to, to really reconnect like that. Uh, uh, I just discovered that family is so important. I mean, I always love, loved my family and, and everything. But uh, it is just so important. And uh, I have my youngest brother.

20.11.01 We're more or less estranged only because I have no idea where he is. You know? He's just kind of, he works on construction and he's kind of a drifter, and I never hear from him and I have no idea where he is. And so to be able to reconnect with my older brother in this way it really, it really means a lot. And then to see the, my family on my trip and whatever uh, it is it (?) I think that that's uh, that was the best thing about the trip.

20.11.34 And I mean, just, just to ride along and , and we talked all the time. You know, and I was a little hesitant to go with him. Because we have different political views. And he's very outright with what he thinks is right or wrong. You know, where I kind of have to look and say well, maybe. But he's very definite. You know, what he knows is right and that's all.

20.12.07 But uh, but it was amazing. We got, we never had an argument about anything uh, and uh, but we, we talked and , and it was really, it was really an exceptional time, I thought. You know?

JW: How would you describe visiting him after September 11th?

20:12:42 LARRY COURTNEY: Yep. We went uh, again in his RV uh, we went over to the beach for a couple of days while I was visiting him in there.

20.12.57 And uh, the RV had just like one queen-sized bed 'cos it had been you know, just his wife and him that traveled in it. And uh, I remember we parked uh, like at 6 o'clock or whatever and we went, we went some place to eat dinner, and then we parked in this RV park. And we played dominoes and then uh, we went to bed.

20.13.27 And that as the first night since September 11th that I slept through the night. Uh, and he said the same thing. That it was a first night since his wife had died that he slept through the night. And I am positive that it was because there was another person in that bed that you could hear breathing, you know? Uh, and I, after that visit and I went back to New York.

20.14.02 I uh, the sleepless nights were back. But that sleeping in that bed with somebody else you know, and, and on this trip, this last trip uh, we did the same thing. We had the queen-sized bed. And uh, I slept very well. We never woke up the whole night. And normally I'm awake 2 or 3, 4 times a night. But uh, (?) I just think it's that. You know?

JW : What about the first day you arrived here?

20.15.34 LARRY COURTNEY : Now I, it as, it's really funny because uh, non of that time was I scared. I was anticipating, yeah, but I wasn't scared or nervous about it, and which I don't normally a new situations will get me a little unbalanced. But uh, I arrived and it was like uh, a sense of relief.

20.16.04 I had enjoyed the trip, I had enjoyed the preparation of getting there and doing all of that. But it as like a sense of relief and I don't know why, but it was like I'm home. You know, I, I this is, I just felt I was at home.

20.16.29 This, this is where I was supposed to be and, and uh, it was just very nice to, you know, be in my apartment. Be able to have my kids over for dinner. Uh, just, it was just a real feeling of peace and, and being at home, being where I was supposed to be. Uh, I didn't expect that to happen you know, so soon or you know, I thought it would take me a little while to kind of get used to the idea of California living.

20.17.05 But uh, I really, really enjoyed it. You know, it, it's been much better than I anticipated. Uh, so I just uh, you know, I just like I say I just feel at home. This is, this is it. At least for now (LAUGHS).

JW : What (?)

20.17.32 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I just uh, I don't know, I traveling again with Elden with that trip and everything and, and seeing you know, Pheonix and wherever we went. And uh, then coming back to San Joe uh, again for a second time uh, after a long trip.

- 20.17.58 Uh, it was (?) was just a relief and, and Ok, I can relax here. You know, I can, I can begin to build my life uh, whatever that means. Uh, and, and uh, it's gonna be interesting to do it here. You know? To start basically start over again.
- 20.18.33 Uh, and I haven't really done anything to uh, to speak of to, to accomplish that goal, to accomplish this new start. Uh, and I had kind of given myself a time line that I knew this, this week, this past week was coming. Uh, where we would all be together, and it was gonna be busy and a mess
- 20.19.06 And uh, so I'd kind of set my timeline as, as starting June 1st. you know, I've got to get out there and see San Jose, you know, really kind of fit into the, (?) sphere of things. And uh, begin to meet people uh.
- 20.19.29 And right now my daughter and son-in-law are really the only people in San Jose that it know. And uh, there's the (?) (STOPS) Anyway, the DeFrank Center. Which is the uh, gay center of San Jose. It's only 2, w blocks from my house, and so I've decided to go and see if there's, there are programs. 'cos they're very active in the community.
- 20.20.03 See if there are programs where you can you know, maybe volunteer or, or meet uh, people and uh, I know they have discussion groups and things like that. And uh, it's time to you know, make an effort to make some, some friends here, you know? I love to cook. I love to be able to have somebody come over for dinner. You know?
- 20.20.29 Uh, or, or go to a movie together, you know, just anything. Uh, and not that I'm you know just terribly lonely. Uh, a little lonely, but not terribly lonely. And uh, it's be nice to kind of have a (?) a real nice group of friends in New York, you know, and I would like to have you know, be able to say I can do that her in, in San Jose.

JW : What's been the thing that has kind of kept you from doing that?

- 20.21.17 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, partly the travel. And partly the kids. Uh, I've kind of put my life on hold to make sure that theirs is, their, Heather and David go started well.
- 20.21.35 And that Pat and Lahr are doing well in lake Tahoe. And uh, I realized that when uh, I knew that I was uh, they were coming down for this week. Because of all the birthdays and anniversaries and what not. And celebrate them altogether.

- 20.22.00 And then Laura asked me, she called and asked me if I could come up the week before. And stay with them. And help Patrick uh, build this or ort of child-proof their deck. 'cos they had moved into a new house and now that the snow has melted on the deck, they can the uh, railings are about almost a foot apart.
- 20.22.32 And so uh, their 2-year old could go right through those. And there's quite a fall. I, I mean it's half a story, which is not too much for us but for a 2-year old, it could be really bad. And so uh, I went up and we did some you know, we built, I bought some lattice work and we put lattice work all around the deck.
- 20.23.01 And then built gates so that he couldn't go out the other side. And but I realized when I guess when she called, her, during the, during the period after she called and I finally went to Lake Tahoe, 'cos there was about a week. Uh, I kind of realized, you know, I've not done anything for myself since I've been here.
- 20.23.30 I've made time to do something for the kids. Every time they needed something uh, and I really haven't taken any time for myself or I really haven't done anything for myself. I've had time to myself, but I really hadn't done anything for myself.

JW : How do you distinguish for those two?

- 20.23.53 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, having time to do it and not do anything uh, not getting out there and, and seeing what's available or, or you know, whatever, uh, and then to, to actually do that uh, and I knew that so I, I set, like I say, I set this timeline for June 1st. As of June 1st, Larry is going to be in the community doing what he can uh, maybe getting involved in, in another political uh, situation.
- 20.24.33 Uh, uh, I've decided to look for a job uh, maybe even part time, or uh, build up a, a consulting business with you know, some accounting clients or whatever. And uh, but I've got to do something for me now.
- 20.24.54 And uh, doing all of these things, like I say is gonna build a, hopefully a network of people that uh, I will come, come to know as friends in San Jose. And uh, you know, it's kind of like uh, it's time to get up off the couch and you know, and do things. And uh, I think that uh, I've had a couple of bouts of flu uh, I don't know that they (?) was flue.

20.25.34 But I, I just bad colds or whatever, and I think part of that is, is that I just wasn't doing anything. You know? And I'm not sure that uh, I was a little depressed and so (~I~) Well, when you, you know, when you go home to an empty house uh, every night uh, every day uh, it can be depressing.

20.26.04 Lonely. Like I said, I'm not too lonely, I'm not so lonely that you know, I'm desperate. But uh, once in awhile it, it gets you know, you notice it, it's quiet. It's you know, and uh, you feel that.

JW : How is the awareness of feeling that?

20.26.41 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh, Well, I think what I actually did become aware of it uh, was after I got back from the trip with my brother. And I had that's when I had the worst bout of flu or whatever, bad cold.

20.27.03 Uh, and it affected my equilibrium, and it took about a month to get that back. And I was in bed for two weeks.

JW : You had a hard time walking?

20.27.18 LARRY COURTNEY : Yeah. I just I, I guess it affected my inner ear, because uh, I could make too quick a turn and I'd fall. I, I just couldn't catch my balance.

20.27.30 And it took about a month to get that back, to reestablish it. But (COUGHS)

JW : That must be scary?

LARRY COURTNEY : Oh, yeah, it is. Well, I (?) you know, I, I called my doctor and talked to him about it. And uh, he said that uh, he believed it was the inner ear also and that it would right itself out. But uh, but during that time, uh, I stayed in the house pretty much.

20.28.04 Because I was afraid to uh, you know, fall on the street or, and when I walked I looked like a drunk because I just weaved. So uh, and the only person I saw during that about 6 weeks was Heather and David, my daughter and son-in-law. And uh, you know, they would come check on me and do that kind of thing.

20.28.31 And it, it was really sweet. But I just realized that man, I've been here uh, almost a year uh, at that time I'd been here almost a year. And those are the only people in my life, you know, my children. Which is great, I love it. But you know, you can't.

JW : It's a different kind of relationship?

20.28.56 LARRY COURTNEY : Oh, yeah, it is, you know, and, and like I say, I we have a great time with Heather and David. We play dominoes we you know, have dinner together quite often and everything. But uh, I, I realizes then that you know, you've got to have something more than that. You've got to have like I say somebody to go to the movies with or, uh, somebody to go out to dinner with or whatever. Uh, or somebody just to come over to play cards or you know, you go to their place or whatever.

20.29.27 But uh, it is a different relationship and it's uh, so (?) that really hit it home is that, that six-week period when I was really alone you know? And uh, so I decided that that has to change. And I let it happen, you know? Uh, I don't regret you know, anything that, that I do with the kids 'cos uh, it's so fun.

20.29.59 But uh, at the same time, you know, I just let my life kind of slip away. And put it on hold or something. And, and uh, it's time to you know, do something about it.

JW : What do you think is the root of that situation?

20.30.50 LARRY COURTNEY : I really didn't, haven't given it a great deal of thought, but I, you know, with you bringing it up uh, I think that part of it was the change from New York to here. And part of it was uh, bad experiences with the people that I stayed with in Harlem. And the guy that I tried to help in New York. So that I kind of uh, unconsciously withdrew.

20.31.27 You know, I can live in my little shell and, and nobody'll hurt me in my shell and, and that's good, you know? Uh, you don't have to take any chances uh, living in a shell, you know? And uh, unconsciously that's what I've been doing is just withdrawing and, and uh, probably when it gets right down to it, I've been using the kids as uh, a shield from the world, you know?

- 20.32.02 Uh, 'cos that's been my excuse oh, I can't do this because I have to do this with the kids. You know? So, uh, when I was thinking about it and, and deciding that as of June 1st something has to be done about it, you know, I'll let these, these weeks go by 'cos you know, these are plans, weeks and everything.
- 20.32.26 But uh, it, it's time to come out of that shell and to, to uh, life is, is exposing yourself to risks as well as you know, joys and uh, I guess it's time to, to take some risks, you know? Do something different. So or, or maybe do something the same but do it, you know? Get involved with something.
- 20.33.58 And uh, so I, I kind of think that that's you know, that's breaking out of that shell is what, the best analogy I can come up with. You know?
- JW : Did the events of 9-11 and its concurrent shock to the system affect your relationships?
- 20.34.07 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I definitely thing that uh, the, you know, 911 and (CLEARS THROAT) the two subsequent you know, misadventures uh, with people made me withdraw and uh, as long as I was in New York, I still had these friends that you know.
- 20.34.34 Ollie was there and he's uh, you know, we're very close and, and uh, I still had these friends, but still I was you know, once I went into my apartment and closed the door that was, it was it. And uh, and I think that yeah, those, the disasters, I guess, in my life of, of in the past 3 years
- 20.35.37 Uh, did make me distrust a little. I always had faith in people. I always, always did. And people used to tell me I'm just too much of an optimist. But I always figured you know, somewhere there's some good in everybody. And uh, then having gone through those things and , in the last 3 years uh.
- 20.35.37 I kind of, I did become a little more cynical. And uh, that's when uh, that was part of the realization that I was uh, I had turned so far inward that uh, you know, I needed to change that. And I just needed to change that.
- 20.36.02 And uh, I don't know that it was, it was conscientious on my part as to you know, beginning to distrust people or anything. But uh, I know that it was a conscious decision to change it. And uh, hopefully you know, I'll be able to restore this, this faith in people that, that there is you know.

20.36.36 Uh, there is goodness in everybody. And just because you've had a couple of bad incidents in your life doesn't mean you can't have a, have a very happy life in the (?) I look at my brother uh, (CLEARS THROAT) whose gone through several things, the same as I.

20.37.01 And uh, you know, he's, he's putting himself back together very well, and he's, he's older than I am and he's you know, but uh. I think that, that uh, just getting out there is, I just go to make myself do it, that's all.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW : I this part of the human process, and where are you in it?

20.38.06 LARRY COURTNEY : You know, hoping may be better than healing. Uh, (~I~) coping, yeah. Uh. I, I just think that you know, like I said. (~I~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

20.38.36 LARRY COURTNEY : Kind of my uh, my decision you know, or my realization that I had put myself into this shell uh, is definitely a uh, hopeful situation uh, if uh, for me it means ok, you (?) do put yourself out there.

20.39.01 And uh, you know, not, not being the, the front-runner for most of my life, uh, I realized that I have to kind of get back this energy that I had uh, when I was fighting for the, you know, worker's comp or uh, and when I was working on the campaign.

20.39.34 Uh, and that, that had a lot of joy in it, you know, (?) I mean, I really worked hard on both of those things. And it made me feel much more hopeful, yeah. And uh, since then I've just, you know, I've not been doing that. And uh, so I think that is definitely a part of, of uh, moving on.

20.40.06 Uh, you know, I, I mentioned to you earlier that I had been awake several times during the night, and for some reason I was thinking about healing. And people saying you have to put closure to this. You have to uh, and I mentioned that I don't believe in the word closure.

20.40.33 It doesn't exist for me. But I kind of thought that when you're wounded uh, I, I just had to use the physical analogy of being wounded and what happens is a scab covers the wound.

- 20.41.02 The wound is still there, but the scab covers it for awhile. And then when it's gone, the wound is still there, but it's now a scar. And it still hurts. And I think that that hurt never goes away.
- 20.41.32 I remember my grandfather. He had uh, cut off uh, tips of several fingers uh, when he was young uh, chopping wood or whatever he was doing. And he used to tell me that he could still feel the pain in the tips of his fingers, not where the stubs were, but out on the end of his fingers.
- 20.42.05 He said, I can still feel the end of my fingers hurting. And it always sounded silly to me. You know? But uh, a wound like that is, is it's going to always hurt. Always hurt. It may get less intense. Uh, you may be able to deal with it and handle it better.
- 20.42.33 But it is always going to hurt. Uh, and I hadn't thought of it that way before, you know? Uh, you can move on, but it's always gonna hurt.

JW : Did you think about that last night?

- 20.43.03 LARRY COURTNEY : I don't remember uh, really it being a conscious thought until last night until I was. I woke up about 2:30. And uh, I couldn't go back to sleep. And so I just sort of laid in bed and, and it just started. I just started thinking about it and I, I don't know why, 'cos I haven't really given it conscious thought. If (?) it's been there, it's been totally subconscious.
- 20.43.50 But uh, to me, it may, it finally made sense uh. Like I say I can't use the word closure because I don't know that that exists. But uh, that, that thought, that uh, you know, you, you live with wounds. (STUTTER) You go on with wounds. Uh, people coming back from Iraq, you know, missing legs and arms.
- 20.44.0 They're, they're going on with their lives, you know, but that wound's always gonna be there. So I think that uh, that's, that's kind of the best analogy of, of my life up to this point is that uh, I think maybe I'm in the scar period of that time. Where now it's, it's maybe gonna be less intense but it's going to be there, you know?
- 20.44.0 I (?) don't know, I don't know what, you know, that makes any sense to anybody else, but it does to me

JW : When do you feel it the most?

20.44.46 LARRY COURTNEY : At night. Night is the loneliest time, you know, and it's when uh, you know, I mentioned I, I wake up uh, 2, 3 times in the night.

20.45.04 And uh, (~I~) every night, yeah, sometimes uh, sometimes I can go back to sleep very quickly and other times I lay there and think about you know, did you pay this bill and you know, all of those kind of daily, mundane things. And, and uh, and a lot (?) of times, you know, I think about Gene and, and uh.

20.45.30 But also just uh, when, when something happens and you, like you're automatic reaction was I have to call my wife and tell her about this, you know, or I got to tell my wife this when I get home. And I think the same thing. I got, o, I got to tell Gene, you know, and then it hits me and those moments are like uh, you know, being hit with a tsunami.

20.46.03 You just, it's so uh, so devastating uh, just, just for a moment, just for a moment. But those, those points uh, those periods awful. But I you know, normally it's late at night. Uh, if I can't sleep.

20.46.32 END OF TAPE # LC20

21.00.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW : Is it part of the human condition to go through what you are?

21.01.43 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh. I think it is part of the human condition and, and you know, everybody has pain in their life at some point, sometime, whatever it (STUMBLE) might be.

21.02.01 Uh, when you lose a parent, you know, or a parent loses a child, something. Uh, or any, any number of I mean, there are just, you know, there's going to be pain at some point in your life. Uh, and I, I can't say that my pain or wound was or is any greater than anybody else's.

21.02.35 Uh, but I think that uh, that healing or hoping process uh, that we talked about earlier uh, is kind of cycle.

21.02.54 And I'm hoping that uh, saying in, if it were degrees like a clock, twelve being the best and I guess 6 being the very bottom, then on that clock I may be at and 8 ½ or a 9.

21.03.34 Of coming up you know, of, of getting through that, that scarring time and, and moving on. And sometimes I think that I'll ever get back to the 12.

21.04.01 Twelve was being with Gene. (PAUSE) And I think that what I'm hope will is that I'll at least reach 11. You know? I mean, I may never get to 12 again, but at least uh, get past you know.

21.04.33 That last little upswing and, and uh, and that, and that's why I think part of my decision to do something about it. To uh, I don't want to be at 6 anymore. You know?

JW : What was the lowest point for you?

21.05.10 LARRY COURTNEY : I can't pinpoint the exact time or anything. Uh. I think (STUMBLE) probably the lowest, the very lowest was uh, when this kid I was trying to help attacked me.

21.05.34 And I thought you know, you're no really good for much of anything, you can't even help somebody. And uh, it was a point that uh, I, I'm not sure it was this, it was really serious thought, but I thought that uh, if you're not any good to anybody, when are you hanging around here?

21.03.05 You know? Why don't you just do something about it. You know, take, take some pills, do something. You know? I'm too much of a chicken to throw myself off a building, but uh, and the only thing at that point that, that uh, my thoughts would then go to my children, which was good.

21.03.33 Because uh, I could not do that to my children, you know, and to my family. Uh, but the thoughts were there, you know? And it kind of surprised me because I never, I never thought that I would have you know, thoughts of doing away with myself.

21.06.59 But uh, you know, they, they went away, and uh, I actually saw a therapists for awhile while I was at the last uh, 9 months I was in New York I guess. And uh, just being able to talk to her you know, uh, kind of got me out of those, those feelings.

21.07.30 Uh. (STUTTER) I never thought I'd see a therapist either, but you know, I just thought this is not good. And uh, and I didn't really have anybody to talk to at that point, you know? I

didn't want to, I didn't want to talk to my friends about it, because I didn't want them to be worried or anything.

21.07.57 And uh, so at least you know, I, I talked to her and (?) it kind of helped me, you know uh, put things a little better in perspective and that the kids, and by this time I had made my decision to move out here. And uh, that the kids were a big help and a big support and comfort to me. So.

JW : Did you mention that to them?

21.08.25 LARRY COURTNEY : Oh, yeah, I, I tell them all the time. That uh, that you know if it hadn't been for them uh, being there and supporting me and uh, I don't know where I'd be today. You know? Uh, I (STUTTER) I think I probably have too much faith or religion or spirituality or whatever you want to call it to allow myself to do that anyway.

21.09.00 To take my own life. But uh, the kids were you know, the main support.

JW : Just contemplation?

LARRY COURTNEY : Yeah. Yeah. And uh, that's why I finally told the therapist after I decided to move out here was that I never felt so much lighter uh.

21.09.25 'Cos my kids, during that conversation in July, my kids told me things about me that I didn't remember. Or that I didn't know. Uh, and you know, they told me how much they looked up to me uh, how I had made an impact on their lives, and uh, you know, it was incredible.

21.10.00 It was just incredible. It was just like being just literally drenched in love, which uh, you know I hadn't felt that for a long time. And uh, and they (?) still do, you know? They still tell me things and how important I am in their lives and what not. And it you know, that makes you really, really appreciate things. And uh, so they, they, they know how important they are in my life and uh, I'm beginning to see how important I am to them.

21.10.37 You know? I was kind of felt like a failure with them because uh, when we were together as a family, we struggled a lot. It was a uh, there were times of unemployment and what not that, that we had some really rough times.

- 21.11.01 And then when I decided to leave their mother uh, that was really hard on them. And then later coming out of the closet, you know, to my teenagers, uh, and , and they, they were wonderfully, you know, but I know that it had to be you know, very, very stressful situation.
- 21.11.35 Thank got they're very close and they you know, they talked about all these things. They've told me since then. But uh, so I always considered myself as not much of a role model to my kids or to uh, you know, not much to, not somebody who's, who's built them up with all the things that they went through.
- 21.12.00 Uh, and then for them to tell me, you know, these things that uh, I, I didn't know or uh, the way they really felt. Uh, it, it was, it's been really incredible.

JW : Has it been challenging to reconnect?

- 21.12.23 LARRY COURTNEY : No, it really hasn't. it's, it's been like instant. It's just like magnets coming together. And uh, and I think that's, that's part of the incredible part is that because I didn't know these things or didn't know how they felt about some of these things, uh, it really has been uh, amazing. And uh, my son who lives in Maryland and, and wants to move out here uh, I mean, when he calls it's just like I'm missing out.
- 21.13.01 You know, I'm missing out on this family, you know? And uh, so I, it's, it was (?) like I say it was like instantaneous, the rebonding. Uh, I (?) had always thought we'd been fairly close, you know, the year after I moved to New York and , and the kids knew that I was gay and I had my partner, Gene.
- 21.13.29 And uh, the kids would come up to New York, or we would go down to Maryland to visit them. And it was always good, it was always very close I mean, you know? But uh, since this discussion in, in July uh, of 2003, uh, there's, it was like this, it just, if there were any barriers, they were broken down at this point, this, this was you now, this is a working family, you know?
- 21.14.02 And uh, it's (?) that feels really good, really good.

JW : Did your pain with Gene's loss possibly prevent you from taking your life?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

21.15.04 LARRY COURTNEY : (MID-STATEMENT) the kids definitely were, or the thought of the kids definitely were, was the reason that I couldn't do anything like that. And uh, and you know they, they uh, they feel uh, they're very emotional like I am, all three of them.

21.15.27 And uh, I just, I just know that they, it would just tear them apart, you know? It's gonna be bad enough (?) when you lose a parent. I lost my mother, you know? And uh, I lost my father years ago, and, and it does tear you apart, you know? But to, to inflict it intentionally on someone uh, is, is you know, a whole different level.

JW : When did you find out about being HIV-positive?

21.16.20 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh, I got tested in 1989. Uh, which was right after I moved to New York. And uh, because a friend of mine who lived here had tested just before that, and found out he was positive. Uh, not that we were, I mean, he was just a friend, we were never intimate or anything, but uh, it was totally unrelated, but because he went to take the test, uh, I decided I'd better as well.

21.17.00 Uh, and I already knew that Gene was uh, positive. And so I, I went, this is you know, this is when the tests were still new and uh, you had to wait two weeks for results uh, now the results are almost instantaneous, so. But uh, I remember going to the clinic, and them drawing the blood and you know, whatever they did.

21.17.33 And uh, then they gave me a date to come back. And uh, they were so kind and, in the clinic and uh, they told me I might want to bring somebody with me, because if the test results were positive, I might you know, it might be very devastating.

21.17.59 And uh, I thought about that and then I though uh, no, I really expected to be positive. Uh, because I had been very careless several times with people. And uh, so uh, this (?) you know, back before I really realized the extent of what was going on with the HIV and AIDS.

21.18.34 And uh, so I went back in two weeks and uh, they revealed the test results. And you know, wanted to know if I was Ok and what not. And I was. I just, you know, and it didn't hit me for about two months.

- 21.19.00 Uh, and then I went through a, for some reason it was like on a Saturday morning and Gene was gone, he was down, I think he (STUMBLE) was visiting his mother. And uh, hit me that at that time, in 1989, that was almost like a death sentence.
- 21.19.31 And I had started to see friends or acquaintances die from AIDS. Uh, and I knew it was a real epidemic by this time. And it just kind of really struck me that I probably didn't have more than a couple years left to live. Uh, but I'm still here.
- 21.20.33 You know? And I'm well and uh, not worried.

JW : What was that period of time when it hit you?

- 21.20.36 LARRY COURTENY : (MID-STATEMENT) it was the weekend, and uh, like I cried for almost two days. Thinking you know, uh, I'm never gonna see my grandchildren, you know, uh, my kids are gonna be you know, without their dad. Uh, Gene is gonna be you know, on his own.
- 21.21.00

