

TAPE # LC 29 09.11.2005
Larry Courtney / B ROLL
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

02.01.01 PICTURE UP – B ROLL, EXTERIOR, LARRY WITH GROUP, TALKING ON PHONE

02.04.56 LARRY AND MAN MEET EVELYN

02.05.30 LARRY : How are you, sweetheart? (?) It's good to see you.

WOMAN : Good to see you. It feels like you never left.

LARRY : We've got your ribbon.

WOMAN : Oh, thank you, thank you. What's this?

MAN : It's, it's your, that's actually your entry badge.

(UNINTELLIGIBLE CONVERSATION)

MAN : Uh, got back to the hotel about 10.

(UNINTELLIGIBLE CONVERSATION)

02.06.01 MAN : Took awhile to get everything organized and all that kind of stuff. But uh, so. We're all set, I think.

WOMAN : All right, so we walk in? Ok. So what's going on?

MAN 1: Not much, how are you sweetie? (~ovlp~)

WOMAN : I'm ok. (~ovlp~)

MAN 1: I'm tired, it's early in the morning (LAUGHS).

(UNINTELLIGIBLE CONVERSATION)

02.06.30 B ROLL CONTINUES, WALKING INTO GROUND ZERO AREA, ACTIVITY

02.08.06 GROUND ZERO, VARIOUS SHOTS, VIEW OF CROWD, SIGNS

02.11.37 ENTRANCE OF FLAG, BEGINNING OF CEREMONY

02.14.21 CHILDREN'S CHOIR SINGING NATIONAL ANTHEM

02.16.45 HONOR GUARD LEAVES DAIS, BAGPIPES STRIKE UP

02.18.06 MAYOR BLOOMBERG : Today, we again we are a city that meets in sadness. We come here to remember the names of those we lost four years ago. The greatest honor we can do them is to remember them, not just as they were in death, but as they were in life. We have asked our sisters and brothers, those who grew up with them in childhood, and who knew them in the prime of their lives, to lead today's ceremonies. At this time, please join us and all New Yorkers in a moment of silence. (PAUSE)

02.19.26 The ties between brothers and sisters are special ones. Their lives are intertwined from childhood, sharing a common bond of parents and the years of their youth. Siblings know each other as no other person ever can, the one you depend on to walk with you in times of trouble and in times of joy. As we listen today to these sisters and brothers, we are reminded that there are ties between all men and women.

02.20.01 That we are all linked to one another in our common humanity. That in a fundamental way, we are all brothers and sisters. We have asked the siblings of those who died to help us remember the bright lives and legacies of those who perished in this place.

02.20.27 WOMAN : My name is (?) My older brother, John, lived in Technicolor. He taught me to wear bright colors and to love life. So today, I wore this bright pink shirt to honor him, and to fill the day with his great zest for living. At home, we call John by his Greek name, Yanni.

When he walked in the door, the whole house lit up, and I'm sure heaven lit up, too, when he got there. My brother wanted me to understand that each day should be lived to the fullest. That life is short, and that I should try to find happiness, even when I'm surrounded by sadness, as we all are today. (CHARLES COOK IN CROWD?)

02.21.12 When I think of John, I think about a man who had a gift, a gift for making all those around him feel good about being alive. I hope I'll carry the lessons he taught me all through my life. I am proud that he graced this earth for 31 years and made such a lasting impression on all those who knew him. I am so proud to call him my brother. God bless.

02.21.43 (CROWD REACTION)

02.21.52 MAYOR BLOOMBERG : Today, as we recite the names of those we lost, our hearts turn as well towards London, our sister city, remembering those she has just lost as well. And to Americans suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Our deepest sympathies go out to you this day. In difficult times as these, I think of the words of the American poet, Carl Sandburg. Time is a great teacher. Who can live without hope?

02.22.28 In the darkness, with a great bundle of grief, the people march. On this fourth anniversary of 9-11, the one miracle we can perform is to go on living, to preserve, protect, and celebrate the value of life, and to remember those who died here, not as strangers, but as our brothers and sisters.

02.22.56 Today, the sisters and brothers will read the names of those who died.

02.23.17 B ROLL CONTINUES – READING OF THE NAMES

02.36.05 SPEAKER : Good morning. My name is Chris Clark. I stand today to honor not just one brother, my younger brother, Tom, but a band of brothers. Tom and I worked on the 105th floor, at different times, with different brothers. Not colleagues, not co-workers. Extraordinary men and extraordinary women who became an extraordinary family, brothers and sisters.

02.36.37 Right here, right on this spot, at the Top of the World. A family that left their mark by how they lived their lives. From their first day to their last. I stand today with a message I know

they would deliver, if only they could. Define us not by how we left, define us by how we lived, by how we laughed; by how we loved. That's what they'd say.

02.37.13 Make us the reason we embrace life, not the reason you don't. It's your spirit that keeps ours alive. That's what they'd say. We hear you. Our hearts maybe broken; our spirit is not. That's what we need to say.

02.37.38 True honor, true honor demands nothing less. Thanks, boys. I love you, and I'll see you just a little further down the road. That's what I say, thank you.

02.37.56 (CROWD REACTION)

02.38.04 RICE : Good morning. I'm Condoleezza Rice. I am so deeply moved to hear the individual stories of brothers and sisters, to learn about the lives of those who died here. For we all know that no matter how many fall, each life tells a unique story. And each death diminishes us all.

02.38.30 The poet, Christina Rossetti, wrote this about remembering those who have loved and lost. I hope that it will bring some comfort to those who have loved and lost. Remember me when I am gone away, gone far away into the silent land, when you can no more hold me in, my hand. Nor I have turned to go yet turning stay. Remember me when no more day by day you tell me of our future that you'd planned.

02.39.04 Only remember me. You understand it will be late to council then or pray. Yet, if you should forget me for awhile, and afterwards remember, do not grieve. For if the darkness and corruption leave a vestige of the thoughts that I once had, better by far you should forget and smile than you should remember and be sad. Thank you.

02.39.33 (CROWD REACTION)

02.40.04 B ROLL CONTINUES – READING OF THE NAMES

02.44.06 END OF TAPE # LC 29

01.01.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Do you want to talk about your memory?

- 01.02.33 LARRY COURTNEY: I almost didn't come. I had real reservations about whether it was worth coming this year or, or to wait 'til the 5th anniversary and uh, then, I think it was Croi who called first, maybe Danielle. And said that, you know, you would like to do an interview while I was (?) here and everything. So I thought, well, then I'll go this year, and you know?
- 1.03.00 And I'm gonna go up to Connecticut on Monday and uh, see my cousins up there. My angels, Bob and Rosanna.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 01.03.13 LARRY COURTNEY: Bob's actually a cousin, second cousin or first cousin once removed or something like that. His mother's actually my cousin. (~JW~) Yeah. But uh, so I'm gonna go up and spend a week with them in Connecticut. So.

JW: How is it to be back?

- 01.03.39 LARRY COURTNEY: It's kind of surrealistic. Uh, it, it didn't really hit me until we were just about to the bridge, and I could see the skyline, and I could see the uh, Empire State Building in red, white and blue.
- 01.03.59 And that's you know, that's, it hit me that I was actually home on this coast. You know? And uh, and it was hard. But uh, it was, it was ok. And it's, it's, just to see things again, you know? I went up to uh, the Village uh, with Ollie and Evelyn after the ceremony today.
- 01.04.31 And just ate in a diner. But it was good just to, I've eaten in that diner you know, hundreds of times. And uh, it was just nice to be back in you know, familiar places with good friends. Uh, I miss my friends, because uh, I've been sporadically traveling.
- 01.04.57 And I haven't really settled into the community uh, even after a year and a half. And uh, so I'm hoping when I get home this time that my, much of my travel time will be over with. I

probably go up to Tahoe at Thanksgiving to be with uh, my son and daughter-in-law and grandson. But uh, then I plan to just kind of stay at home and looks like I'm gonna have to get into the political ring again and work to try to defeat our august governor.

01.05.41 But uh, particularly after he said he would veto the uh, Gay Rights Bill that was just passed by the legislatures. So something's got to be done. His, he's just not doing what he promised he would do.

01.06.03 And uh, so that'll be good and, and that'll be an activity that I get to meet people and, you know, you just have to have a, a venue to meet people. So. And I'll, I plan to get involved in a church. Uh, I'm not sure which one yet. Uh, there are several denominations now that are gay-friendly.

01.06.31 And so let's see if I can find something like that. And get involved in the activities and things like that. Hopefully.

JW: You once felt you would be here until the buildings go up. What caused the change in feelings?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.08.22 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, in uh, May of 2003, uh, my grandson was born. And, and they live in Truckee, up by Lake Tahoe. And so I came out to visit and see him, uh, in late July. Of that year. And uh, all three of my children were there. And uh, (?) one night, we just started talking.

01.08.59 And uh, my kids, all three of them, just built me up so much. Telling me that uh, I had been a major influence in their life. Uh, I had always feared a little bit that I really wasn't in tune with them because I'd left their mother.

01.09.29 And uh, they, then I moved to New York and they had to fend for themselves without me. But uh, that night, we must have talked for 4, 5, 6 hours. I know it was really late (LAUGHS). And uh, they just told me how much I meant to them. And uh, what I had done for their lives. Uh.

01.10.02 And then uh, the question was asked, why are you staying in New York.

JW: Do you remember who asked you that question?

- 01.10.15 LARRY COURTNEY: I, I think it was Heather. She's, she's pretty much the most, not (?) the most intuitive, but she, she hits nails on the head a lot. And uh, so she asked me that question.
- 01.10.31 And I said, well, I love New York and we talked a little bit more. And I said, you know what though? Uh, Gene is no longer here, and uh, he loved this city. He just, he absolutely, he came alive in this city.
- 01.11.00 I mean, he was made for this city. He was just, you know, he was born into it. And uh, when we moved here, he just, it was like he just blossomed here, he became a whole different person almost, you know? And it was just so great to see what, how much it meant to him. And uh, and so then I realized that the main reason I was staying in New York was for Gene.
- 01.11.33 And uh, even though I loved it, and I, I still love it. Uh, I love the activity on the streets. You know, I can't keep up the pace with the, with New Yorkers any more. But uh, you know, I love the energy that's here. There's always, always energy here. And uh, San Jose is certainly laid-back compared to New York.
- 01.11.59 But uh, I realized that if I stayed in New York and just made periodic trips back to California, uh, my grandson would grow up like my granddaughter did. That I only got to see her about once a year. And now she's 13, and I missed so much time with her.
- 01.12.28 And so I said, ok, I'm not gonna miss that time with my grandson, so the best way to do it is we made a plan. We called it our two-year plan. That within two years, we would all be living on the West Coast again, uh, both of my sons and my daughter. And when I got back to New York uh, I looked at my job and I looked at my apartment, and my life in New York.
- 01.13.10 Uh, and I thought, you know, I can do this before, before the two years is up. I actually did it in one. Uh, my uh, youngest son still hasn't made it. But he's, he says he's trying, but I don't know. He's got some uh, he's got some uh, romance problems, so I'm not sure what he's gonna do.
- 01.13.38 But uh, I think eventually he's gonna be here. It's just gonna take him a little more time. And that'll, and when uh, Pat and Laura's lease is up, uh, in Truckee, uh, that's a two-year lease, so that's another year and a half uh, they plan to leave uh, the Tahoe area, because they're just tired of 10 feet of snow.

- 01.14.05 You know, and shoveling all the time. And in (?) resort towns just do not pay, you know? They pick up all this part time labor and they just do not pay well. And my, my son is a chef, and he's not earning nearly what he should be earning. So they plan to move off the mountain and come down closer.
- 01.14.29 Maybe not as (?) far as San Jose, but uh, so that would uh, it was just such a uh, spellbinding, that's what it was, moment for me, to hear my kids talk about me the way they did. You know? It, I was just astonishing to me.
- 01.14.59 Uh, and they pointed out, and I don't remember it now, but they pointed out things that I did that they remembered. You know? And I just uh, I never, never gave it a second thought. It was just something you do as a father. And uh, so I just was, I knew I had to be with the kids, you know? And I knew I could come back here, you know, 'cos I have my friends here.
- 01.15.30 And I have my friends in Connecticut, so I knew I could come back and visit. And, and it, that's what I feel. I, this uh, somebody asked me a question uh, today, and I said uh, it was for directions or something, and I said, I'm sorry but I'm a visitor in my own hometown now. I don't, I don't know where that is, you know? So uh, but I, I do kind of feel like a tourist now.
- 01.15.59 It, it was uh, and staying in a hotel instead of my apartment. Uh, you know, I was gonna stay with a friend, but her apartment uh, had to be deconstructed because there was, they found mold in the walls. So. Uh, but it does, I feel like a tourist, you know?

JW: Do you miss it?

- 01.16.28 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, I do. Uh. I miss going to the theater. Oh, San Francisco has wonderful theater, and San Jose has a lot of good theater. But uh, I miss the excitement of, of the Broadway openings and you know? Uh, I miss being able to go around the corner to a deli and get a sandwich, and not have to get in my car and drive somewhere and get one, you know?
- 01.17.04 I've put a lot of miles on my little car since I moved to California. But uh, 'cos you don't, you just don't have the convenience uh, there's a drug store on every corner in New York, you know? And I have to drive, you know, two miles to the closest drug store if I need something. So. It's, it's just, New York has a convenience.

01.17.32 There's (?) something you need almost anywhere, you know? You can find it within a couple of blocks, usually a radius of, of where you are. Uh, which is not the same in California. Uh, and I miss that. But on the other hand, uh, I have this beautiful weather, you know? All the time. And uh, I enjoy driving my car, so.

01.18.02 Uh, that's not too much of a problem, but uh. And, and I miss my friends. We keep in touch uh, by phone or uh, uh, (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: What are you thinking?

01.18.47 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, no I was just trying to remember where I was. Uh, I, we keep uh, my friends and I keep in touch by phone uh, by emails. Oh, my computer's been down for awhile, so I haven't uh, all I need to do is call Dell and they'll, they'll take care of it.

01.19.06 But I've just been kind of busy and haven't gotten around to it. It's not a top priority in my life. Except (?) I miss having email capability immediately. Uh, my apartment complex has uh, what they call a business center. And it has two computers fully set up for internet and with printers.

01.19.27 So if I go down to the business center, I can retrieve my emails, or do what I need to do on the computer. So but otherwise, we uh, or send cards to each other, you know, things like that. And so that's, that's better than nothing, you know? But uh, I miss being able to just call one of them and say let's go to dinner, or you know, or (?) have you seen this show and you know?

01.19.59 Uh, and I didn't realize that so many of, or at least since I've been in San Jose uh, two of the, of shows that came to Broadway originated in the San Francisco area, Lennon, and Wicked both originated in San Francisco. And uh, so I mean, there's (?) a lot of culture there, but then you have to go into the city.

01.20.31 Uh, and so far I just really don't have anyone to go with. You know? Uh, my daughter would go with me most of the time, but she's got, she's busy. You know? And uh, her little business is beginning to take off, so she has less and less time, and that's fine uh, that's, that's the way

it should be. Uh, so I just, I just need to kind of put down some roots and actually meet some people.

01.21.02 And uh, I know that there, there's a lot going on in San Jose, that I would enjoy doing, but not alone. It's not, not fun to do alone. You know? I mean, you can go through a museum by yourself and that's Ok, but to go see a show or, you know, go to a dinner or something, that, that's not fun by yourself.

JW: One of the big issues for you seems to be feeling lonely?

01.21.43 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, it's, that's very true. I mean, I know that my daughter and her husband are right there. I mean, they're only five minutes away from my apartment. Uh, and they'd do anything for me. They're just, you know, and we get together uh, quite often. Uh, to the farmer's market on Saturday kind of halfway between our places.

01.22.05 And we usually meet there on Saturday morning and you know, shop for vegetables and have a cup of coffee. But it's, it's still your children, you know, she's still my daughter. Uh, although she's becoming more and more my mother (LAUGHS). So.

JW: How do you mean?

01.22.27 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, she's uh, she hounds me (?) I've been so congested this summer. I've never had allergies before. And uh, I finally went to the doctor, and he said, well, you're allergic to this pollen and that pollen and you know, whatever, and he, he said but uh, just take Claritin, you know, which has helped. Uh, and uh, but my daughter kept bugging me, you have to go see the doctor about this, 'cos I put it off and put it off, you know?

01.23.00 And there's things like that. So but she's, she's terrific. But yeah. Uh. When you don't, and when I don't have anybody in town just to call and say hey, you know, you want to go to dinner tonight uh, and go see a movie? Uh, and that's, you know, that's kind of unsettling.

01.23.33 Uh, particularly if, if they go away for a week, you know, I'm in San Jose all by myself. I don't know anybody, basically. And I've tried to meet some of my neighbors. And a couple

of them uh, I, I've meet. But you know, uh, you see each other in the elevator and say hi. Uh, so uh, I have to do something about being alone.

01.24.02 Uh. At least uh, I, I want to meet some people or some uh, one person I don't know how many, that uh, like I say, I can go out to dinner with and, and have a drink with or whatever. Uh, I'm not sure that I want someone in my life again like Gene was.

01.24.30 Uh. It's funny what four years can do to you to, for uh, getting uh, territorial I guess is what it is. You know? For instance, when I make my bed, I want it made a certain way and the pillows go this way. Uh, I know where every spoon is in, in my cabinet in the kitchen.

01.24.59 I know where all the china is, I know where the pots and pans are, and I don't want them moved from one place to another. Even uh, even when David and Heather come over for dinner and Heather will help me with the dishes, or David will do them while Heather and I talk. They don't put them away, they leave them out so that Dad can put them where he wants them, you know? And having another person you know, step into my life that way uh, and always be there, you know, I, I don't know that I'm, that I need that anymore.

01.25.30 But I, I never say never. My brother uh, is 71. He lost his wife to cancer two weeks after 9-11. So we've become very close. And he called me last week, well, I called him and left a message on his machine.

01.25.58 He called me back and the reason he wasn't home to take my message was that he and Joan were shopping for engagement rings. So he's met this 65-year old woman, and she makes him very happy, you know? And so I, like I say, I would never say never because you don't know. I mean, she's, she's going to move in with him, and his life has become you know, my, my house, you know, my whatever.

01.26.36 And uh, but he's gonna take the chance. So uh, I would not, not say it couldn't happen.

JW: It was interesting that you said take the chance. Is there possibly a version where a fear of getting into a relationship could be a little bit at play here?

01.27.20 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, I'm sure it is, I'm sure it is. Uh. When. When you've had a relationship that was so intense, and I know you know what I mean, uh, and then it's gone, you're not sure uh, anything can ever be that good again.

01.27.59 And I'm not gonna settle for not that good, you know, as far as that goes. And I don't know. I may be. I may just be all right by myself with friends that I can, you know, hang around with. Uh.

JW: Friends can become more than that?

01.28.23 LARRY COURTNEY: They could. And, and that's why I say, I'm not gonna say never, and I'm not gonna say I wouldn't take that chance. Uh. Because if, if, if it felt right, if it felt like that was the thing to do, then I would, I'm open to that. I don't, I haven't closed any doors. Uh. I just haven't met anybody knocking on them, either. So.

JW: What about the nature of how it happened with Gene? Could it also create fear?

01.29.04 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. I think, you know, if I were to get involved in a relationship, and something were to happen to that other person -that's what I've been thinking about, I think, that it's always, there would always be that nagging thing in the back of my head, you know? Is, is he gonna leave me, too? You know? Uh.

01.29.29 And I sinned on my 60th birthday. Uh. You know, I'm old enough and comfortable enough that it's ok. Uh, and then my brother calls me and tells me this, you know, and we had discussed this uh, on our trip in, in February, how lonely it was.

01.29.59 And, but that we were both kind of settled in our ways and we didn't think that we'd ever you know, meet anybody we wanted to share our lives with completely. And uh, she just kind of blew him away. So. It could happen to anybody, you know? So. It's (?) you know, I'm, I'm willing to take the chance if it's, if it looks good. You know?

01.30.36 But uh, it'd have to look awfully good to be able to, to uh, do that.

JW: What restaurant did you go to today? Was it the one you were talking about?

01.30.53 LARRY COURTNEY: No, we didn't go all the way up to uh, midtown. We just went to the Village. And there's a diner right on the corner by the subway called the Waverly. And it's been there forever. I think the original tables are still in there. But uh, they serve really good

food. I mean, it's just diner food, but it's really good. And uh, it just, you know, it was kind of. Gene and I used to go there uh, when we'd be in the Village and hitting the bars.

01.31.29 That's when we first moved to New York, we did that a lot. (?) about the first year or so. And then it kind of got tiresome. But uh, and we were involved in a theater group down in the Village. And so after the, after the theater was over, or after whatever was over, we would kind of go with a bunch of people and hit these certain kind of bars downtown, piano bars, basically.

01.31.56 Uh, and after that, uh, which would be quite late usually, around two in the morning uh, we'd stop at the Waverly and have breakfast before we went home. And uh, so it was kind of, kind of interesting to be there again. And uh, (~JW~)

JW: Was it hard?

01.32.21 LARRY COURTNEY: I thought it was going to be. I thought it was going to be, but it really wasn't. Uh, I mean, Ollie and, and Evelyn were there and kept up a lively conversation, so uh, I just kind of made a mental note that it was ok, and that this was not gonna be, you know, a bad experience, this was gonna be good. And uh, so I had, I really had a nice time and, and uh, enjoyed it very much, and it was nice to just see it again, you know?

01.32.57 So. That was good. I hadn't been in the Village for years. 'Cos I think after Gene died I, I didn't go down there at all. Well, I (?) don't remember. Oh, I went down there, I met Ollie somewhere.

01.33.35 Uh, he had a meeting, and I met him after his meeting and we went down in the Village for lunch once. But I think that's the only time I was in the Village after Gene died. And so this was kind of, this was kind of a first time again. But uh, it was all, I mean, the Village is the Village.

01.34.00 Just you know, it's the same. And uh, so it was kind of nice going back.

JW: What about the trip back here, coming to the city?

01.34.24 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. It was uh, like I said I had, I had uh, mixed feelings about coming back this year, and whether I should wait until the 5th anniversary. But uh, once I

decided and kind of scrambled for plane reservations and hotel reservations and all that sort of stuff uh, thanks to Heather. She's very good on Expedia and Google search.

01.34.59 Uh. Then getting on the plane. Flying doesn't bother me anymore. So the, so the plane part didn't bother me. I used to be scared to death of flying. I was just an absolute white-knuckle flier. And (~JW~)

JW: When was that?

LARRY COURTNEY: Before 9-11.

JW: You mean you're less scared since then?

01.35.30 LARRY COURTNEY: Absolutely. (~JW~) Uh, well. I think that what, what happened at 9-11 just told me that if it's time, it's time. And there's nothing you can do about it, so just relax and enjoy the ride. And that, that goes for many things, aside from flying.

01.35.59 Uh, like I, I don't hold grudges, I don't get angry much anymore. Uh, it just takes too much energy, and I don't, I don't need to expend it on those kind of things. Uh, and fear is just crippling, you know? So I just don't, I, I just get on a plane and fly, and it doesn't bother me. I say, say a little prayer uh, before I, you know, before we take off.

01.36.31 And uh, and I'm fine. And, and it was a very comfortable coming out. Uh, the flight itself was wonderful. I thought I (LAUGHS) was a little apprehension because there were two little children right across from me, and a lady with a cat in a carry-on. And I thought, this is going to be noisy. As the kids cry and what not.

01.37.00 They were wonderful. It was just, you know I read my book and we were here before I knew it. Uh. Coming back into the city. The closer we got, the more apprehensive I, I was. Uh. And I'm not exactly sure why.

01.37.35 Uh, but when I saw the Empire State Building with the red, white and blue uh, I actually tear-ed up. And uh, but then (~JW~)

JW: Why did you tear up?

01.38.04 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, I knew why, why it was red, white and blue. It was red, white and blue for September 11th, and uh, because the only other time they do red, white and blue is uh, July 4th and maybe Veterans' Day, I don't remember. But uh, and then September 11th. And it hit me, I think, as to why I was coming back.

01.38.33 You know, what I was going to do here. Uh. What memories were gonna be dredged up here, you know?

JW: Why were you coming back?

01.38.53 LARRY COURTNEY: You know, I'm still not exactly sure why. Some part of it is that when I'm down in the footprints of the building (PAUSE) I just feel a real closeness with him.

01.39.27 Uh, I don't know why that is, I, I don't. It's, it's been that way every time I've gone down there. But it's just like that's the last place he set foot on, you know, somewhere in that space he was there. (PAUSE)

01.40.00 And even though uh, I have part of his ashes at home, uh, and I have dirt from Ground Zero at home in San Jose, uh, I still feel the closeness, the, the intensity of it so much more in the particular spot uh.

01.40.40 And I'm, I wasn't sure, I don't think I've ever put that in words before as to why. Uh, I'm not sure I ever cognitively, whatever that word is uh, put it together before. Uh.

01.41.05 And I think, of course I don't know uh, what the future will bring, but uh, when they have finished or whatever's gonna happen at the site, (?) whatever kind of memorial is there or building or whatever, I don't think it'll be the same as to be standing on that bare dirt down there.

01.41.35 It's a very powerful, powerful thing to go down into that pit, and I know it's not just me because I, I saw people down there today, after 4 years, (PAUSE) just sobbing uncontrollably, you know?

01.42.04 I did not. I held it, but uh, it, it was just very powerful to be down there. And I don't know, maybe I feel like at least once a year I have to, have to do that. Uh. We'll see how it plays out in the next couple of years.

- 01.42.30 Uh, what the city or what the, the planners do. And uh, I, I thought by four years' time I would be much more composed about this. I'd be more settled about it.
- 01.43.00 But I'm not. I uh, after lunch today, I uh, took the subway back down to the hotel, which was a, a maze to get back to the hotel.
- 01.43.28 But uh, I decided to stop into the bar and have a drink before I went up and changed clothes. And I was sitting there and this lady came in and sat down beside me on (?) the stool, and she asked me about the ribbon, and I told her it was a family uh, badge sort of.
- 01.43.59 And so then of course she asked me (?) you know, who I had lost at the World Trade Center and I told her. And uh, she wanted to know where he had worked, and I told her at AON, and she said, how, how weird this is, because I worked at AON uh, several years, and just about a year before the 9-11 uh, she left.
- 01.44.29 And uh, but she knew so many people (?) at AON uh, some (?) of the names I knew. Uh, and so we got into a conversation, and we were talking about uh, you know, losing a partner. And, and she said for some (?) reason you're familiar, or his, his, no, Eugene's name is familiar.
- 01.45.05 Well, what did he look like? And I said he was a gorgeous black man with the most beautiful smile. And she said, I saw his poster, and I saw you on TV. And I said yeah, I was fighting for workers' compensation rights. And she said oh that's it. I knew it, I knew I knew you from somewhere.
- 01.45.32 And she said, thank you so much for fighting. She said I'm, I'm gay, too, and that might be a fight I don't have to make now. And I was just you know, so we exchanged names and addresses. And uh, so we'll communicate.
- 01.45.54 But I was just very touched that uh, (?) by the, what should be a coincidence but is it (~JW~) you know? When, when something like that happens uh, is it just coincidental or is, is that something that was supposed to happen, these two people meet at a bar and just talk and have all of these things in common, actually? Uh, so I, I was really touched by that, and uh.
- 01.46.35 I don't know, it just made sense today for some reason.

JW: What part of today made sense?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

01.46.48 END OF TAPE # LC 30

02.01.01 PICTURE UP

JW: You said it made sense today? Is that because some days before now didn't make sense?

02.01.21 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes uh, I think, you know, I think why didn't Gene evacuate? Why didn't he evacuate? He was (~JW~)

JW: You think about that a lot?

LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. I do.

JW: You never said that before.

02.01.45 LARRY COURTNEY: I uh. Oh, it was, it was yesterday morning. I had set my alarm for 8, but I woke up at five (COUGHS). And I couldn't go back to sleep. And that subject came into my mind.

02.02.12 And I got angry, actually. (PAUSE) And ended up just sobbing, because he called the office at five minutes to nine, and said he was evacuating.

02.02.42 He left that message on my answering machine, and I'm sure I've told you this before. And he also talked to my good friend, Wanda, our good friend.

02.02.57 And she could hear bells in the background. And she said you have to get out of there, you have to get out of there. And he said (?) he was. And so it was about 20 minutes after, I think, that telephone call, that the plane hit his building, number two.

02.03.36 Was he below the plane, evacuating? Or was he still on the 102nd floor helping other people out, or did he go back to his desk because there was a false announcement at one point not to evacuate?

JW: What do you think?

02.04.05 LARRY COURTNEY: Knowing Gene, what I think, and I heard this from an AON employee who was there, not about Gene, but about a couple of other guys who lost their lives, the last time they saw them, they were standing by the elevator doors holding them open and shoving as many women in as they could get in. (PAUSE)

02.04.36 So maybe he was doing that. Uh, maybe he just didn't move fast enough. I don't know. But I (PAUSE)

02.04.58 I know that uh, (?) that when I woke up yesterday morning, I was blaming him.

JW: You were angry?

LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, I was.

JW: Why?

02.05.15 LARRY COURTNEY: Because he didn't get out. And he should have. He should have been able to get out. Uh. You know, I know none of the circumstances or what happened in that building that day, and so my anger is misplaced. Uh.

02.05.41 You know, he could have been moving as fast as he could and, and when the second plane hit, it was just, it was too late. Uh, I really, if he was helping other people or you know, if he did go back to his desk, I don't know. I don't know.

02.06.00 And so I can't. I just finally told myself, I can't be angry about that anymore. Uh, and I think maybe today at the site uh, I really let go of that. Uh, as I've told you a couple of times before that anger takes so much energy, and I just don't have it in me to be angry.

02.06.30 Uh, and I get angry in short spurts, you know? But and I realize, why? That's too much, it's too much hassle to be angry, to hold a grudge, you know? To judge somebody else. You don't know, you don't know what happened. And uh.

JW: If he had been helping people it's kind of a hard thing to be angry about?

LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. Yeah (~JW~)

JW: But you've had suffering, too?

02.07.06 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. And, and I guess I was blaming him for that. You know, no matter what the reason was, you know, I was, I was suffering. You know? God only knows how much he suffered that day. Hopefully not at all. But you know, what right do I have to think my suffering is worse than his?

02.07.38 And today with all of those people uh, my suffering isn't any worse than any of theirs, you know? They lost brothers and sons and fathers, and uh, you know, and today having the brothers and sisters read the names uh, you know, you realize you're not alone in the suffering.

02.08.07 And (?) you certainly don't, don't have a, you know, a, a lock on it. That's uh. It's, you know, and, and, and you don't have a right to be angry with the other person.

02.08.26 I don't have a right to be angry with Gene, because I don't know what he was doing, you know? I don't know why he didn't make it out of that building. I never will know.

JW: Are you curious, do you think you'll investigate it?

02.08.49 LARRY COURTNEY: I'm curious about it, but no, I won't investigate it. Uh. You know, I would, in my own fantasies, you know, I would, I would just rather think of him helping people into the elevator.

02.09.10 Because that's the kind of person he was. I know that. And so that's, you know, I mean, I'm not gonna ever tell anybody that that's what he was doing. But uh, it's, it's a possibility, you know? And so I'm gonna hold on to, I know he didn't intentionally die that day.

02.09.34 And it wasn't his fault. So uh, there's no good to be angry about it.

JW: Do you have fantasies about certain things?

02.09.48 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I a couple of times, you know? I. After he, after 9-11, I was still working at (Banka-e-me?)

02.10.02 And somebody said they had a friend who had written a long email about his experiences getting out of the building. And meeting up with this woman who had no shoes on, and, and there was glass everywhere.

02.10.27 And he carried her, you know, for quite a ways, and then they found a shoe store down in Nassau, and she bought some at least some flip-flops or something. But it, it went on for quite awhile, and uh, he asked me if I wanted to, if I wanted to see it.

JW: Was it a true story?

02.10.50 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, it was true, uh, he actually had written his experience coming out of the World Trade Center.

JW: When you said Nassau?

02.10.58 LARRY COURTNEY: He went. They went towards the East River. And, and there's a whole bunch of shops uh, on uh, I think it's Nassau (~JW~) and there's a little, like a courtyard they, they blocked the streets off so that (?) and they cobble-stoned it and what not. And uh, there, there was a shoe store there. But uh, so he asked me if I wanted to see it. And I told him yeah, go ahead.

02.11.28 And so uh, I printed it out and read it. And it, it was, you know, it just, it just kind of the heroics of this guy, helping this woman he'd never met, you know, and at the time uh, that's something Gene would have done, you know? He would have done that.

02.11.57 So I'm just thinking that maybe you know, he's, that's like I say, that's kind of one of my fantasies of what could have happened. Uh, I try not to dwell on that too much. Like I say, I had the bad episode yesterday morning. But since I don't know, uh, I just try not to (?) dwell on the reason.

JW: Do you do anything to get yourself out of it?

LARRY COURTNEY: Well, I just made myself stop (~JW~)

JW: How?

LARRY COURTNEY: I just changed channels in my mind, you know and thought of something else.

JW: Intentionally?

LARRY COURTNEY: Intentionally.

JW: What's that like?

- 02.12.51 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, it was, what it did was just kind of closed the door (~JW~) but it wasn't gone. It wasn't gone. And that's what I mean about today being down in the pit and everything. I was able to open that door and let that fantasy go. I don't know. So I, I uh, have to just let it go. (PAUSE) And it really isn't important (PAUSE) as to why he didn't get out.
- 02.13.31 It's just important that he didn't. Uh. (PAUSE) Like I said, I, I have, after four years you'd think that I could, I could go through a day without having some reason to think about him.
- 02.14.19 Uh. I have pictures of him in every room of my house, of my apartment. And it's funny, I get used to passing them, you know, on my way from room to room or whatever.
- 02.14.37 And almost instinctively I reach out and touch, touch the picture in that room. Uh, maybe some people would think that's maudlin. I mean, they're not big portraits you know, hung with black drapery. They're just photos.
- 02.14.58 And uh. I guess I just I, I haven't let him go. Uh. (PAUSE) Sometimes I think of what uh, where our life would be, had he lived, you know?
- 02.15.35 What would, what would we be doing, this year? Uh. Oh, we'd probably still be in New York. Uh, maybe not. Maybe, maybe because of the kids, because he loved my kids.
- 02.16.01 Uh, he would have wanted to go to California, too. But uh. You know, we both had great jobs. And uh, so we might, might have been still in New York. (PAUSE)

JW: Where were you?

02.16.56 LARRY COURTNEY: Oh, just kind of I guess projecting where, what we would be doing here if we were here, and uh. And we'd still be living in the apartment with the terrace. And there would be no car.

02.17.28 And it would be very nice, it would be very nice. I would have uh, a lot of feelings about uh, missing my grandson growing up, which I have now. I (?) get to watch him grow up now, and I (?) would be, have a lot of feelings about not being able to see that happen, if I was living across country from him.

02.18.04 Uh. And especially now that I'm, now that I know him. You know, I know him as, well, he's a little boy now, he's not a baby. And uh he's such a joy that uh, I would have missed that, you know, I would have missed seeing the steps of development. So I don't, I don't know whether, I just can't see Gene as a California guy, you know?

02.18.38 He was too much energy, I think, for San Jose. San Jose is quite laid back in, in many ways. But I know we would have been together wherever it was, whether it was here or in California.

02.19.09 I just don't know.

JW: Do you feel stuck?

02.19.17 LARRY COURTNEY: Stuck in time? Or just stuck? (LAUGHS) Sometimes, I guess. Uh. When Evelyn came back uh, she was, she had a conference in San Francisco, and so she, in January of this year. And so she came and spent a weekend with me, which I really enjoyed.

02.19.56 But she walked into the apartment, and she said this looks just like New York. She said, you've decorated it just the same way as it was in New York. It's a little different configuration, but basically it's the way you and Gene had it, and she's right. You know? And I, I guess I did that somewhat subconsciously. Uh.

02.20.29 But everything that's in that apartment uh, was something that meant something to the both of us, except my dining room table and chairs. I bought a new dining room table and chairs. When I moved here. But the rest of the apartment is what we put together. You know? And uh, it means something to me to have you know, a certain picture over the couch or whatever.

- 02.21.06 'Cos that's the way we did it, and I liked it that way. Uh. So hearing that from Evelyn, it kind of uh, it took me aback that I was duplicating what Gene and I did uh, at, but I did it because I liked it that way, you know?
- 02.21.36 I know my brother uh, has a three bedroom house in Oregon that he and his wife shared for 26 years, 28 years, something like that. Uh. He has uh, it's still the same as when she lived there.
- 02.22.01 Except he, he put up more pictures of her than she had in, in the house. Uh but then, now I think he, some of those have come down because he's seeing Joan. But I don't know whether it's just a, like I said subconsciously whether it was a way to hold on to Gene.
- 02.22.33 Uh, because that's the way we did it. Or whether it's just because we did it that way because we liked it and I still like it, you know? Uh. I don't know. But that uh, you know, that, that may be being stuck.
- 02.23.01 You know? And using that word, I think that may be why I'm not out trying to meet other people. Maybe there is, there's a fear that uh, if I met somebody that came to mean a lot to me uh, I'd have to let Gene go. (PAUSE)
- 02.23.52 And although I can uh, mentally do that, emotionally I'm not sure, and I won't know that I guess uh, until I do meet somebody. And then I guess that, that will be part of the equation as to whether that becomes something more than just let's have dinner.
- 02.24.25 You know?
- JW: You can mentally do it but not emotionally?
- 02.24.34 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. Emotionally I'm still tied to Gene. Uh, like I said there's not a day goes by that I don't think of him, or I see something that I want to tell him about when he comes home from work. Or that I should call him and let him know this is going on.
- 02.25.02 And it's just a flash. You know, I had, when my mother died uh, I did, I had some of those, too. I, I you know, I love to cook and, and I learned it from my mother. And occasionally I would be trying to do something had I would think, I'll call Mom and get the recipe. Or she, she'll tell me how to do it, she didn't have a recipe.
- 02.25.30 She'd just throw some salt in and you know? Just little flashes. And you think you like oh, my god, no, you can't, you know? Uh, I can't tell Gene how beautiful Mount Rushmore was,

or Niagara Falls, you know? Things, there's just little flashes. And uh, I don't know if that goes away, you know? I just uh. I don't know.

JW: Would you like it to?

- 02.26.19 LARRY COURTNEY: I'm not sure. Uh. That's hard to say because uh. Then that means that you know, I want it to go away with my mother as, as well. You know?
- 02.26.46 And it, it's, it's a little warming when you think of them for just an instant, that you could tell them something. You could uh, you know, my dad.
- 02.26.59 My dad's been gone for 14 years, I guess. And uh, the last time I was in the hardware store, and I can't remember now what it, I was there for. But I thought, you know, I could call Dad and he would know (?) it was some tool, he would know exactly what I wanted. 'Cos he had every tool in the world, he was an electrician, and uh, it was just that split second.
- 02.27.35 You know? That you forget that person is gone. Uh, and it's not conscious, it just is. I'll call oh, I can't, you know? It's that quick. I mean, it's just, just that quick. And I'm not sure I want that to go away because that's still, it's a part of remembering who that person is. You know?
- 02.28.00 'Cos then I can see my Dad in his overalls, and with his tools. And, or I could see Mom in, in the kitchen just for that split second. And or I can see Gene doing, doing whatever, for that split second. And it's, it's like a, a memory that I'm not sure I want to go away, you know? (?) it was something essential to that person, who they were, that makes me think uh, for that split second that I could, I could find out from them, or I could call them or I'd tell them whatever.
- 02.28.44 Uh, so I'm not sure that I, I want that to go away with any of them, you know? I think it's, it's uh. You know, they're a part of me no matter what, and always will be.
- 02.29.01 And uh, I don't think that's a bad thing. I don't think that's a bad thing to think. I'm sure that if I met somebody and actually got into a relationship, that it would be at least as far as Gene is concerned, it would probably be less uh, because then I would think about telling the other person probably.

02.29.29 And uh, you know, but I don't, I don't know that for sure. Because he, you know, we were, we were there for fourteen years. And part of who I am is what he was. Uh, I think that we truly enhanced each other uh, and uh, therefore became part of each other.

02.30.06 And I don't know that that ever has to go away. I don't know that that's a bad thing. Uh. Like I say, just like my mom and dad. They're, they're a part of me. They made me, they made me who I am. And uh, so I, I would never want that to go away. You know?

JW: It's a challenging balance with the suffering?

LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, it is (~JW~)

JW: You surprised me with your revelation; do you think you might be afraid of having to move forward because you'd have to let go?

02.31.20 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. That's true. I, well, I think that what you said about the fear of losing someone else is, is very definitely a part of what I'm going through right now. But also the fear of having to let go, not, not that I could totally ever do that.

02.31.49 You know, (?) uh, those things that I still want to (?) happen. But I would certainly be letting go if I got into a relationship of a lot of, a lot of things. I think, because I wouldn't be so lonely.

02.32.12 Uh, if I had somebody who loved me uh, for me, you know? And accepted all the warts and whatever, like Gene did.

02.32.29 Uh. But it can't be like Gene did. You know? It'll never be like Gene did. Uh. And I would hope that if I were to meet somebody that I was really attracted to, I would not compare, well, you don't measure up to what Gene did, you know? Or I don't know, but I would not, I would hopefully not compare that.

02.32.59 And in that way I (?) would be letting loose of a lot of things, I think. Uh. You know, if (?) I was in a relationship, it wouldn't be fair to have Gene's picture in every room of the house, and certainly not in the bedroom or, you know? I wouldn't stick him back in the attic, you know?

- 02.33.28 But uh, you'd have to be fair to the other individual. And I think that that would uh, be, be a way of letting go a little. Uh. And like I said I, I think that if I were in that relationship, and I saw something uh, on television or, you know, uh, some site.
- 02.34.05 And I would, I would think that I would want to call the, the other person and tell them and not think about calling Gene to tell him, you know? Uh, I don't know. I, it's.
- 02.34.35 I don't know if you can truthfully ever let anybody who has been so important in your life totally go. I don't know that that's possible. Uh.
- 02.35.03 But I don't know that it's impossible, either. You know? Not (?) going through that uh, you know, meeting another person and, and doing that uh, you know, I don't, so I don't know whether it, it's possible or not to do that. Uh.
- 02.35.32 And like I said these, these people who have meant something in your life uh, and even my friends here who have meant something in my life and became somewhat a part of me in, in some way, you know, I've learned from them or I you know, uh. Uh, yeah, I don't think you can let that, that go because they, they are that part of you.
- 02.36.00 Uh. But I, I do think that uh, it could be channeled into uh, kind of like not a storage box in your heart, but uh, (?) you're still conscious of the fact that they were there in your life.
- 02.36.33 But it's not right out here, you know? 'Cos still today it's right out here for Gene. Uh. You know, I can go down to Ground Zero and let go of things. And feel his, him right there.
- 02.37.03 And one day uh, it won't be so there. Just right there. I, I wonder uh, and, and this is something I haven't thought, thought or thought through.
- 02.37.35 Or it just kind of popped into my head right now. I wonder if I moved to California, part of the reason I moved to California, was so that I could move Gene from right there to a place in here that wasn't so close.
- 02.38.07 Uh, and I don't know. I just, hadn't thought of that before. And I don't, that's something I'd have to think about because I just was that a part of my reason for going to California?
- 02.38.30 It's like putting distance between me and Gene. Uh, I don't know. I, it's uh. Haven't thought that through.

JW: From here to here is a lot of pain?

- 02.38.51 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. Uh, well, it, it's painful to put, to put somebody away, not away, but to move them from here to here. Uh, took me a long time to do that with my dad. Uh. They lived in Oregon, and I went back from New York uh, two weeks,
- 02.39.27 I spent two weeks there, and Dad was in the hospital all the time I was there. And uh, I had to come back to go to work, to go back to work. And two weeks after (?) I came back, he died. And I had had a bedside chat with him uh, the night before I left to come back.
- 02.40.02 And he was very lucid, and could talk, but just very weak. And we talked about my being gay, and he assured me that he loved me.
- 02.40.31 And he loved Gene, he got to meet Gene. Gene was not with me on that trip. And uh, we talked about several other things in our life. And kind of, it was a wonderful conversation. And it took me a long time.
- 02.40.59 I didn't get to go back for his funeral because I had no more vacation time. And uh, bereavement time was only three days and that was, you know, a plane ride both ways in three days. And uh, but it took me a long time uh, to move him, you know, inside.
- 02.41.29 And uh, it's funny because my mother uh, I was closest to, between the two parents uh. I, I had seen her uh, go downhill.
- 02.42.00 And I had watched the, you know, the process of her dying. And uh, I had been there to help uh, when it was finally decided that she had less than 6 months to live and she needed hospice care.
- 02.42.28 And I was there with my brother to make that decision. And then I had to leave again, and that was in November, and she died December 1st. And for some reason, it was easier for me to move her inside.
- 02.43.00 Uh. Maybe because we were so close uh, and I saw what, what happened to her in her later years. Uh, that it was just easy, easier for me to say it's ok, Mom, it's ok. (PAUSE)
- 02.43.42 But moving Eugene inside has not happened, yet. (PAUSE)
- 02.44.03 And I don't know when it will. Or if. I don't want to be like one of those old widows that you used to see in movies.
- 02.44.28 That dressed in black crepe 20 years after their spouse had died, and had bunting still in the house. And I don't want to be like that, you know? And uh, I, I think that's just a conscious decision I have to make, that I'm not going to be like that.
- 02.45.01 You know, I'm a, I'm 60 but I'm not dead, you know? As Ollie told me today I said (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.45.37 END OF TAPE # LC 31

03.00.01 PICTURE UP

JW: You were saying?

03.00.10 LARRY COURTNEY: We were walking up to the family uh, sign-in (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.00.22 LARRY COURTNEY: We were walking up to the family sign-in together, and just casually having a conversation, and I said something about turning 60. And he said, 60 and counting, let's not forget that. You're not dead yet. So I figure, you know, uh, there's still, still time, maybe, (?) you never know.

03.00.54 But uh, maybe there's still time to uh, build a relationship with someone else, or learn to be totally uh, totally complete without someone else. You know? There are times when I would catch myself and I still do it.

03.01.31 But it's always a we when I'm talking about myself, or uh, something that happened. And I have to, I have to remember to come back to a me on that. I did that, I, I realized that (~JW~)

JW: Can you explain?

03.02.03 LARRY COURTNEY: When I uh, moved out of, of my wife's uh, well, our house, I moved out of our house uh, and we were, we were separated but we weren't divorced, and we belonged to the same church, and we sang in the choir together, you know, and we had made a pact that we would remain friends for the children's sake.

- 03.02.32 And I would catch myself in group meetings at the church or whatever, always referring to we. I hadn't, I hadn't set her aside in that situation and it was always a we.
- 03.02.55 And I remember being corrected several times by people saying no, it's just, it's just. You know? So I do it, I did it again after Gene died. Uh. It just uh, the word we came into my mind instead of me. As though he and I did it together.
- 03.03.27 Now oftentimes, I mean, if I was talking about something we did together that was fine. But there were times when I was talking about something I did, and just subconsciously, there was a we instead of me. And so I have, I have to work and I, I do work at it. Uh, trying to remember that it, it's just a, it's just me, you know? It's not the two of us anymore.
- 03.04.00 It's just me. And uh, the things that we did, we did. But four years ago, it became things that I did. Not we. But things that I did. And sometimes (?) I slip even today.
- 03.04.28 And I don't you know, really consciously I don't do that. But uh, I don't know if I'm, I guess if I'm not truly thinking what I'm saying before I say it, you know, then that's when the we comes out, instead of me. And uh, it happens much less now.
- 03.05.00 But it was, it's, it's uh, and I had to think back to the time with my wife, you know, you had, I had to separate the two of us, and now I have to separate Gene and I. It's uh, and that's a very conscious effort, you know?
- 03.05.35 And I don't have to lose that, that part of him in the process. But that's, that's another step in, in moving him inside. Uh. And, and uh, I don't know, I don't know how long that's gonna take.

JW: Are you glad you came here?

- 03.06.02 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, I am. I'm very glad. And I was very excited was not the word I want, but uh, anxious. I guess. To actually go down into the pit today. Uh, with all my emotion and everything else, I really wanted to be down in that pit today.
- 03.06.30 So I am, I am supremely happy I came this year. Uh, and I'm here today. Uh.

JW: Why?

- 03.07.05 LARRY COURTNEY: I said before that in that pit, in those footprints, I feel him very close. Very close. And it's like, he's close enough to hear me now.
- 03.07.33 I mean, he's that close. And you know, my, my prayers are for, for him, but also for me, and that uh, he would watch over me.
- 03.07.58 But today seemed to be another step in moving him inside. Uh. I can't remember what my exact thoughts were.
- 03.08.29 But uh, it was, it was a feeling that uh, that we were taking that step together. Him moving closer inside. And uh, and it was great.
- 03.09.03 It was really great to feel that, separated by four years, we were still in tune with what needed to happen, the two of us. And he was willing to take that step. (PAUSE)
- 03.09.45 So now I accept that fact, what I believe to be fact. Uh.
- 03.10.03 And maybe that will uh, make it easier to, well, I don't know that it'll make it easier, but it's, it was just a step uh. (PAUSE)
- 03.10.42 It's something that I don't have to uh, (?) revisit all the time. You know? It's, that was, that's something that happened.
- 03.10.57 And I'm sure I conscious of it while I was there, that that's what we were doing. Uh, but thinking about it, that's what, that's what happened. And uh, (~JW~)

JW: You said he was willing?

- 03.11.16 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. But I don't know whether I projected that, you know? I still believe that he's there, you know? I, I you know, I, I have, I am spiritual enough to believe that he's not, nobody is ever gone.
- 03.11.39 Uh, they're, they go to some place you know, a better place. And uh, I believe that he's there. But he was, you know, I, I do believe he was willing to take that step, to come inside.
- 03.12.06 Uh. And it might take me awhile to uh, completely come to that, you know, that he has, that we have.
- 03.12.28 And that uh, and that is a good thing, not a bad thing. You know?

JW: Therein lies the?

- 03.12.48 LARRY COURTNEY: Yep. Yep. (PAUSE)
- 03.13.11 That Gene will always be a part of my life uh, because he's a, he's a part of my history, you know? And uh, you never let that go completely, you never do.
- 03.13.39 I, I don't, I don't think that anybody, I don't care how much they deny it or how callous they are, I don't think that anybody can ever uh, dismiss the impact that other people have on you.
- 03.14.05 Uh. I mean, every, every contact you have impacts your life. And uh, those that impact you so deeply uh, can never be forgotten.
- 03.14.36 It's just uh, you know, it's history. And you can't erase history, you know? Some people I guess would block it out, try to block it out. Uh.
- 03.15.01 But I'm trying to embrace my history. I uh, my parents, my brother's wife. My brothers and sisters uh, all have impacted me some, one way or another. Some good and some bad.
- 03.15.33 And you can't dismiss that, you just can't. It, it happened. You know? It is. And it's, it's that part of you that uh, makes you who you are. (PAUSE)
- 03.16.18 So that doesn't go away, they don't go away.
- 03.16.33 And I. Uh, I uh, think of my brother, and the fact that he is ready (again?) to share his life again. Uh.
- 03.16.56 That's, that's uh, an act of, of love and selflessness, I think, 'cos he and his wife loved each other dearly. And uh, you never would have thought that anything would happen to either one of them, you know? And for him to take this step uh, shows me that, that, you know, there's love can, can do many things.
- 03.17.38 Uh. And is possible. And that doesn't mean that he's throwing away the history of him and his wife.
- 03.18.01 Uh. It just means that he's been able to move her inside, and take this leap of faith uh, and so I, I know that it's possible. (PAUSE)

JW: Will you be here next year?

- 03.19.16 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I don't, I don't really know. Uh.
- 03.19.29 I am going to go back to work or look for uh, at least a part time job. Uh, (~JW~)

JW: That hasn't been an easy part of this equation?

- 03.19.46 LARRY COURTNEY: No. And uh. There was some bad investments made, so there's not as much money for my retirement as I thought there was going to be.
- 03.20.06 So I need to supplement. And (?) going back to work (LAUGHS) is just the worst thing I can think of, because I really, truly enjoy being able to like come here and not have to worry.
- 03.20.28 So uh, it'll depend on if I am uh, if I do consulting from my home, then that's one thing about time. But if I'm actually in a job uh, you know, will I have vacation time to come? Uh, that kind of thing. Uh, I don't know why, but I kind of figured they would do something a little special for the 5th anniversary.
- 03.21.01 But I don't know (well, I don't know?) if that's true. Uh, I finally got my address changed with the city of New York so I'll at least get the information. But uh, I would like to come next year. And (~JW~)

JW: You think you'll have a job next year?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 03.21.30 LARRY COURTNEY: There'll be something. Uh, one way or another there's gonna be something uh, even if I work for a temp agency or something like that. You know, uh, 60 is not too old to, to work and be productive, and I have quite a history that could be useful to a lot of people. So I don't think I, I don't think it's uh, impossible that I wouldn't be working somewhere uh, doing something.
- 03.22.03 Whether like I said, maybe consulting from my own home, if I could you know, find enough clients that needed what I have to offer. Uh, so, and if that's the case then I, I could probably come, you know, work out my schedule so that I could come back. Uh, I'd like to come back for two reasons.
- 03.22.31 Uh, most of my friends have no reason other than me to come to California. Uh, so unless they have a seminar on the West Coast, they're not gonna, not gonna make the effort and spend the money to come out, you know? I don't mean that harshly. I mean they just, you know? Uh, and although Ollie and, and his partner plan to come out in March.

- 03.23.03 But they're combining that with several other things. So, so one reason I, I want to come back is at least I get to see them once a year, you know? And be with them and, and you know, they hurt, too. They, they lost their very good friend.
- 03.23.26 And so that's something I didn't, I kind of blocked out, that I was the only one that was hurting, you know? And I didn't see the pain in all of my friends. And we didn't talk about it until I realized that that's what I was doing. And they were afraid to talk about Gene in front of me because they thought it would hurt me.
- 03.23.56 And I had to, you know, tell them that we, you know, we have to, we have to talk about this because you're hurting, too. And it just, it (?) just helped so, so tremendously, you know? And then we were able, when we got together, to tell the, tell the stories, you know? And uh, I was just uh, that uh, that helped me a lot, too. But uh, I know it helped them.
- 03.24.28 And uh, so I, I like to, you know, I love to be around them. And uh, so I'd like to come back and see my friends. Uh, and the ceremony is very meaningful here. You know? It just, it's just very touching to see all of the people, all of the family members. Uh.
- 03.25.02 Still in pain, too, you know? Like I said, I saw so much sobbing down at, down in the pit uh. And so that, that means something to me to uh, it's kind of being a part of that group, you know? It's not me alone anymore sobbing or, or being upset.
- 03.25.33 It's part of that, part of a group. And uh, and these people should be remembered, you know? Uh. Not to, you know, not to the point of exclusion of something like Oklahoma City or Katrina, you know?
- 03.26.02 Those people must be remembered, too. Uh, what's uh, one of the who was it that read, they read a poem today or I don't believe it was Condoleezza Rice's poem.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 03.26.46 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) I was already down in the pit, and I heard him uh, reading this poem. And it was something about uh, you know, a (?) I don't know, I got the essence that it was something about I continued to, to live through you. Or uh, that, that sort of thing. And you know, I think that's true. And uh, I was very touched by that. (?)
- 03.27.15 I actually stopped and just listened to him read that. And uh. That's (?) like I said, they're, they're a part of us and that's never gonna go away.

03.27.42 I don't uh, you know. Today, like I said, I anticipated going into that pit. I was anxious to go (~JW~)

JW: You thought it would be bad?

LARRY COURTNEY: Kind of yeah. And it wasn't.

JW: It was good?

03.28.09 LARRY COURTNEY: It was good. It was really good. And it, if I come back next year, uh, I don't know if this is gonna come out right, but it's as much to be with that group because today it was very good.

03.28.48 And I don't feel like I have to repeat that next year. I, if I come, I will go into the pit. And I'm sure that there'll be you know, a great deal of feeling.

03.29.10 But today was uh, I don't know, it was, it was so good that it's not that I have to go down there every year. You know, Gene, like I said that, that's the last place he set foot on.

03.29.37 Uh. But we don't usually remember people uh, where they died. I mean, victims of car crashes, their families don't necessarily go to the site of the car crash every year.

03.30.06 They go to the cemetery, you know? Where they're buried. Uh, you'll see crosses along the road and flowers where uh, some people do, you know? But I think the same is true of uh, this area.

03.30.30 Uh, I don't know that, you know, they're, they've been talking about (CLEARS THROAT) the memorials and that all the (?) unidentified remains might be buried in this memorial at Ground Zero. Uh.

03.30.58 And at first I, you know, I thought why? That's, that's where they died, not, you know, not, not. But then I realized I was doing that with Gene at the same time. I was putting him at Ground Zero. And uh. It just isn't, you know, I haven't been back to the cemetery where I laid his ashes.

03.31.30 Since, since I did that. Uh. And yet I come back here. Uh. But I really don't uh, I really don't think that. I mean, the place the person died is just the place they died.

03.32.00 Uh. A memoriam certain on this, on that site. But I don't, I don't want it to be uh, a maudlin site forever. Uh. You know, I hope they do something beautiful and creative with the site. Uh.

JW: Why haven't you gone back to the grave?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.32.56 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) I actually was gonna go back in May (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.33.12 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) It's in Portland. And uh, I wanted to go back in May and then some things came up and then I ended up having to go up Tahoe instead. Uh.

03.33.32 And so I (?) I don't know. There's uh, a possibility that I could go back, but it hasn't been a conscious, you know, I, I realize what, you know, what I'm talking about with, with the car crash thing.

03.33.57 And, and that uh, you know, if I go, go to Portland and I have to stay with my brother uh, but I saw him in March. And then he was down for a weekend in August.

03.34.26 And then I'm gonna see him when I leave Connecticut. I'm gonna meet him in Omaha, Nebraska, and we're gonna RV back to San Jose. Stopping along the way. And uh, so I guess because I see him, it uh, I don't know, it lessens the need for me to go to Portland.

03.35.03 But uh, it's a very good point. And partly maybe because at Ground Zero uh, it was violent.

03.35.36 And horrendous. And in Portland, at the cemetery, it's peace. It's absolute peace. And I can think of him in absolute peace in Portland.

03.36.02 And yet like today, feeling that this is the last place he stepped on, on Earth. And maybe today I was able to put peace into that situation, into Ground Zero. So maybe I, because I feel that uh, he's at so much peace in Oregon uh, it's not, it's not such a need.

03.36.38 I, I never, my family never were people who go to the cemetery a lot. Uh, know uh, I have a cousin who his father died, my uncle, and uh, he goes every Friday to the cemetery. And this

has been going on for well, he died before my dad, so it's been going on 20 years or more. Every Friday.

03.37.11 He goes up and sits on his father's grave and talks to him. And I just, to me is you know, extreme. But uh, I guess it's just that uh, you know, if it's really true that they rest in peace, you know?

03.37.30 Then I (?) guess I don't feel such a need to be there, and after today uh, I may not feel that need that I have to be here once a year. Uh.

JW: Because?

03.37.52 LARRY COURTNEY: Because of, of just feeling him so close today and, and feeling that he has, he and I together have taken that step of coming inside. Uh. And, and maybe now his uh place of rest will become more important than this site to me.

03.38.36 Uh. I don't know. (PAUSE)

03.39.02 You know, he uh, he's in a beautiful garden that the cemetery has. And uh, they actually have a 9-11 memorial with they, and it was after, after we uh, laid Gene to rest that they decided to put this memorial in the garden.

03.39.34 They weren't sure where they were gonna put it, and they decided to put it in the garden, and it's just about two, three, three steps from where Gene is. And uh, it's a really beautiful place and my parents are up there. It's on a beautiful hillside overlooking the valley.

03.40.00 Uh. My parents are up there, my uncle is up there. Uh, Eldon's wife is buried there. Uh. So it kind of feels like, you know, they're, they're all together. And uh, (?)

03.40.30 It's time for me to go up there, even if I just did almost a weekend trip. It's only a little more than an hour flight from San Jose, maybe an hour and 45 minutes, I don't remember. And uh.

03.40.57 I uh, been invited in August, August the 18th, that weekend uh, to come up for a family reunion. And I had made plans to go, and then I realized that the reunion was on Sunday the 21st.

03.41.32 And what they were doing was Eldon was introducing his girlfriend to the family. And uh, my sister was supposed to come out from Nebraska, because it was her 70th birthday, she's 10 years older than I am, almost with in 4 days of exactly 10 years. And uh, she couldn't come. And then I remembered that I had jury duty starting Monday morning at 8:30 and

there was no way I could attend the reunion and get back you know, I mean, I'd have to take the red eye back down here and then uh, go in for jury duty that next morning.

03.42.17 So I, I couldn't go. Uh. And I've been promising that I would come up, you know? So maybe uh, next month uh, in October maybe I can go up for a few days and then we'd go to the cemetery, you know?

JW: What are you looking forward to next year?

03.42.57 LARRY COURTNEY: Oh, gosh. Uh, I don't make many long term plans anymore. Uh. I used to have kind of, well, we can't do this this year, but we can do it next year, or the next. And kind of have plans. And now I can just kind of uh, take it day by day. Uh.

03.43.34 I'd like to make sure in this coming year that I'm financially secure. Uh. I'd like to meet people that uh, I enjoy and uh, develop a friendships uh.

03.44.16 I don't have big aspirations. Uh. I, I have to, you know, I have to keep everything written down.

03.44.34 And I kind of look at the present instead of the future. Uh, I want to see my kids uh, achieve a financial security as well, and that they be happy.

03.44.56 Uh, my daughter uh, is talking about maybe uh, getting pregnant next year, maybe. Uh. And I would look forward to that. Uh. I look forward to being with my grandson. And I hope that in this next year uh, I'll be uh, my granddaughter will be able to come out and spend some time.

03.45.38 And uh, I think mainly that my aspirations for the coming year are more for my children. But uh, I would hope that I can fill some of the void and uh, the loneliness.

03.46.06 And uh, and I hope uh, to get uh, involved in politics again. I, the campaign I worked on uh, uh, well, I let it absorb me, actually, and I can't do that.

03.46.35 But uh, I would like to become more involved again. And this (?) I can be a runner or you know, pass out pamphlets. That's fine, I don't care. But uh, do something. Like 'cos I can't sit back and, and say we have to change this if I'm not willing to work at it.

03.47.01 So uh, I would think that would be you know, pretty much it. I don't, I don't think that, you know, I want to win the Nobel Peace Prize in this next year. Uh. I (?) don't, I should, I guess. I, everybody should set goals.

- 03.47.35 But I don't do it. Uh, at this point. You know, I have hopes that things, that those things will happen. Uh. And in some ways I have to learn how to, how to do that. How to make it happen that way. Uh.
- 03.48.00 But just in general uh, at this, this point in my life, I kind of, I guess I kind of let life just happen. I have been doing that at least for the last year, I know. And uh. I, in my mind I know that that's not good, that's not a good thing.
- 03.48.32 Uh. I think that, that you ought to be able to influence what's happening to you in your life to some extent. Uh, I have to be able to, I have to be able to come out of my shell and actively seek friendships or relationships or whatever I'm seeking.
- 03.49.00 Uh, and right now I'm not doing that at all, you know? It's easier just to sit back and watch life go. And uh, I kind of know that that's got to stop this year. I've got to, I've got to become more active in my, my destiny than what I've, than what I've been in the past year or so. Uh.
- 03.49.35 So I guess that's, that would be my, you know, my main goal for this coming year is to become pro-active in my life, you know? I don't expect to win the lottery or (~JW~)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.50.27 END OF TAPE # LC 32

04.01.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 04.01.14 LARRY COURTNEY: I never was uh, great at remembering things (~JW~) uh, but I did, I can remember birthdays and telephone numbers. And you know, it (?) general things that you remember.
- 04.01.39 Then it just seems that after 9-11, uh, I feel that if you write it down you don't have to remember it. It's already, it's just something you can look at. And I, I don't know why uh.

- 04.02.07 But it kind of goes along, or it happens at least at the same time as when I discovered that you had to use too much energy to be angry or to hold a grudge or whatever.
- 04.02.22 And at that time, I don't know whether it was like to remember all of these things uh, took more energy. Uh, so I write everything down. Uh. I have an agenda book, so that I keep everybody's birthdays and uh, all the important stuff and, and appointments and all of that written down, and I check it every day.
- 04.02.53 Uh, because I just don't remember uh, consciously remember these things. You know, and now with cell phones and computers, you've got everybody's number programmed in, so you don't have to remember their telephone number (~JW~)

JW: Where are you going?

- 04.03.19 LARRY COURTNEY: I'm not sure I know what happened then. I know that that was the pivotal point (~JW~)

JW: You started losing your memory?

- 04.03.26 LARRY COURTNEY: That I, I and maybe it was just that I didn't care enough to control it, that I just let it go. And uh, I find it embarrassing sometimes because I, I have a hard time with names. Uh, I'll meet someone and five minutes later I'll think, what was that person's name? You know?
- 04.03.57 And it's just so, it's, it's embarrassing if I, you know, have to, to meet that person or say that person's name. But uh, things like that. Uh. I don't know, just, just kind of general things, not uh, not specific things.
- 04.04.28 But it, it was, it's. You know, say if I, I forget to look at my agenda book or, or don't look at my agenda book for a week, because I'm doing something else and I don't go in and, and use my office. And uh, and I realize I missed somebody's birthday because I didn't look at my book. And uh, I used to be really good about sending out birthday cards and you know, whatever cards. And anniversary cards and that kind of stuff. And now if I don't, if I don't look at it, uh, that doesn't happen.

JW: That bothers you?

04.05.12 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, it bothers me because uh, it's. Like it's not something that I, I wanted to happen. It's not something that I wanted to let go of. And I don't know whether it's tied into that energy that I was talking about.

04.05.33 Does it, is it just that it takes energy to remember things? And that's, that's why I don't? Uh, that's not a good thing, you know? It's ok that I don't have the energy to be angry at someone. It's ok that I don't have the energy to, you know, hold a grudge. But it's not ok that I don't have the energy to remember something.

04.05.57 And uh, so I don't know whether that's, that's tied together. But it happened at (?) about the same time, you know?

JW: Does it scare you?

04.06.11 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I don't think. Well, there are times that I think uh, are you slipping into senility or Alzheimer's or something? And I know that I'm not, you know? I know that I'm not.

04.06.28 So uh, there are times, there are times when you wonder, but then, you know, I see my doctors uh, every three months, and I know that that's not, not the case. That's not, not happening. So uh, it may just be that I don't uh, make a conscious effort because conscious effort requires energy.

04.07.05 And I, I wonder if I become more active uh, have things to do. (~JW~)

JW: More friends?

04.07.22 LARRY COURTNEY: People to see, and that kind of thing. Uh, you know, if I have a job that requires this or that. Uh. Will that kind of reactivate, because then I, I'll be willing to expend that energy. And uh, so I, I, I uh, I think maybe that that's you know, that's something that definitely has to be worked on because uh, I just don't want to, want that to happen. I don't. So maybe uh, like is ay, expending that energy it'll be uh, I'll be willing to do that, if I can expend it on other things.

04.08.02 That's (?) I'm not sure, but I you know, I would hope that that would happen. So. I don't know what more to say about that.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Do you think most of your improvement has happened in the last 24 hours?

04.09.23 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) Uh, like I said, that was, was such a positive thing that happened today. Uh, that maybe, maybe it is, maybe it is just within the last 24 hours. But I hope to be able to go home and uh, make it work. You know? Not let it fade away. 'Cos I think that's, it's something I definitely have to work on, you know? So.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.09.05 LARRY COURTNEY: And I've let it languish for you know, four years now. A little bit uh, at a time. And particularly in the last year, since I was off, you know, not working. Uh. So. I really think that uh, going back to work in some form or other is gonna be a big help.

04.10.33 Uh, having reasons to get out of my house every day instead of just to go to the bank or go to the grocery store, you know? So uh, I, I think that that's definitely gonna be good for me. And we'll see what happens (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.13.28 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) it's like doing a therapy session (~JW~) and uh, you know? Yeah, I, it, it's good. I enjoy it, I do. (~JW~) And I never feel put upon, so don't, don't think I do.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.14.47 END OF TAPE # LC 33 2005