

TAPE # LC44
Larry Courtney
JIM WHITAKER, Producer/director
PROJECT REBIRTH

01.01.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: I was nervous for the first time this year. Is this a marker or the top of a hill?

01.03.53 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, it, it's, it's actually started quite a bit back. I mean, when I found out that I was selected to read names, you know, I there were so many mixed emotions about that. And I thought I had them all under control. And then when I actually got to New York, uh, it was a little different. And then for some reason, this morning uh, I just, I just, I met with my friend, Oliver, (CLEARS THROAT) excuse me.

01.04.29 Uh, because we have a board meeting for conscious contactor in New York tomorrow uh, which is an all-day thing. And I'm the financial administrator. And all I had seen was the final balance sheet. So I hadn't been involved in it for this past year, other than just the, the balance sheet. And so we met this morning to go over that.

01.05.00 So that I would know what I was talking about tomorrow. And he left. And I was just trying to relax, get myself together and you know, kind of relax. And for some reason, I just got extremely nervous, just extremely nervous. And (?)

JW: How does that look?

01.05.23 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh, my hands shook a little bit, you know? And I just was kind of like uh, I (?) maybe it is five years thing, because it was, it was like oh, my god, you know, this is, we've been at this for awhile. And what is this all gonna mean, and uh, I mentioned it to my, the (CLEARS THROAT) lady I was staying with.

01.06.00 She had been out all morning, and she came in and I said something about being nervous, you know, and she said why? You know, you've done this before, you know, you know these

people. And uh, I realized that I wasn't nervous about coming here today. Uh, that's not what the nerves were about. They are really about Monday. Uh.

01.06.29 It's always a very emotional day anyway. And for it to be five years already uh, and I have a lot of frustration about what has not been done down there, you know. All the (?) political bickering and the money things and all of this stuff that keep it from actually happening down there, you know.

01.06.59 Five years is a lot time for that place to just stay a pit. You know. I understand that they started doing some foundation work in march, but uh.

JW: What does that mean for you?

01.07.20 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I, I just think that there were so many promises made, you know, the first year about what was going to happen down there. And that it would be done as quickly as possible. Particularly the memorial. Uh, I, I think it's an absolute uh, shame. It's just unconscionable that there is not a memorial even started yet. And uh, so I had all of that going on in the back of my mind.

01.07.58 And then of course, yesterday they announced plans for the building, the three other buildings, which I saw in the Times this morning. And I thought. You know, I uh, it was just to me political timing that they would announce it you know, a couple of days before the ceremony and when they've had five years to decide. You know? But uh.

JW:

01.08.59 LARRY COURTNEY : Uh. Frustration I think is, is the biggest thing. Uh, we've talked before about I don't have much anger any more, you know? I don't know whether that's age or whether it's just that after 9-11, I realized that it was just wasted energy to have anger and to carry grudges. It takes a lot of energy to be angry and to uh, even to be frustrated it takes a lot of energy.

01.09.33 And I would rather not spend my energy there. But getting all caught up in the planning for 9-11, for this particular ceremony, in the way that I, I have become involved in this year's

ceremony uh, all of those things kind of bubbled to the top. Uh, there are things, those things I had kind of consciously set aside because I didn't want to spend that energy, uh.

01.10.03 Not that I was pushing them down or repressing them. I just made a conscious decision that that's not where I wanted to spend my energy. And then getting this altogether for uh, Monday uh, it really kind of, they step back in front of me and I had to face them again.

01.10.33 But uh. (~JW~) To face those frustrations and those, and those anxieties about the things that I wasn't, didn't want to spend the energy on to begin with. And so once again I have to make a conscious effort to set those aside. It's not worth uh, it's not worth the emotional drain to dwell on them.

01.11.01 Just, just let them go. They'll get there. Uh, I, I told my, the uh, Evelyn, the girl I'm staying with, I said you know, I wish that they had maybe even just planted a tree there, you know, and, and just, just a temp, even a temporary something. Uh, I understand that they've opened a temporary museum or something like that close to the site.

01.11.32 I haven't seen it uh, I haven't been down there at all since I go here. Which is you know, a good first step at least. 'Cos I was really sad when uh, so many places took down the missing posters and all of those things that had you know, I thought really meant something.

01.11.59 But I also know that you know, that space is precious and like they had one in, in Grand Central Station, I remember it was just a temporary one. And uh, Eugene was right on the front panel. I mean, you walked into there and you, that's one of the first faces you saw. So I was sad when, when they took it down. But I also realized you know, it was, it was a, a big space that they needed to utilize. But uh, so I'm glad that at least this temporary museum is open.

01.12.21 And uh, I, I don't know whether it's open to the public yet.. it is? But so I'll try to see it then while I'm here. And uh, that would be nice. But I, I just don't. you know, I don't want to become involved in a blame game or any of the politics of the families who don't want this particular memorial.

01.13.06 They want something else. They you know, I mean, I've never been consulted by any group whatsoever about what's going on down there. So I've sort of been out of it. And to me, I don't really care as long as it's something tasteful and uh, will evoke peace and calm and memories, you know, as much as there could be peace and calm with those kind of memories.

01.13.33 But uh, so I, I just want to not hold on to those things that I've already once set aside, you know, and uh, and move forward with what's ever happening.

JW: What about the conscious effort to take anger and put it aside?

01.14.50 LARRY COURTNEY : Now, I, I can't say that I (CLEARS THROAT) have a visual image of you know, like a little box or, or a big box. Uh, I just know that uh, I (?) can make that conscious effort. And I think that one thing we have never talked about uh, I don't know why it hasn't ever come up, but I grew up in a very uh, faith-oriented family. Uh, I grew up in church and uh, I, I always uh, I, I don't like the, the word religious.

01.15.35 (STUTTER) Somebody is a religious person or whatever. I think that somebody can be a spiritual person and not be labeled a religious person. Uh, and I think since 9-11, I've relied on that basis. Uh, from my childhood and, and through my adulthood.

01.15.59 Uh, and I'm able to uh, not always use prayer to do it, but very often be able to bring that peace about in, in myself through prayer and through trust, I guess. That uh, it's going to happen. With something, you know, it's going to happen, whatever is going to happen is going to happen and I don't have any control over it.

01.16.34 So why get all tied in knots about it, you know? So I think that's, that's if I look deep down, I think that's the basis for being able to let it go, you know? It's not my problem. I can't you know, this is like even when I get somebody offends me or uh, does something that would normally I would just be angry about.

01.17.05 Well, it's, it's not my problem, I can't do anything about it. Uh, and if I can do something about it, then, then I will try to do something about it. But if I can't, why am I going to stew about it? Why am I going to hold on to it? I just let it go. Uh, but there used to be a saying let go and let God or something like that.

01.17.30 And uh, even though that's not my conscious thought (?) at the time, but that's really the basis of it, you know, if, I can't handle it, so I trust that somebody else can. You know, whatever anybody wants to call it. But uh, so, so I think that that's, and (?) I hadn't actually labeled it that way before (CLEARS THROAT) excuse me.

01.18.01 (STUTTER) I think my box, I would say, is my faith and my trust in God and so I can put it in his hands instead of mine. You know. And just, and just leave it there. Sometimes I take it back, but you know, I try, I try to leave it there.

JW: Do you think that before 9-11 you would have said the same thing?

01.18.46 LARRY COURTNEY : I didn't act on it in the same way. I didn't. I mean, that's, that's been something all my life that ingrained with my parents and, and with church and whatever.

01.19.02 Uh, but I didn't act on it as much as I do now. Uh, I used, used to have a really bad temper. And uh, I (?) found that uh, since 9-11 I don't. I, if (?) I do, I, I know how to control it and I know how to let it go.

01.19.32 Uh, and before 9-11 I knew that's what I was supposed to do, I just didn't always act on it, you know? I tried. But I wasn't always successful. And I won't say (?) I'm successful all the time now. But I am better about it. And part of that, I think, is the horrific things that have happened.

01.20.03 You know, to this country. Uh, and to me personally. Uh. Have changed my perception uh, have made me realize that I wasn't always doing that. I wasn't always putting it in God's hands, or you know, whatever.

01.20.28 Uh, I was trying to, I was trying to do it all on my own, you know. And I, I uh, I don't have to do that now. I don't. so I think that that's uh, for some reason 9-11 was that, that turning point, and then all the things that happened after that uh, have made me realize even more.

01.21.00 I don't have that control. So if I don't have control, that's like when (?) the difference between driving and being a passenger. When you're driving, you are responsible, you have control, or you're supposed to have control of, of the automobile or whatever. When you're a passenger, hopefully (LAUGHS) hopefully you can trust that driver so that it's not in your control and you can let it go.

01.21.36 You can let that, that responsibility be that the driver's. So I just have to trust that God is the driver, and I'm just a passenger, so I can, I can uh, kind of analyze it in that way.

JW: There could be an inflection point of 9-11 to help change you?

- 01.22.27 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I wouldn't say that I didn't at all. I (?) had anger about it for a little while and then I thought, you know, I, I wasn't in control of it. And I don't know what the, what the purpose of that could possibly be. But uh, it happened, so uh, I, I was not in control of it, you know? I can't, I certainly can't say that I didn't have anger after that.
- 01.22.58 Uh, but uh, it was only about, about a month after that that I was interviewed for a German documentary. And uh, that's one of the first questions they asked me, are you angry? Do you hate the Arabs? Do, you know?
- 01.23.30 And I think that's the first time I put it into words, is that uh, I don't have that kind of energy. And no, I don't hate anybody. I hate uh, again, is another emotion that just saps your energy. Uh, holding a grudge saps your energy. I don't, I'm not, you know. I uh, the, the people responsible uh, I would like to see brought to justice, but I can't say that I actually hate them.
- 01.24.01 You know? They have, they have an agenda that I don't understand. Uh, will never understand. Uh, and I don't like what I do understand about it. But I don't hate them. I don't, I, I.
- 01.24.28 If I was brought face-to-face with Osama bin Laden uh, if he were to be captured and I, I wouldn't want to hit him, I wouldn't want to spit in his face. I would want to ask him why, but I, I, I couldn't, I can't say that I hate the man, you know? I hate what happened. But I don't, I can't say that I hate the man or that you know, or the idea of, ideology.
- 01.25.00 I just don't understand it. I don't understand how what seems to me the motivation of hate, you know? This is uh, how can you hate somebody so badly that you want to kill them, you want to destroy them, you want to annihilate their culture. How can you hate that badly? I don't understand that.
- 01.25.30 Uh. So I, I can't say that I you know, that I hate anybody or, or, or have that kind of resentment about it.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Bad things happen all the time and spirituality is important in coping with them; how does that sit in life and faith?

01.28.09 LARRY COURTNEY : I mean, you know, I, I could have gone out and bought a gun and gone out looking for somebody, you know? And a lot of people did. They you know. Uh, but.

JW: What's the thing that happens there?

01.28.37 LARRY COURTNEY : I'm not really sure that I can, that I can pinpoint it or put a you know, but now that you have children uh, you look at a relationship differently. I mean, when children are little, particularly when they're very little, you know, they depend upon you 100%.

01.29.06 You are their life. I mean, you are the one who is protecting them. You are the one who is teaching them, you are the one who is uh, responsible for them. In all ways. And the way I grew up, I had this very loving family. And still do.

01.29.29 My parents re gone, but you know, my brothers and sisters and my family are very loving. But I grew up associating and being taught that the relationship we have with our parents is the relationship we should have with our, our god. Our spiritual being, whatever anybody wants to call it.

01.30.01 He's responsible for us. He's, he protects us, and yes, bad things happen. Yes. Bad things happen. Uh, and you can, and you can certainly go the other way. But just for me and for what I, I've learned, you know, over the years, going the other way is not just not uh, it's not possible for me.

01.30.36 It is just not within my nature to be able to go the other way. Uh, some uh, I, I don't remember whether it was when I was in the Air Force or whatever, and somebody said against guns, you know, and I hated going to the rfile range and having to handle the M-16 and all of that.

01.31.05 And uh, somebody said something about, yeah, but if somebody came at you with a gun, wouldn't you want to shoot them? And I had a really hard time with that, with that question. Uh, to protect my family and, and whatever uh, would I do that? I don't know that I'd do that, but I don't know that I wouldn't.

01.31.29 I mean, but 'cos the circumstances would merit things. But uh, I think that's kind of uh, all of this, if you, if you don't have any trust in someone other or something other than yourself, then my god, the responsibility is enormous. You are responsible for your own world.

- 01.32.02 And I'm not saying that you don't have to work at, at achieving what you want to achieve. But you are not responsible for the world. But if you don't have any trust in anything else, you take on that responsibility. And uh, I don't want that on my shoulders. You know, I want to be responsible in ways that I can be and ways that I should be.
- 01.32.31 But I don't have to be responsible for the world. I don't have to be responsible that 9-11 happens. It happened. It will, it was not my doing, it was not anything that I did to cause it. It happened, and I couldn't, I couldn't do anything about it. So I'm not gonna take on the responsibility of uh, all of the, you know hatred and anger and all of that.
- 01.33.02 That's, that's just taking on a role that I don't have to play. I just don't have to do that. So I'm able to for the most part, uh, not always successfully, but for the most part I'm able to say I, I'm not responsible for that. You know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Did you ever have a moment after 9-11 of feeling guilt or responsibility?

- 01.33.50 LARRY COURTNEY : No. I well, right after 9-11 I didn't feel anything for, for awhile. Uh, I didn't even uh, well, first of all, I, I didn't admit to myself that Gene was gone for at least two weeks. Uh, then when I finally you know, came to the realization that he was gone, then I was, I was kind of numb for awhile.
- 01.34.27 But as for guilt or responsibility, no, no. that's never crossed my mind that I was.

JW: You had maybe felt something?

- 01.34.53 LARRY COURTNEY : And I know that uh, certain very right-wing conservatives and religious right-wing people have said that bad things are happening to America because we've turned away from God and (?) I can't remember what it was that this, this happened because we're allowing homosexuality in, into the (?) you know into the American culture.
- 01.35.28 And I can't remember who said it and what the context was, but it dealt particularly with, oh, I think it was Phelps come to think of it, that this bad thing oh, it was Hurricane Katrina. It was that, that happened because we had turned away from god and we were allowing

homosexuality to rule our politics and all of this stuff, and we were being punished because of that. And I thought, (?). I don't get that.

01.36.01 I don't get that, where that came from. You know. (CLEARS THROAT) I've read scriptures all my life and I never found that in there, you know? Uh, I used to be able to quote scriptures and proverbs and psalms. And now that I'm older and whatever (LAUGHS) I have my senior moments and I can't remember things like that.

01.36.29 But uh, I know that that's not, not it, anything that you know, you can, you can blame a tragedy on something that we've done, and so I don't think (?) that's why I don't feel responsible or guilty for a terrible act like that, even that somebody else perpetrated. You know, a natural disaster is a natural disaster.

01.37.01 And whether, whether we're being punished, I just don't think that, that the Creator I know about works that way. I just don't, don't believe that. Uh, I'm sure that the, you know, other people have other opinions, so. But uh, that's certainly not mine, and so why, why shoulder guilt and responsibility for something that you can't control or you can't do.

01.37.32 So. You know, I don't feel any of that. I never have.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Religion and faith have not been encompassed by our interviews; do you feel this year has been different?

01.38.44 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, I've come to a couple of realizations this year about myself. That kind of reinforced some things that I knew. (?) I already knew but I just had kind of not thought about them for a long time.

01.39.04 And uh, one of the points was uh, what, what brought to mind the fact that we hadn't really talked about faith is uh, I was talking to Croi on the phone, preparing to come here and everything. And uh, we were talking about (LAUGHS) we were talking about men and, and you know, had I met anybody etc, etc.

01.39.33 And I said something about I was praying, and she said, oh, are, are you just, you know, how do you mean that? You know, is that a, just a, a general prayer or is that a spiritual prayer?

And I said, yeah, it's a very spiritual prayer. It's you know, I mean, it's, and she said oh, 'cos we've never really gotten into that, and, and I, I don't know why.

01.40.03 Uh, but because I've come to, one of the realizations uh, the biggest one for me, you know. I've been alone for 5 years. I've made two terrible mistakes in that five years with rushing into something that I should not have done, with people I should not have done it with.

01.40.30 And it cost me tremendously in both emotion uh, self-esteem, and money. And uh, I realized that I made some really bad choices. And uh, one of those was shortly after 9-11.

01.40.57 Uh, it, well, it was actually in December. And it was right after my mother died. And I just was, I was totally unable to make a decision at that point. I was just nothing. Uh, and this person stepped in and started making decisions in my life.

01.41.29 And uh, I just went with it and just. And when I finally was kind of got my bearings and I realized, hey, wait a minute, I'm not being helped, I'm being controlled. You know. And the when I finally realized that, I, I cut that loose, I got away from that.

01.41.59 And then I made another stupid mistake which was my own doing. And then this year, uh, because I'm single still, and have no you know, I haven't met anybody that interests me. And uh.

JW: Why do you think that is?

01.42.23 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, part of it is I'm not out looking. You know. When I was younger, the way to meet gay men was to go to gay bars. You know, that's the, that was the culture, when I came out everybody, that's where you met people. And that's actually where I met Gene. I met him in a gay bar. But it was a, that, that worked out very well. And but I'm not into, at my age, going to gay bars and hanging out. It's a young, very young culture, you know, in that kind of scene.

01.43.02 That's not what I'm interested in. And so I'm not really sure where and so I'm not out there and I came to the point where I realized how lonely I was, because uh, here I am now living in California. And I have my daughter in town. And her best friend who is now my housemate.

01.43.31 And basically those are the only two people I can talk to, you know? I don't have any other friends that I, I can't even, I don't know anybody to invite over for dinner, you know, or to go

out for a drink or whatever. And I saw, I was feeling bad about this, you know, why, why don't, what, what's wrong with me that I don't attract somebody. And I was feeling bad about that.

- 01.44.00 And my housemate uh, has a new boyfriend. And they brought home uh, a DVD of Tyler Perry I think is his name. He does, he did the Mama's Reunion. And he did, he's written a couple of other plays that haven't been made into movies, but they tape them, and they put them on DVD.
- 01.44.31 And so there was one called Mama's Class Reunion. And it's funny, you know, very funny. But it's also very gospel-based. A lot of gospel music. And there was this one particular thing about it uh, there was a woman who had, who was quite wealthy. And she was lonely and she went out and really found a man. And he was younger.
- 01.45.02 And he's been cheating on her. Well, her best friend who is at, who is in this hotel, was talking about you know, we haven't seen you in church for a long time, where have you been? And she said, well, my marriage has been keeping me busy and but anyway, so then this woman sings this song, which is a gospel song, and it's about what it said was you went out and found somebody.
- 01.45.35 Instead of praying for God to provide you with the right person. You just went out and found somebody. You didn't wait for the right person to come along. And I realized that that's, that was a real turning point for me, in that I had been almost desperately looking.
- 01.46.00 And what I needed to do was just wait. And be content in the state I was in, if, if I'm to remain single the rest of my life, ok. I can, I can now do that. I can now come, I can, I can give that, that other baggage up of having to have somebody else to make me a whole person. I'm a whole person all by myself.
- 01.46.31 And I would like if, if it's, if it's the right thing, I would like to meet another whole person. So that we can be two whole people together. But if I don't, I'm still a whole person. You know, I don't, I don't have to rely on somebody else to make me a whole person. Uh, I can, I can live the next 20 or 30 years if I'm granted that much time, all by myself. I can do that, you know? Uh.

JW: You seem to grasp onto the idea of being a whole person?

- 01.47.14 LARRY COURTNEY : Well, because I'd lost sight of that. Uh. 'Cos all of our years together, Gene and mine, you know, uh, it never occurred to me that we were both really whole people complementing each other.
- 01.47.28 Uh, we always kind of looked as though we were each other's halves, you know, and then, you know, conversation uh, somebody says, and this is my better half or you know, whatever that. Uh, you're not halves. You know, and, and you don't go into a relationship to give 50%. You go into a relationship to give 100%. And what made me realize is that I was a whole person when, in the relationship with Gene for those 14 years.
- 01.48.01 I was really a whole person, and he was a whole person, and we complemented each other beautifully. I lost sight of that after he died, and I felt less than whole. I felt that I wasn't, I wasn't whole because I didn't have him with me. I lost sight of the fact that uh, I was still 100%. I had lost 100% of him, but I, I was still 100% of me.
- 01.48.31 And when I (CLEARS THROAT) that, that particular gospel piece just struck me as (?) and made me realize that uh, made me remember that I'm still a whole person. I'm still you know, I'm still uh, everything I need to be, well, nobody's everything they need to be. But as much as possible, I'm everything I need to be.
- 01.49.02 And if I meet somebody else who is everything they need to be uh, then, and we'll complement each other. That's, that's wonderful. But (?) I'm not gonna lose sight again of the fact that I, I am a whole person just by myself. You know? Uh, I have uh, everything I need to be me.
- 01.49.35 It doesn't, it doesn't depend on somebody else. I don't have to depend on somebody else to be me. And I (?) just had lost sight of that. And it was nice to be able to come back to that. You know? And I think that when you can really say, well, (?)
- 01.50.00 I can't speak for anybody else, I really can't speak for anybody else. But for me, being able to say, you know what? I'm, I'm a whole person, I'm a good person. I'm a decent person, and I have you know, so much. I have so much to offer and I receive so much from others that uh, I, I can be just me for the rest of my life if that's the way it's supposed to be.
- 01.50.32 And it's, it's, it was a real, a real release for me. Uh, one of the, one of the best things that's happened to me in this five years' period is to have actually heard that and faced the fact that I had lost, lost sight of that part of me. There was, it's like when Gene died, I thought, part of me died, too. It didn't. It morns, but he didn't die.

01.51.03 And so now that I, now that I can say to myself, you're whole. You're whole. You're hurting, you're grieving still, you're mourning still, but you're whole. (PAUSE) So. That's where I am with that.

JW: That's a profound distinction.

02.02.11 END OF TAPE # LC44

02.01.00 PICTURE UP

JW : What does the mourning process take away?

02.01.30 LARRY COURTNEY: For me, I can only speak for me. In reality, it doesn't take away, but I thought that it did. Uh.

JW: But if you thought it?

02.02.00 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, uh, yeah. Uh, it, it was a reality, you know, at the time, that uh, I was not acting as a whole person.

JW: What does that look like?

02.02.13 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, what does that look like? (LAUGHS) I was letting other people fill that gap that I thought was there, that I should not have.

02.02.33 But I was not capable of making that distinction at the time. Uh, I think that for me the (?) mourning process uh, became a depression that I was not able to make, decisions that I would have been able to make prior to 9-11.

JW: Such as?

- 02.03.06 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, one uh, I, I couldn't, I could no longer decide on what tie to wear to work, I just would, I would look at the ties and I would just go I don't know. I don't know. And somebody would come along and (LAUGHS) say wear that one, it goes with the shirt. I mean, it, just that simple a thing.
- 02.03.29 Uh, I got through my days at work making the decisions that were work-related, but decisions involving myself uh. I guess I just didn't feel at that point worthy of making those decisions. I didn't uh, why, part of that and part of that mourning process for me is why am I still here and he's not?
- 02.03.59 You know? Which I think is anybody who goes through a traumatic experience, or even, even if it's a lingering uh, uh, you know, my brother's wife lingered for a year in terrible pain and misery with lung cancer. And at some point, he said why her and not me? So I, it's not just traumatic but I think the trauma uh, kind of sharpens it.
- 02.04.29 Kind of uh, it compresses it. I mean, uh, some people have time to realize that this is going to happen. But when you kiss somebody goodbye in the morning and they don't come home that night uh, it's like that. You know? And suddenly (CLEARS THROAT) you're faced with all of those insecurities that you might have been able to get through over a period of time or to get in, at least get really good and into.
- 02.05.05 And uh, facing it that way (?) I mean, just being hit head-on with it that way uh, it, it was, it's just so devastating that to me, for, for me, it just like dulled, dulled my psyche or whatever. Uh, to the point that I, I really, I wasn't, I wasn't whole at that point.
- 02.05.40 Uh, to myself. I didn't think I was. You know? And we've spoken about my, I call my angel uh, my cousin in Connecticut, and she's you know, she has just washed over me uh, (?) and was right there and, and.
- 02.05.59 And I asked her after this well, first particular bad decision I made with this person. Uh, I said, she said something about uh, I knew this wasn't, wasn't right. I just, I just knew it wasn't right. And I said, well, why didn't you tell me? And she said, because you couldn't have heard me (?). I knew you had to let this happen, and you would come to it.
- 02.06.29 You know, and uh, it, it just, but it took me a long time to uh, put myself together again. I'm still doing it. I mean, I, in, in many ways I'm still doing it. There are still a lot of things that I'm dealing with. But the, the main focus, the, the main uh, my main being, now I can trust.

- 02.07.07 I, I am like I say I (?) realize that like I lost sight of the fact, of that fact. Because I was so desperately uh, missing this person who had been in my life for 14 years.
- 02.07.33 Uh. Not comprehending you know, why he wasn't there any more. Uh, and, and I just, I simply lost sight of that, and it took me a long time to put it back together. That uh, this uh, I guess is kind of like a puzzle that gets messed up at some point.
- 02.08.02 And but you get it back together, you know, and it become that whole picture of whatever it is. Uh, and I'm certainly, I, I certainly don't mean to sound arrogant or uh, better than anybody else 'cos I'm not. But I, I have just come, come to realize that the person I always was, I lost sight of with, through the mourning process.
- 02.08.37 Uh, and let other people kind of tell me who I was. And when I, when I finally realized that I was doing that, and that I wasn't remembering who I was and how grounded I was, then uh, I, I could, can I can finally say that I (?) can get back to that.
- 02.09.06 I can claim it again, I can be it again. And I have become that again. And I pray that I never lose, lose that again. You know? I, I think that uh, as (?) this has been a real epiphany for me this, this past year.
- 02.09.30 In uh, in becoming, in becoming that, that whole again. You know, to, to know that I'm that whole. Uh, which is certainly not to say that I am over what has happened, you know? It's the, the, the pain is still there, the hurt is still there. But I'm not, I'm not missing a part of me, you know?
- 02.10.01 I'm missing a whole person that isn't there anymore, but I'm not missing a part of me. Uh.

JW: Did you see the cartoon about the shark in the water?

- 02.10.20 LARRY COURTNEY: And then they come back together? (~JW~) And I think that kind of, that's a good analogy for what, how I felt is that you know, I, I was, I was going through life and it became Gene and I as, as an entity and then that was cut in half. You know? But then I realized that it really, it really wasn't that. Uh, it was just two whole entities pulled apart. But one whole (?) entity was left standing, you know, and that's me.
- 02.11.02 And so I, I, I can. I can just hold onto that. I, I know that to be a fact now. I, I know that in my very inner being, that that is a fact. Uh. I'm not, I don't, I can't say that I say that 24-7,

because I certainly have my moments when that's, that doesn't when I forget that, you know?
But uh.

JW: What's that like?

02.11.44 LARRY COURTNEY: That's like being lost again. Uh. When I, and it, it happens when I least expect it. You know, uh.

JW: Sometimes I feel small when I wake up?

02.12.13 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. I, I have those kind of things. But that's, that doesn't, that doesn't tear me apart as much as the unexpected uh. An example was there was a, a thing uh, Gene's birthday is May 18th.

02.12.32 And my housemate and a friend decided to, and I (?) it wasn't even a conscious thing on my part, I didn't even kind of realize what was going on at the time, but they decided to take me to San Francisco for the day. And (?) and distract me from what day it was. 'Cos it, his birthday is still a hard day for me.

02.12.57 And uh, so we were at San Francisco and we were having a wonderful time. Well, uh, they, they ended up in a terrible fight, and it was a horrible scene, and I tried to patch it up and do things, and, and it didn't work. And I went to bed, and suddenly everything just crashed in on me. And I literally sobbed for two hours, at least two hours.

02.13.33 And it was just. It was external things happening, you know, and happening suddenly, that kind of, they pinpoint that what I think is that missing half. You know?

02.13.58 And, and when, when I, when I (?) only think of a missing half, then that, that makes me a half again. And that's, that's when it, it gets to me. And when I'm able to get, you know, after I get through it, and then I come back to myself, and I, I say ok, that was an incident that you know, it happened and, and it's, it's OK.

02.14.29 They're gonna happen. Uh, you know, be torn apart several times, many times, before you die. And you'll come back together again, you know? You'll you know it' just a momentary or maybe it's a day, you know? Maybe you have a really bad day, like you say, you wake up

feeling small and, and you're, nothing's going right and uh, you stub your toe when you get out of bed and, you know it just, it's just a bad day.

02.15.04 And uh, then you know, you (?) I try to put it in perspective. You know, I, I pray every night before I go to sleep and I try to put it in perspective as to what has happened that day, you know, why did I feel so bad about whatever? If and maybe nothing, maybe nothing. Uh, but why wasn't I feeling good about myself that day?

02.15.31 And I try, I try consciously every night to release it. Uh. Be thankful for the good things that have happened, and to try to understand or, or give over control of the bad things that have happened. Uh. And I have to, I (?) have to do that every day but that's just a, you know, the, the bad days are certainly much, much less than the good days.

02.16.05 So I uh. You know, I (?) feel (CLEARS THROAT) so blessed in many ways. Uh, and this is from a gay perspective, but so many gay men uh, were never married, they, they don't have children, you know, they don't have grandchildren.

02.16.32 I have those things, I have kind of the best of two worlds, if you want to say that. Uh. I have children who love me. Uh, uh, grand, a grandson that I absolutely adore. A granddaughter who I don't know as well because we've, we've not been together as much. But uh, she certainly loves me and I love her. Uh.

02.17.01 And knowing that, and, and having that kind of support uh, helps me look at the, the good days in a much better light and the bad days in a, in a much lesser light, you know? It doesn't uh, go through a bad day, ok, that, that's fine. You know, you're still uh.

02.17.28 Another example of that is that uh, I have peripheral neuropathy which is a, a nerve disease that affects your extremities. It (?) affects my fingertips a little but it particularly affects my feet. And my feet hurt all the time. All the time. No matter what. And it affects how I walk. Uh, there've been times when I know people think I'm drunk on the street.

02.17.58 Because I shift and I'm not walking in a straight line. And uh, sometimes I think, oh, man. I am so tire of this, and, and this hurts and I'm just really tired of it. And it happened just today when I was waiting to come up here. I was outside and my feet were just killing me and I, I thought I'm just really sick of this. And then this woman came out of the hotel to get on the bus.

02.18.32 And she was hardly able to walk across the street. That her legs were obviously uh, the cartilage or something in her knees had deteriorated, or her, her feet or whatever, but she was

hardly able to move, and I thought, what am I complaining about? What do I have to complain about? I'm fully ambulatory. I'm you know, so I've got a little pain, so what? You know?

02.19.00 It's things like that that bring you back to the center. And you know, make you, make you realize, yeah, you got aches and pains. You're not 20 years old anymore. And but that doesn't make you less a person. You know? And you're certainly luckier than a lot of people, or uh, whatever luck is, I don't know.

02.19.27 But uh. It's things like that that bring me back to that, that same uh, in different ways, but that same sense of you're, you're a person, you're a whole person, you know?

JW: Did that wholeness idea just come out of the blue? What has it been like for the last five years?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.22.04 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, yeah, and uh, I had, I have an analogy but I, I want to go to the (~JW~) grabbing you by the scruff of the neck. (~JW~) That's, that's kind of what God has done to me in this year. Uh, first of all, even before I came, saw this movie or this DVD.

02.22.33 Uh, I realized how much I missed being a part of a religious community or a spiritual community uh, (?) going to church, you know, and worshipping with, within a community. Because a church is not a building, it's (?) a community of people. And I had always had that.

02.22.59 Uh, sporadically when I was in New York, always before that. And then (~JW~)

JW: Did Gene take the place of church?

LARRY COURTNEY: In, in many ways. Yeah, I (?) I allowed that to happen.

JW: What about that?

- 02.23.16 LARRY COURTNEY: Ok, I'll come back to that. (~JW~) But I started going to, well, I started searching for what I felt would be a comfortable family home a, a community home, you know?
- 02.23.30 Uh, people who believed the same way I did, and, and uh, so I (?) came into this uh, church, it's the United Church of Christ, and their uh, stated mission, or mission statement I guess is what it really is, is that we are an encouraging and accepting congregation. Which is a, in totality. I mean, it's not just that they accept different races, they accept different whatever.
- 02.24.03 But uh, different genders are important, different uh, homosexual, straight uh, you know, whatever. And so I felt that this was something that I could maybe be comfortable in. Well, I, I've been going, been attending for about not quite a year. Uh. Not ever Sunday because I, I still have been doing a lot of traveling for one reason or another.
- 02.24.38 But uh, it was nice to find, to, to, it's nice to be back sitting in a pew on Sunday morning and worshiping and, and in fellowship with others, you know, of a like mind. And uh, I think that that was the beginning of God picking me up by the scruff of my neck.
- 02.25.03 And then looking at this video was the shaking part and saying, this is what I've been trying to tell you. You know? This is what I've been trying to prepare you for this year, this is, this is what you're to get now. Understand that you are a whole person, and stop, you know, being this kind of half a person that, that you've let yourself become.
- 02.25.31 And the other, the analogy that, that I was thinking of before is like, before 9-11, I felt like I was walking in, in full light, you know? The, the switch was shut off on 9-11. And I was in, plunged into darkness in, in a sense. And then it was like the dimmer was kind of brought up a little bit, notches at a time.
- 02.26.00 And at this point, it's, it's pretty much full, full power again. And it's not just uh, I think it's the spiritual uh. Spiritual searching and uh, remembering that has brought that, that back..
- 02.26.33 And it started, like I say, started very dim and, and has come to this almost full power. And uh. I, I don't know that it's ever, it's ever ended task, you know? It's, it's something you have, you work on all your life. But uh, but I feel, you know, like a full, like I'm on full power now, I'm, I'm under full power light instead of being in the dim whatever.
- 02.27.10 And now I've forgotten the other ting we talked about (LAUGHS). But uh, (~JW~)

JW: That was a good way of explaining. Gene was like your church in a lot of ways?

- 02.28.18 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, no, it, it is, and I didn't realize until we were just now talking about it, but I uh, prior to meeting Gene uh, I was very involved in a church.
- 02.28.32 Uh, in Maryland for 7 years. Uh, and it gotten to the point that I was way over-involved. I mean, I was there like 6 nights a week, plus Sunday services and what not. And I was on every committee there was, there was. And sang in the choir and I rang hand bells. And I did all of these things. And my life was consumed, basically.
- 02.28.57 And this was, and, and it (?) was consuming my children as well, because they were there and, and uh, and then after the separation even my ex-wife stayed in that, in that same community. (CLEARS THROAT) And then when I moved to New York, I met Gene in October, and we moved to New York in April of the next year. Uh, and when I moved in April uh, I decided I was, I was exhausted with church activities.
- 02.29.35 Not the spiritual side of it, but the activities of it. And so I sought out a church in New York and there just happened to be one about 3 blocks up the street from me. And it was the same denomination that I had been involved in, in Maryland.
- 02.29.57 And so I started going there. And then I decided that I, I felt very comfortable and at home. Now Gene was not a church-going person. Which is not to say he wasn't a spiritual either. I mean, he grew up in a black family in North Carolina wit the gospel and music and all of that. But uh. I felt that, I felt a nice community sense there. And so I decided to join that church.
- 02.30.32 But I, I talked, I sat and talked to the pastor beforehand, and I said this has been my experience for the last 7 years, and I, although I want to be a part of the community, I really need to kind of rest and basically I just want to sit in the back pew. And just participate in the service you know, fine. There was no problem with that, you can do that if you want. That's no problem.
- 02.30.58 So I decided, I, I joined the (?) on, on a Sunday, and the following Wednesday I got a letter from the worship committee that on this particular Sunday I was gonna be an acolyte, on this particular Sunday I was gonna be a reader. And there was a whole schedule for the next month. And what committee did I want to serve on, you know? And I went back and talked to the pastor and he said, well, I don't know, that was, that was a mistake, that shouldn't have happened.

- 02.31.27 But I got another letter the next week. And so I drifted away from that. And that's when I think, I think you're right. That Gene kind of became my church, and the, and the friends that we made in New York, we kind of became that community that I had, that uh, it was not a, you know, a community of faith as, as such. But it was, it provided that kind of structure in, in a sense. In a sense.
- 02.32.00 And then when Gene died, uh, and I continued to live in New York for 2 more years, 3 more years, even though the friends were there, it wasn't as much, you know, it wasn't, I mean, we didn't, I didn't see them all as much as I used to and (?) then my kids, you know, convinced me that I really should (?) come to California and be with them and with my grandchildren, and I agreed that that's, that's where I needed to be.
- 02.32.39 Uh, so then I lost even that community, after losing Gene I lost that community and, and had to start over again. And I think maybe in a sense, looking back at it, that what, now this is gonna sound really preachy.
- 02.33.05 But what God was trying to say to me was that you've made people, you've made friends and, and your loved ones uh, your god basically, your, that's your spiritual community, and that's not where it should be. You know, I mean, they uh, they have to be, you know, very important to you, they are very important to you.
- 02.33.34 But there's also this other, other dimension that you've lost track of, you've lost sight of, you know? And that's when I started coming back around and saying, that's, you know, that's, that's like I say that's when I say he started grabbing me, and, and gently, very gently shaking.
- 02.33.57 Until I saw that video and that was like, almost like having you by the back of the neck and being thrown against the wall, and do you get it now? You know? Do you get what I'm trying to say? You know, it's like uh, I mean, there's so many, many points in Scripture when God as so patient with his people. And they, they would be doing fine and then all of a sudden they'd kind of, and he'd have to smack them.
- 02.34.28 You know? To get them to listen again. And I think that's kind of what, what this was all about. Uh, this year was all about, bringing me back to the point that Ok, I've let you do your thing, now, for these years. And it's time to come, come back and realize that you're not uh, you're not a whole person without me. Yeah.

02.34.58 I just, I just happened (LAUGHS). I, you know, I, I know that I'm a whole person, but I just realized that, that's what he was trying to tell me, is you're not a whole person without me. Because I've always, I've always been a whole person with him prior to, you know, leave, kind of leaving that aside. And uh, not that I'm gonna, you know, I'm not going to seminary, I'm not going to become a preacher. I'm not going to stand on the street corner with a Bible thumping and whatever.

02.35.31 But I know, but I will know in my own self that that's true. You know? And uh, yeah, I think that that's, that's kind of that's what, what that process was this year.

JW: Why are you nervous about the names?

02.36.04 LARRY COURTNEY: Number one, I'm nervous in front of crowds. I've never been a good, I mean, I can talk one-on-one a blue streak and people can't shut me up. But- put me up in front of a crowd and I just freeze. Uh, I remember when I was in high school. And I was in the choir. And every year we had to do two solos, as part of our grade.

02.36.36 I just was so petrified. Had such stage fright. People were actually gonna be looking at me and you know, (?) realizing that I wasn't any good. You know, I was very insecure about, I was very insecure about myself. In, in total, in those years, particularly in those years.

02.37.00 And uh, and I never took debate or anything like that in high school because I was just too afraid to. I'd have trouble getting up in front of the class and, and reading a paper or whatever. So. There's that part about being in front of, you know, number one, this crowd that's there. And it's a very reverent crowd, you know, uh, it's not like they're gonna jeer you if you, but it's still, it's still you're in front of people and then on top of that it's a national television event.

02.37.38 You know? And the emotions it evokes just of 9-11. You know, of the ceremonies to me have always been extremely emotional anyway. Uh, just standing in the crowd. You know, and uh, last year just broke my heart uh, when those children read the names, you know, it just, it just broke my heart.

02.38.06 And the thought of spouses and partners reading names this year uh, these were people who meant everything to them. And to me. Uh, and so there, it's just a, all that emotional anxiety uh.

- 02.38.32 I (?) really think I have, I've come to terms with the, the fact of being in front of people because it's a very set (?) you know, it's very well, well-scripted and, and very well done and very well organized. And so I'm not, I think I've, I've kind of put that part aside. Uh, it's the emotional side of it that it's kind of heightened this year by actually being a participant.
- 02.39.05 I mean, I've always been a participant, but it, it's different being you know, in, on that side. And uh, and I feel a responsibility, a real responsibility (CLEARS THROAT). I have been given 12 names to read. I normally I don't project well.
- 02.39.32 And even though it's (?) gonna be miked, you know, so that'll be done. But I want to make sure that the families of the people I'm supposed to read hear it, and, and know that their loved one has been remembered at that particular second in time.
- 02.40.00 You know, that I don't mumble anybody. I don't do any of those things. Very uh, luckily I have been given 12 names that are very easy (LAUGHS). Duffy. And Egan, those, I don't, I'm not reading any Polish names that I'm gonna have problem with pronunciation or uh, you know, difficult Spanish names that I might have trouble with.
- 02.40.28 I've been given some very that kind of thing. So I feel better about that. But still I feel uh, a responsibility and at the same time, that emotional tug at my heart that this you know, Gene's name is although he's not on my list, he's one of the names that's gonna be read as well. You know, and I will hear that name. And I am allowed at the end to add his name uh, from you know, as, I can't remember, something, and my beloved spouse, or my beloved partner, Gene, Eugene Clark.
- 02.41.08 So that's an add-on to the 12 names. Even though his name will be read in the regular sequence. But uh, I remember last year when the children uh, would get to the end of their list, and they would say something about uh, and my daddy. (PAUSE)
- 02.41.43 To hear, you know, hear that, it really, it so personalizes it, you know, this person really is, you know, really did lose somebody, it's not just a, they're not just names, you know? And so I, I.
- 02.42.06 I want to honor these people. And still know that that emotion is in, you know, in my heart, you know, also this is, you know, uh, a ceremony that, that (?) Eugene is a part of. You know? It's, it's so.
- 02.42.33 I've (?) come to grips with it a lot better since they first told me that I was gonna do this.

JW: What was that reaction?

- 02.42.54 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, when I first got the letter from the mayor's office, telling me that uh, that's what was gonna happen this year, that spouses and partners were going to read uh, I thought that was pretty cool. And then it said if basically if you are interested, or if you wish to nominate somebody uh, send us an email with the information and what-not.
- 02.43.28 And so I said that I would be interested. And I was kind of not you know, I, it was just, yeah, I'd be interested. And uh, then they called me and they told me that they had received my entry, and that there would be a lottery because they expected more entries than they could. And they would let me know after July 26th because that's how long it would take to get all this done.
- 02.44.03 And so uh, I was going up to Lake Tahoe to see my son, and, uh, and my grandson. Uh. The end of June, and I was gonna be there over the 4th of July and you know, spend a good week up there with them.
- 02.44.28 Well, my, I received a call on January 29th that my cousin had passed away. In Oregon, and he was only 3 years older than I am. And so I had to cancel my trip to Tahoe and go up to Oregon. And uh, so I was in Oregon for a week. And then when I got back uh, I got back on like a Saturday and then so I decided well, I'm gonna go ahead then now and, and go up to Tahoe for a week.
- 02.45.02 So I was in Tahoe, and uh, the, while I was there, I, I don't remember what day it was specifically. I, I know the date, but it was July 18th. I got a call on my cell phone, and uh, reception is spotty up there, so I didn't, I, I finally got the message like the end of the day when I was somewhere.
- 02.45.36 I was in where I could get the reception and I'm, and so it the mayor's office. And so I called him back. And uh, she told me that I had been selected. Uh. And I didn't expect it that soon, number one. You know? And I didn't really be expect to, I didn't know why I didn't expect to be picked.
- 02.46.00 Uh, but uh, maybe they didn't have as many respondents as they thought they were going to. Maybe they didn't have to have the lottery, I don't know, what, how what happened, or why I was picked. Uh, and, and you know, 8 days earlier than what they had said.

JW: Is that fate, do you think?

02.46.20 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I, well, you know, I, at this point I, I have to say that uh, uh, everything happens for a reason.

02.46.35 I don't always understand the reasons, but I, I believe everything happens for a reason. And so I'm just gonna let it, let that be, you know, what, what it was. And.

JW: This is hard question to deal with Fate.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

02.46.59 END OF TAPE # LC45

03.01.02 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.01.16 LARRY COURTNEY: How is, how is faith and everything happens for a reason? How do you reconcile that, is that basically what you were gonna ask, something to that effect?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: There's a reason my mother died, and that's so that I would be here. Do you think about it that way?

03.02.24 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I hadn't, I hadn't given it much thought until this year. You know, I, I have. I have always believed that things happen for a reason. That's kind of the way I was brought up. Uh. I'm not a fatalist but I, but and sometimes we don't see the reason for awhile. And, and sometimes we don't (LAUGHS) we may never see the reason. Uh, we, we're not meant to know everything. But uh, yeah, just in the same way that you felt uh, things changed and would not have been what they are today if she had not passed away.

- 02.03.06 I probably would not, had Gene lived, I probably would not have come back to uh, a fellowship with God that I have today. Uh, at, I can't say that I wouldn't have, because I don't know what would happen.
- 03.03.28 But uh, I think that would have hindered it. And I'm not saying that God took him away so that I would come back. I'm not saying that. But the fact that he died, and then I went through the other two deaths in my family, including my mother. Who I adored and, and you know, and just uh, those things just kind of shattered me.
- 03.03.59 And. I, I could be uh, I, I became malleable at that point to become what I have, have reached, to the point that I've reached today. Bad things happen that we have no control over. But I do believe that at some point, we will maybe not know the reason why.
- 03.04.44 But that, that we will realize that it was a step in our life that made things happen the way they are, like that (?) you said, you, you might not have gone down this path had your mother not died.
- 03.05.03 You might have done anything else. And, and so might I. I (?) might uh, I might still be living in New York uh, missing out on my children. Uh, and missing out on (CLEAR THROAT) on some spiritual growth that I needed. Uh. (LAUGHS)
- 03.05.32 I would love to say I'd still rather have Gene, you know, but coming down this, the path in these past five years, not that I don't, wouldn't still uh, wouldn't still want to have him, but I, I wouldn't have come to this, this realization I don't think uh, if he were still alive. Uh.
- 03.05.58 So I, not that I uh, not that I believe God had to take him away so that I could come to that realization. But it, it is, it was I (?) would not be in the place I am today if he were alive. And uh, that's (?) you know, that's, that's a hard thing, like you say, to uh, because you still miss that person.
- 03.06.30 You, you I, I well, and, and my mother. Uh, I there are times when I'm cooking something, and I'll think uh, I got to give Mom a call and see if I'm supposed to add this. You know, 'cos I learned to cook, she, she taught me how to cook, and there are still times like that when, or I'll see something on television or see an ad for something and I'll think, I have to tell Gene this when he gets home, you know.
- 03.07.04 There are those kinds of things that you still, you still miss that person terribly, terribly. And but uh, but, but there's some corners that you turn. And I've seen people go the wrong, what I would (LAUGHS) consider the wrong way.

03.07.28 You know, I mean, uh, there have been several people I think uh, who have actually committed suicide after their partners were, were killed at the World Trade Center, or their spouses. You know, or you know, have become alcoholics. Or you know, they, they made that uh, it affected them in that, that direction. I, I am very (~JW~)

JW: Do those things hurt you?

03.08.13 LARRY COURTNEY: And last December, uh, I became quite ill. Uh, there was a, I guess that I was either taking medication wrong or I had become immune-d to the medication that I'd been taking for several years. Or I'd, you know, my body was uh, and so I became quite ill.

03.08.47 And I thought it was just the flu. And I was living alone. And uh, my daughter and her husband were all caught up in, in the business because they, they had a, it really started to take off and so I was all alone, and I basically laid in the house. All day.

03.09.15 And, and never went out. Uh. If I absolutely got out and get something, you know, it, maybe a five minute trip. I stopped shaving. Uh.

03.09.32 I had no energy. And I basically, I stopped eating. And I became, I just became so depressed during this period of time that I thought, I actually had thoughts, that ok, my will is in order. Uh, material possessions don't, you know, whatever happens to them, happens to them.

03.10.01 And maybe it'd just be better for everybody if I died, and, and they didn't have to worry about it any more. And uh, not that I consciously said to myself I'll take an overdose of medication or I'll shoot myself. But the underlying thought was there, that if I don't do anything about it, I'll just go ahead and die.

03.10.39 And I, I guess uh, because I have a real, I (?) (CLEARS THROAT) have a real uh, I guess (?) it's spiritual but I can't, a think about taking my own life, you know.

03.11.03 And it's not that I'm afraid that I wont' get to heaven or whatever, but I, I grew up that way you know, that that was something you just didn't do, you know? Uh, and but if I let it happen, that, for some reason that (?) was easier, I mean, that was not as bad as shooting myself or whatever. And uh, in the process of just laying around or whatever, I developed a blood clot in my leg.

03.11.38 And my daughter came over one Sunday. She and her husband. And I hadn't washed dishes in like 2 weeks. I mean, I didn't use, I didn't, you know, I had glasses for water and stuff but that's, I wasn't eating or anything, so there wasn't any uh, real mess. But (~JW~)

JW: You hadn't had anything for two weeks?

03.12.03 LARRY COURTNEY: Oh, maybe I would have, maybe I would have a, a bowl of soup. But if I had to get up and fix it, I just didn't have the energy to do that, you know? Uh, I, there (?) I ate very little during that, that period of time. I kind of existed on 7-Up. Uh, it was easy to open a can of 7-Up.

03.12.28 And uh, she came over and she noticed a swelling in my leg, 'cos it had gotten really big. And immediately took me to the emergency room, and they put me in the hospital for 7 days. And uh, and then uh, they put me on blood thinners and all kinds of stuff, and they, and he, at that point they adjusted my medication.

03.13.00 And I immediately began to feel better, immediately. And, and then I looked back on it and I thought how could I have let myself get to that point of not caring whether I lived or died when I have children and other people who will care, you know? Just like I cared when Gene died. And that's honestly the only time that I ever uh, even gave it a thought. (?)

03.13.33 And I think that part of, part of that is because I grew up with that, you know, that suicide was s stigma on, on not only the person who committee suicide, but on the whole family. And uh, so. But that, that was the only time when I (?) even considered just you know, letting it go, letting life go.

03.13.59 Uh. And I feel really bad for, for those who you know, came to that decision uh. In, after 9-11, you know? Or, uh, slowly, slowly did it by drinking themselves to death or whatever. And uh, for me to have, to have allowed myself to even come that close, uh.

JW: When was that?

LARRY COURTNEY: That was last December.

JW: Quite a recovery of a year?

03.14.41 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah. And that's (?) after, after that experience and after I started uh, that, I started feeling better like I said immediately, once the medication was adjusted. And uh, (~JW~)

JW: What was the medication for?

03.14.58 LARRY COURTNEY: No, that uh, it was my uh, HIV medications. And my body had started rejecting whatever I was on. And it was affecting just my general health, you know? And uh, but then, after the hospitalization and they got my, everything else (?) you know, on the level, he, he uh, prescribed a small dosage of anti-depressant.

03.15.30 And any time uh, at this, at least at this particular clinic, any time they prescribe an anti-depressant, you have to go see the psychiatrist. You at least have to have a consultation with the psychiatrist. And uh, so I went to see the psychiatrist. And we talked and, and he said, well, I think, you know, you've got a pretty good handle on what's been happening.

03.15.58 And uh, he said uh, I don't, I'm not gonna ask you to make any more appointments, but at any time, if you want to talk to me, you just call, call and make an appointment and we'll talk. But uh, so I'm still on the anti-depressant. Uh, and uh, it's just a small dose, dosage and uh, you know, I (?) I'm assuming it's helping me, you know?

03.16.29 Because I, I really, I think (?) maybe my body had been building up this immunity for a long time, or what-not. But I feel physically better right now than I have in years. I, I just, I didn't realize that I wasn't feeling that good, you know?

03.16.57 I mean, yeah, I've got my aches and pains and what-not and like I say my feet and everything. But otherwise, I feel so much better than I have in just a long time. Uh, and maybe, and maybe that's because I'm not only physically better, but more in tune with, you know, all the other things that we've been talking about today.

03.17.27 Maybe there, maybe they've all come together in this period of time when uh, I, I needed it all to come together. So uh. I (?) can't imagine at this point ever thinking about that again, ever thinking about suicide or you know, at least not living. I want to live, I want to live for my, you know, I want to see my grandson graduate from college.

03.17.58 I want to see him you know, and uh, my, my granddaughter starts high school this year, I want to be at her high school graduation, you know? Those kind of things. And uh, so you know, I'm gonna live as long as I can. And, and, I, I say never say never. You know? But I don't, I don't think that I'll ever come to that point again.

JW: It's interesting the loss of Gene was so painful that you didn't want to inflict that pain on anyone?

03.18.59 LARRY COURTNEY: Oh, I would never, I would never wish that on anybody, you know? And uh, that was kind of pointed up, too, again, when I was, I said you know, I, my cousin died. Uh. The, they had found I guess it's been over a year ago or longer uh, spot on his lungs. And he had been a smoker since, you know, he was a kid.

03.19.28 And he's just 3 years older than I am. And his sister is the same age. Uh, she's April to August older than I am. And we were you know, we grew up together and we were kind of inseparable, and he was the leader of our little band because he was older. And uh, they found the spot and they thought that uh, he went through chemo and they thought that he was in remission and they declared him in remission, anyway.

03.20.03 And that was about 6 months ago. And then on a Friday night, he didn't feel well and he started coughing up blood and he went into the hospital and he was dead early Saturday morning, you know? And uh, the tragedy of seeing his wife and his two sons, and their wives and his grandchildren suddenly being left alone and his mother losing a son, you know, before she died.

03.20.55 And his sister's pain. And you know, I had experienced it for myself, but then to see others going through it that way uh, it's (?) just so heartbreaking, that you never, you never want to see that in anybody that you uh, particularly anybody that you love and care for.

03.21.23 And uh, certainly reinforced you know, what I had always, already come to the conclusion of is that I, I would never want to inflict that on my children, you know? So. Uh. No, never.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.22.35 ROOM TONE

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

03.23.25 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) She's willing to try anything, and her hairdresser, her, she has hair that is perfect to experiment on. And so she just lets her hairdresser do anything, and her hairdresser does all of these projects for uh, exhibits and things like that and for photographs for, so she lets, she lets her experiment on her hair. And she loves it. She's just, I think when you guys were there, she had blue stripes in the front, didn't she? (~ovlp~) But now it's bright fucha. Well, it's fading a little bit, but. She (LAUGHS)

03.24.08 The day she had it done I was, we were sitting out in the backyard and uh, the sun was shining bright. She stepped out of the backdoor, and the sun hit her hair and she looked like she had just come from the circus with cotton candy. It was just bright. But. She's got her own sense of style, you know?

03.24.32 Very artistic independent person, you know? She's great.

JW: She had a big year?

03.24.44 LARRY COURTNEY: She did, she did. Uh, once the Ellen Degeneres show ran, she got all kinds of orders. And then the third show of the summer when they were doing repeats, they repeated that show.

03.25.03 And so she got ton more orders uh, again. So she has orders through Christmas at this point. She's just been working herself. They've got a studio and so now she has a space other than her house. And uh, uh it's just, and her husband's business has taken off.

03.25.30 You know, he's a videographer. And uh, (CLEARS THROAT) he's, his business has really taken off. And he's been doing a lot of special events, and then he does uh, family like, like uh, he's been commissioned to do things for anniversaries, where he puts a montage together of lives and he takes, uh.

03.26.00 He takes old uh, what are those, 8 millimeter, the old movie cameras, you know, when they first came out? And uh, people have all these reels in their drawers and what-not? He takes those and converts them to video and then he puts them all on a DVD, and he adds music

and, and stills and they're really very, very nice. Very nice. Well, I sent you or uh, Croi borrowed that uh, tribute, Gene's tribute?

03.26.32 He had put that together. and that was just a real short part of what he did. But uh, and he does uh, weddings. He just did a wedding that uh, was a 3-camera shoot. And everybody was miked individually, and so he put it together in several different ways so that uh, you could see the groom's point of view or the bride's point of view or the, you know, and you hear the groom making all (LAUGHS) these hysterical comments.

03.27.06 Uh, it's very funny. So. But they're doing good, they're doing good.

JW: How did the Ellen show happen?

03.27.19 LARRY COURTNEY: Heather decided to make, she loves Ellen Degeneres, thinks she's so funny. And she watches the show all the time. And people are always sending Ellen things, you know? So Heather decided to make a box for Ellen, so she sculpted Ellen coming out of the box and (?).

03.27.39 And she was just getting it finished, and I said you know what? January 26th is Ellen's birthday, 'cos they (?) had talked about it a couple of times, and she's uh, decided to celebrate her birthday all the month of January. So I said, why don't you send it to her as a birthday gift?

03.27.59 So she sent it uh, with a, a letter to one of the producers. Well, she contacted the studio and asked who, who she should send this to. And she sent it, and she got a call when they got it, that they loved it and that she should watch this episode. Because they thought Ellen might mention it.

03.28.28 And then (CLEARS THROAT) Ellen did like uh, she said uh, you have to see this. Its' one of the most unique gifts I've ever seen in my life. And she pulled it out of the bag and she wound it up and popped it and the audience went crazy, and, and she said, I like it so much that I think everybody in my audience ought to order one, and I am going to do something I've never done before and I'm gonna do a, a full commercial for Pop Art Creations.

03.28.57 And then she did this little spiel about how everybody should have a you know, a unique gift and, and then they put Heather's uh, website up on the screen. And said go to the website and click on order, and so it was just amazing, just amazing.

JW: How many orders did you get?

- 03.29.17 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, that, that day because what, you know, we weren't thinking about it, but it airs at different times all over the country. And she got up and turned on her email at like 9 o'clock in the morning, and she had uh, something like 700 emails.
- 03.29.40 Uh, they were inquiries. Her website at that point wasn't as, as well developed and it didn't have uh, some information and it didn't have a price. And so a lot of them were just inquiries, uh, but she answered every email. She ended up getting over 1500 emails from that first show. And uh, I think she got 20, 30, about 30 confirmed orders that they actually paid for the boxes.
- 03.30.13 And uh, but she made , when the show ran again in the summer, she got more, but by that time she had already updated her website and all the information, the most asked questions that people had wanted in the email, she had already answered.
- 03.30.30 So she didn't get as many emails but she got more orders. So. You know, it was just, she's just out there. Great kid. And she wants to get pregnant (~JW~)

JW: What were you thinking about just then?

- 03.30.52 LARRY COURTNEY: I was just thinking, she wants to get pregnant by Christmas, I was thinking about children and she wants to get pregnant by Christmastime. So uh, 'cos she's 33. And so she doesn't want to wait too much longer to have her first child. So. That'd be kind of exciting if, if it works out.

JW: What about your brother?

- 03.31.20 LARRY COURTNEY: Elton, my older brother, he's, he turned 71 in February. And we had talked before, I think, about uh, was it last year? Yeah, last year, how we, he has an RV, and he and I took off and we spent a month in the uh, deserts of Arizona. And then in February, we took, no I'm sorry, it was in September, we took, he, no.

- 03.32.03 I beg your pardon we took another almost a month in February, that's right. And he and I talked about (CLEARS THROAT) us being alone, now being you know, single men. And that we had both adapted to it, and that uh, both had become kind of set in our ways. And now it'd be kind of hard to have somebody come in and rearrange the silverware in the drawer and you know? This kind of stuff.
- 03.32.36 And that was in February. And in March he called me and told me he'd met somebody, and they were going uh, they were (?) going to go look at engagement rings. And I was, what? (LAUGHS) What? You know? So uh, uh.
- 03.33.01 They uh, they're, they just hit it off right away, and, and uh, she's 65. Uh, really nice, nice woman, very different from his first wife, you know? Uh. But they hit it off really well and then they decided to get married in May. So uh, I went up for their wedding, and it was really, really very sweet.
- 03.33.30 You know? And see, he, he said well, if, if there is, if there was hope for me, there's hope for you (LAUGHS). So.

JW: Is he right?

- 03.33.43 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, there's hope. Well, I'm you know, I mean, he (?) it came out of the blue for him. So like I said, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen. But I'm you know. It's not like I'm avoiding it.
- 03.34.00 But uh. I didn't think I'd ever have a roommate, either. I never wanted one. You know? And then uh, that happened, so. You know?

JW: What happened?

- 03.34.18 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, right after I was sick in December, well, I guess, this, this guy is Heather's best friend, actually. Uh, he's 40.
- 03.34.31 And they had done a lot of theater work together, and they had become very close friends. And then he had met somebody, and in like Thanksgiving of the year earlier. And they, he moved to Portland, Oregon, to be with this guy and, and that didn't work out. So he moved back to San Jose.

- 03.35.03 But he didn't have an apartment or anything. So he's, he was staying with Heather and David. Well, they, even though what size their house is, and they have two bedrooms, but they had converted the second bedroom into David's video space. And then (?) the living room was all Heather's workspace for her business.
- 03.35.30 And so he was sleeping on a couch. And I was just recovering from my illness (CLEAR'S THROAT). And so Heather said, Dad uh, what would you think about Davy coming over and, and staying with you until he can find an apartment? And I thought, well, I don't know. That's uh, you know.
- 03.35.59 But I had you know, I had that other bedroom, that big space. And so uh, uh, yeah, that'll that would work, that would work, you know, until he finds an apartment. But we hit it off so well. And then they raised the rent on my, or were going to raise the rent on my apartment again, and it was becoming prohibitive for me to afford that apartment.
- 03.36.31 And so uh, we decided that we would start looking for a house, and share it. And uh, we got lucky and found this uh, well, we (?) I saw a (?) cute little house right around the corner, actually, from where I lived, from the apartment. There was a, a For Rent sign in the front yard, and so I called him and, and went to see it and then I had Davy come look at it.
- 03.37.03 And it was a little two-bedroom uh, place, but it was really charming and it had a nice backyard and had a fireplace and everything in the living room. And it was really charming. And, and so we, Davy and I were talking, and we said you know, it's gonna be a really tight squeeze to get everything in this house that I had in my apartment. You know, Davy didn't have any furniture, so that wasn't a problem.
- 03.37.31 But I had all that furniture. And so we thought about it, and the guy that was showing us the place uh, said I hear you guys talking about trying to fit this in this corner and that in this corner. He said, I have a little bit bigger place. It's a 3-bedroom, and uh, why don't I show that to you and you can.
- 03.38.00 So we walked in and it didn't have the charm of the little, the one little house. It didn't have the fireplace and that, but it had 3 bedrooms. Uh. And the bigger backyard. And uh, and it was only \$100 more than the other little, the little place. So we decided to uh, take that.
- 03.38.28 And just split everything down the middle, all the expenses down the middle. And it's just worked out great. You know? He's, he's the kind of roommate that I sure, am sure that everybody would love to have because uh, we have great time together, and then uh, we also

have things that are all on our own, you know? He takes off and, and does things, and he works from home.

03.39.00 So uh, he gets up at 5 o'clock in the morning and, and works until like 1 or 2. And uh, but he can let the girls out in the backyard and, and uh, (?)

JW: Who are the girls?

03.39.17 LARRY COURTNEY: Oh uh, he has two dogs. He has two little, little uh, they're both females, so we always call them the girls, Piper and Phoebe. And uh, they're real, real sweet little dogs.

03.39.29 And uh, so aside from having Davy uh, and some companionship there, I have the, the two dogs, you know? And uh, (LAUGHS) the nicest way to have an animal is if somebody else owns them, and somebody else feeds them and somebody else takes care of the vet bills, you know? And you just get the love, you know? So. Uh, it's really worked out very well.

03.40.00 And uh, uh. He's uh, he and his boyfriend are real uh, real sweet to me uh, and they, like they take me, lot of times they'll say we're going to lunch, come on, go with us. I'll say no, you guys need time together, no. You're coming to lunch with us. You know? And then they couple of weeks ago, they decided to go to Six Flags. And uh, and made sure that it was a day that I would go or could go, you know?

03.40.34 So I went with them, and up to Six Flags. Watched them ride all the roller coasters and all of that stuff. I don't do that (LAUGHS). I get sick just thinking about it. So. But I had a really good time. And uh, but they're very much like that they you know, we, and we kind of started a uh, I made the mistake because they're both very competitive people. Uh, they love playing tennis and trying to you know, really best, best each other all the time (CLEARS THROAT).

03.41.11 And they wanted to learn how to play dominoes. And I thought I was a pretty good domino player. So I taught them how to play dominoes, and I have not won a game since. And then when they taught me how to play some other card game, or whatever.

03.41.31 I can't win. I cannot win. They just, they beat me in no matter what I'm doing. One or the two of them beat me. Now they want, maybe, they want to teach me how to play tennis. I have no hand-eye coordination, I never have. I couldn't hit a ball when I was in school, you

know? I tried to play tennis once before. I just can't, can't get it. And uh, I mean, the ball would be past me before I would even start my swing, you know?

03.42.03 So but they decided they were gonna teach me how to play tennis, and I said no (LAUGHS) That's another thing I'll get beaten in and I'm not, I'm just not doing it (LAUGHS). So. But they're, they're good guys. And, and Davy particularly is just a real nice guy.

JW: You moved in February? When did your cousin die? Were you close to your cousin?

03.42.43 LARRY COURTNEY: I grew up with uh, my cousin and his sister. Uh, and always looked up to my cousin. Uh.

03.43.01 And then we had kind of, well, after (?) (CLEARS THROAT) after I came out, uh, he had a little hard time with that. And uh. Then uh, a couple of times after I, I was back in Oregon after Gene died, uh, he made a couple of comments that hurt my feelings, but I, I understood where they were coming from, but he, you know, he said something to the effect that you know, I don't.

03.43.38 I don't appreciate your lifestyle but I certainly feel (?) you know, I have sympathy for your loss and whatnot. And I just, I just thought, you know, that was (?) unnecessary, just unnecessary. But we were, we were close. And, and uh, then when, and you know, when he died suddenly uh, it was just really a blow.

03.44.02 It was just like uh, you know, another, another look at morality. There, there you are, you know? You know, you're not guaranteed any time. And uh, you know, I talked a little bit about his family, how much, but I really was concerned for his mother. She's my, well, I have no I shouldn't say that.

03.44.32 I have two surviving aunts from that generation. I have my father's sister, and then she was my uh, father's sister uh, my father's sister-in-law is this, this lady. And she's 87 now. And, and not in good health. And I was just afraid that this would be, deal her a blow she couldn't recover from.

03.45.00 Physically. And she took it in so much better than I had thought, you know? It was very painful for her to lose a child, you know, and she, she made it a point of telling us how hard it was to, when she was 87 and in such poor health, and then to lose a son who was, you know, looked like he was on the road to recovery, and, and uh, and he was very close.

- 03.45.32 They uh, he had lost his father several years before that and his, his, he and his father were just very close. Well, they had owned a company together. Uh, Courtney and Son. And uh, but after his father died, he checked in on his mother at least 3 times a week. He would stop by after work and, and he'd take her grocery shopping and did all that.
- 03.46.00 And uh, uh, so she's suddenly without that as well, you know? So I was really afraid for her health. And uh, I still am concerned about it. But uh, she seemed to have come through it better than I expected. So. We'll see as time goes on how that, you know, affects. But she says she's ready anyway.
- 03.46.33 She's a very uh, spiritual woman, has been most of her life that I, well, all of her life that I've known her. And uh, she was out, all these, this person that she would pick up (CLEARS THROAT) elderly people who couldn't go to church, and she would pick them up on Sunday mornings and she would take them to church and then take them home, and then she would take them grocery shopping, and she had a whole bunch of people who depended upon her.
- 03.47.02 And then when she became too ill or too infirm to drive anymore, uh, it was really hard for her to let, let that part of her life go, you know? But uh, she was, she's quite a woman. But you know, she's 87 and not in good health. And she said she's, she's ready to go any time, she can be in a better place and as far as she's concerned, that'll be fine.
- 03.47.37 You know? It's hard. When you get to my age, and, and since I'm one of the (?) well, one of the younger kids in my family, you know, my parents were a little older than most of my friends' parents.
- 03.48.00 So all of my aunts and uncles were quite a bit older. And so uh, my father uh, was one of six, my mother was one of five. And they're all gone now except for these two, these two widows. And it's hard to see that whole generation you know, gone.

JW: What's hard about it?

- 03.48.34 LARRY COURTNEY: Because, just because you love them so much. You know, and you, and I grew up so close to all of them. You know, when, when you grow up in the Midwest, uh, and in (?) you know, 60 years ago, I mean, you were, we were at my (?) grandmother's dining room table every Sunday. You were just expected to be there, you know? And, and we

all wanted to be. And so I, you know, I, these people I grew up with, my cousins and my you know, these aunts and uncles.

03.49.02 And I, I think uh, part of the, part of what's really hard about it is that you realize you're the next generation. You know? And now that I've lost my cousin of our generation, it you know, it brings your morality all that more apparent to you.

03.49.28 And uh, but it's hard, too, because uh, when you're in a close family like, like we had, you know, and they were kind of uh, role models for you, and not all of them. But some of them were, were you know, really good role models for you and, and you loved them and you really cared for them. And not to, not to have them around is, is you know, is difficult. You know?

03.50.00 Of course now uh, you know, families are, they're not nuclear like that anymore, where you know, you stay in the same community that you were born in, and this was all farming community, so everybody had their own farm and, you know, and now you know, you're spread out all over the country, or the world. And uh, but I, but I can't say that it would be, it would be any easier to start losing my brothers and sister uh, just because we don't live in the same geographic area, you know?

03.50.44 I am uh, I thank god that, that so far all my brothers and sisters are alive, you know, and uh, hopefully we'll be for awhile. And uh, it, it's just.

03.51.02 I you know, I see uh, particularly my brother who's 71, you know, and my cousins who are his age and they're all uh, (?) have real bad uh, real health issues, you know? Uh. And so I know that that's, you know, it's gonna start happening to our generation.

03.51.31 Uh. And it kind of is, you know, it's kind of unnerving. But it's you know, I mean, (LAUGHS) there again, you can't do anything about it, there's nothing you can change about it. And uh, but it, but you miss people, you know? I mean, even if you don't see them for 2 or 3 years, at a time, because you're (STOPS)

03.51.55 END OF TAPE # LC46

04.01.01 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Where did you go just a second ago?

- 04.01.23 LARRY COURTNEY: Uh, I just. Just talking about it brings back so many memories of, you know, things we used to do. Uh, like I say, the, the dinners around my grandparents' table. And then uh, Saturdays when I was little uh, in the fall, after the fields had been cut uh, the men would all go, and they would go on pheasant hunts, and they would bring back all these pheasants, and we would have these big feast of pheasant, you know?
- 04.02.03 I never knew that, that it was an expensive (LAUGHS) bird. I thought they were just like chicken. You know? They were always (?) all around or. Uh. We'd have square dances, you know? And all, all this you know, childhood memories when you think about that, that generation that's gone, and, and uh, all the fun we had.
- 04.02.33 The Christmases we got together at my grandmother's house, which is just, I mean, tons of people. And at that time we, we celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve. We went uh, to church on Christmas Eve. And we had a pageant, there was always this pageant on Christmas Eve at the church. And then uh, we'd come home and Santa Claus or whatever would have come while we were in church, you know?
- 04.03.05 So then we'd sit around and then we'd all, we'd unwrap our presents on Christmas Eve. And I can remember so many times being in my grandmother's living room. And they didn't use their living room. It was like an addition. It was an old, old house, and it was an addition and, or maybe it was an addition. Maybe it was. But they kept it closed off because the, then they didn't have to heat it. And they heated with uh, (STUMBLE) and they had an oil stove in the dining room and an oil stove in the living room.
- 04.03.38 So the dining room was the gathering place. And but they would always heat that room for Christmas, and the Christmas tree was always set up in that room, and it was like a real treat to be able to go into Grandma's living room, you know? And all, there'd be all these people, all these kids, and, and uh.
- 04.04.01 And uh, the, those uh, you try to recreate those things with your own children, you know, you build your traditions and everything. But it's, in the times that we live in, it, it's not easy to get you know, a big family together for a whole Christmas holiday, you know, like, like it was then. And uh, uh, it's just, it's you know, you just think about those times.

04.04.31 They were, they were good times. My (?) grandmother was one of the most incredible ladies I ever knew. Uh, I never knew my mother's mother 'cos she died when she was, when my mother was 14. Well, my father's mother and, and father uh. She had had like rheumatoid arthritis uh, I'm sorry. (STOPS)

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.05.13 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) Rheumatic fever, when she was like in her 30s. And she lost all of her hair, and she had beautiful, long uh, thick brown hair, and when it came back in it was snow white.

04.05.32 So I never knew her with anything but snow white hair, you know? And she was just uh, one of the sweetest, gentlest, kindest people. I don't think I ever heard her say an unkind word about anybody. And she was a devout Methodist, tea-totaler.

04.05.58 Uh, and just well-respected in her community and what-not. And just a sweet, sweet person that I, I looked up to, you know, so much. And she died when I was, I guess I was a sophomore in high school. No, no, I was a senior in high school. And uh, she was someone I always missed. She was, she was kind of uh, I, I would say my spiritual uh, leader.

04.06.33 Because she was the one that when we were little uh, even though my parents were involved too, but you know, you went to church. You met Grandma at church. My grandfather never went. He (LAUGHS) was, he was something. But uh, she was, she was the spiritual core, you know, of the family. And uh, she, she was just, uh, she was someone I would love for my children to have known.

04.07.10 You know? Uh, but she was gone long before they were born, but. She was someone I would love for anybody to know. She was just a (?) sweet lady.

JW: Do you think about mortality and death this year a lot?

04.07.30 LARRY COURTNEY: Well, I think uh, (CLEARS THROAT). Starting off with my illness in, in December. And uh, then you know, all that's gone on before, and, and uh. It, it's kind, if kind of was in, it took a new place in my life.

- 04.08.00 It has a new, not a central focus but certainly it was uh, it was a lot more prominent than what I'd thought about before. Uh. And uh. I think that uh, maybe that was one, one of the things that helped me to get back on track and (?) come back to where I am now, because uh, we're not guaranteed tomorrow, you know?
- 04.08.45 Uh, as a matter of fact, when we took a break, I went, when I was downstairs and I had to cross the street. And I, I came back across the street, and I thought, now wouldn't it have been ironic, after we were talking about what we were just talking about, if I had gotten hit by a bus while I was downstairs?
- 04.09.06 And then everybody around here would have to be interviewed as to what I was doing you know, here. And uh, it, it's just one of those things that uh, it doesn't. I (?) when I was little, I was, I was afraid of death.
- 04.09.30 You know? Uh, 'cos when I was little there was we had, we did those drills of getting under your desk for atomic warfare, you know, possibility and the nuclear drills and getting under your desk, that's really gonna save you. But you know, that's you had those kind of drills, and people were building bomb shelters in their backyards and that kind of stuff.
- 04.09.57 And I went through a point as a young teenager of thinking what's the point of trying to do anything? You know? Uh, somebody's gonna drop a bomb someday and you know, we're not, nobody's gonna survive anyway, what, what's the point? You know, thank goodness I got through (LAUGHS) that, that part. But then uh, I've come through with, you know, I've always believed in an afterlife.
- 04.10.28 I grew up believing in an afterlife, and in a better afterlife. And uh, I, I've come to the point that thinking of, of my own mortality or the mortality of, you know, uh, in general uh, it happens to everybody. You know, can't be stopped.
- 04.10.59 And uh, I would (?) you know, I, I, the pain it causes to those left is severe. But I don't uh, if it happens to me uh, or when it happens to me, I hope that I'll feel the same way I do now, in that uh, it's not, it's not a bad thing.
- 04.11.30 For me. You know? And maybe it will have an effect as to like what you, we were talking about before, maybe my death someday will have an affect on my, my children, that they will put, move them in a different direction that they would not have gone otherwise, or my grandchildren, maybe.

04.12.00 So I'm not uh, I'm not afraid of, of that at all. I don't like the idea of having to go through a lot of pain in the process (LAUGHS) but. Uh, uh, death doesn't, doesn't scare me at all. I (?) shouldn't say at all, 'cos there's always some trepidation, I think. But I'm not, I'm not frightened, you know? I, I hope it doesn't come for awhile. But I'm not frightened about it.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Do you think that some of your realizations would have happened regardless of 9-11 and Gene?

04.13.35 LARRY COURTNEY: Eventually. It might have taken longer. (?) I think that eventually I would have come uh, even if Gene had uh, if there had not been a 9-11, and, and Gene was still alive, uh, eventually I would have realized or felt that (CLEARS THROAT) uh, there was kind of like this, this uh, not a hole but a, a little bit of a vacancy.

04.14.13 Where what we had talked about earlier is that I had made him and my circle of friends, that, that faith, that community that was not based on faith but on, on love and, and trust. But not necessarily on faith, and I think that eventually because I grew up with that community of faith, that eventually I would have come back to it. It might have taken me longer, but eventually I think I would have come back to it, because I think, I think I'm called back to it, you know?

04.14.55 Uh, you know, and you know, maybe I would have been 70 before I came to that. But uh, just looking back over my life and realizing that (?) all my life, that has been where, where I've been in this (~JW~) in this faith-oriented community, in one way or another.

04.15.31 Except for my period of time with Gene, and, and (?) I don't think that was bad. Uh, and I think that it was like uh, God was saying that it's all right. That's all right for now. Eventually I'll call you back into this other uh, back to where you, you know, you're (?) your roots, your starting points were.

04.15.59 And uh, had 9-11 not happened, uh, like I say, it might have taken me longer, but I truly believe that eventually it would have come back to that. I would have, I would have realized that uh, there was something that I was missing and, and that I was uh, that I needed, you know?

04.16.30 I needed in my life. And, and like, it may have taken longer. It's taken me long enough as it is, but it may have taken I don't know, I don't know what it might have, you know, if there would have been anything precipitous that would have caused it. But uh, it certainly, certainly might have taken longer.

JW: How often do you think of Gene?

LARRY COURTNEY: Every day. At least, at least once every day. Uh.

JW: How would you compare that to last year or the one before?

04.17.15 LARRY COURTNEY: I think that it is (CLEARS THROAT) less intense. I mean, now I can think of, about him, and not have, you know, just sudden pangs of grief, just you know, waves of grief.

04.17.40 Uh. When I was here last year and we talked about what had happened down at Ground Zero, when I had finally laid the flowers there, and realized for the first time in those four years that I was able to let him go.

04.18.01 Up until that time, it was like uh, just uh, just, just the thought of him or seeing his picture or whatever would just bring these waves and waves of, of grief. And now I, you know, I look at his picture every day. I have his picture in every room in my house, just because of the way the house is set up.

04.18.28 And uh, so I see his face, you know, all the time, and there are a lot of times I'll just be walking by and, and uh, (?) I'll make some stupid comment, like you know, can you believe Davy did this today? Or, you would have liked him, or you two would have fought. Or you know, this, you know, and, and, and now it's, it's just like Ok, I'm just, I'm seeing the face of a friend that I can, that I can just talk to.

04.19.02 And it doesn't necessarily uh, bring back you know, just heart-wrenching uh, grief. Uh. There are times when it, when it does. You know, when, when I do, when I think about him and uh, remember some of the things we did and, and uh, how much uh, how different life is without him.

- 04.19.30 That uh, it's very tough, but it's, those are less and less, and remembering all the, the good fun things we did. You know? Uh, or, you know, I'll see something on television and I'll think, you know, we saw that show and we loved it. And we laughed or we cried or whatever, but we, we loved it or we went to this Broadway show and, and we thought that was fantastic.
- 04.20.01 And I can do that without uh, just, just you know, collapsing, which uh, a year ago uh, prior to 9-11 a year ago uh, that really wasn't the case. That was uh, I truly, I truly meant what I said last year, in that I was able to let, to release my hold over him, I guess is what it was.
- 04.20.38 That uh, not because that'll never go. You know, but for me to release my hold over him, and be so needy in, in my grief that you know, I, I just was kind of holding on to him in (STUTTER) that way.
- 04.21.00 Uh, I miss him terribly. I, I'm I still mourn for him every day. But it's not, it's not uh, it's not unhealthy. Uh, I, I shouldn't say that, because then that makes it sound like before that it was unhealthy. And I think that was a process. That, that's a process.
- 04.21.28 Uh, I saw an interview with uh, Anderson Cooper on The Oprah Winfrey Show uh, this year. Now I had met Anderson Cooper when I was living in New York, and after Gene died, he actually interviewed you, interviewed me on uh, (CLEARS THROAT) excuse me, when he was still with New York One before he went to CNN.
- 04.21.58 And he had interviewed me about uh, the worker's compensation uh, fight. And what-not. And uh, I didn't know much about him, except that I, I thought, he has beautiful blue eyes, absolutely beautiful blue eyes, but I was struck by looking in his eyes and seeing pain there, and I never knew what it was.
- 04.22.29 I mean, here was this television reporter that I thought had everything. And I didn't know who he was either, except that he was Anderson Cooper of New York One. And well, you know, I didn't find out later that he was a Vanderbilt and uh, all of that stuff. And I certainly didn't know anything about what had happened to him in his life. And when he gave his interview to Oprah, uh, and the talk about his father, his father's death at the age of, when he was 10.
- 04.23.03 And then his older brother, who was 2 years older, committing suicide in front of his mother. I didn't know any of that, you know? He had never discussed that before. I don't think. And uh, so then I read his book. Uh. And I was, I was struck by the interview and by his book

about, then I understood what that look was in his eyes when I, when I had (STUMBLE) met him.

04.23.36 You know? That it was (?) had no idea why, why I felt there was pain there. But uh, having seen the interview and now understanding him a little better uh, what that look was, what that feeling was.

04.23.57 And reading his book and seeing how, what he's been through in the last year with Katrina and, and I think Katrina was really kind of the, he says, is, is the, the point where he started to feel again, that he had shut down all feelings. And he, he began to feel again after Katrina. And uh, I think that that's something uh, some kind of the thing that I went through, is that I, I had shut down after Gene died.

04.24.35 Uh. And I didn't feel anything but grief. He was a, he was able to block that out. I mean, he was uh, it, it seems, or he thinks. But uh, but since I've been able to like I said, last year when I was able to uh, say to myself, and to you, that I had actually been able to let Gene go uh, it just made, made a big difference in the way uh, I've handled grief, or the way grief's handled me.

04.25.19 I don't know, maybe that's the case. Uh, and it's been a real, you know, a real uh, turnaround year, really. And it, and it started that day with, with your interview, that day. Uh. Me looking at it in a different, different light.

04.25.44 Uh, and so then all these other things have happened in this year since then. Uh, which have just pointed me to where I am right now. Uh. And I'm very happy with the way, where I am right now, you know?

JW: Take me through the things that you've mentioned?

(SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATION)

04.26.31 LARRY COURTNEY: Yeah, and that's, that's true, and (?) then uh, you know, seeing the, seeing Anderson Cooper on television. Oh, and, and another person on, and again, the Oprah Winfrey Show uh, Nate (Berkas?), who is an interior designer and she used him and a lo of time. Well, he lost his partner in the tsunami. And I first heard about that I you know, I never assume that somebody is gay, just because they're cute.

- 04.27.00 And you know, that, I never, I uh, somebody once told me uh, you can't be gay because you have no gay-dar, you know? 'Cos I don't, I don't. I don't get it. I don't uh, but uh, so I never assumed that Nate Burcas was gay just because he was an interior designer. You know? But then when he was on national television and talking about losing his partner in the tsunami and everything, and then uh, about a year later, he did his first completed his first job after losing his partner.
- 04.24.41 And uh, and it was for Jerry O'Connell you know, the TV star. Uh, Crossing Jordan. And uh, and they showed the you know, the design process and all of that stuff, and then Oprah talked to him again about how did he feel about this being you know, and, and uh.
- 04.28.05 And I felt you know, this, this guy has, has gone through the fire as well, and he's come out the other end. And uh, he's able to actually talk about Fernando without breaking down on national television. And, and so I, I just kept seeing this kind of this like, I don't know whether it was hope or uh, or just fact, that the, that this was happening.
- 04.28.41 And in the (?) at the same point, my physical health was improving and my mental health was improving, my emotional health was improving. And they've all been just like stair steps up to this point.
- 04.28.58 Uh, which I'm (?) really excited about. I, I'm, and it's the first time I've been excited about life. I mean, true, truly I can say I'm excited about life uh, since Gene died. Uh, I've been happy with it, you know, to the, but I'm truly excited about, and about possibilities. Uh, potential. Uh.
- 04.29.29 Not just uh, relationship-wise, but uh, there's a possibility I may go to work for uh, a lady who's building a dental clinic right next door to my house. I just have to walk through the hedge, and I'll be in the office, you know? Uh, and I think that would be good for me, to, to uh, sort of come out of retirement and, and get me involved again in something.
- 04.29.59 And if, if that doesn't work out, maybe I'll do something else. I'll (?) get a part time job somewhere. Uh, it's uh, join, you know, join a temp agency. And uh, uh, and if I can do that, then maybe I'll, I can also move on to doing some volunteer work, which I'd like to do. Uh, but I realize that uh, it would, it would be good to have a little more incoming coming in for the next few years, you know?
- 04.30.33 So. Uh. And, and so I uh, there are just all these things that have, just in this past year that have pivoted that, that direction and, and led me on this new, new path, I think. You know?

Uh, anxiety that I've felt, not withstanding, about just the, the day and the, you know, uh, my overall outlook is so much brighter just uh, so much more positive uh, in this past year. So.

04.31.17 Don't know where I'm going from here, but (LAUGHS) it, it looks better to me, you know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: Why do you think we grieve?

04.31.48 LARRY COURTNEY: I think we would be, well, I was gonna say inhuman not to grieve. But animals grieve, too.

04.32.00 I mean, the you know, chimpanzees when they lose a mate, grieve. They document that. There are animals that, you know, they'll sit, sit beside their (?) a dog, you'll hear stories all the time where a dog is sitting beside his master for days after the master's dead and you know, won't leave his side, or you know. So I'm not (?) it's not a necessarily human trait that we grieve.

04.32.29 But uh, if. Why do w grieve? I think it's uh.

04.32.59 It's, it's a natural way to heal uh. If we didn't grieve, we didn't love. Uh. We grieve for, you know, uh, Mother Theresa, say, you mentioned that.

04.33.31 We grieve well, many people grieve when the pope dies. You know, I'm not Catholic but that still means something. Many uh, when President Kennedy was shot, I mean, my gosh, you're too young to remember that, but it was just. you know, the grief was just palpable everywhere.

04.33.56 And uh, even Democrats when Reagan died, you know? You may not have agreed with a thing he said while he was in office, but they grieved when he died. Uh. Somewhere in us, we have this great capacity to love, absolute great capacity to love. If you have a capacity to love, you have a (?) capacity to be hurt, and you will have a capacity to grieve.

04.34.32 And it's just uh, perhaps a way of, of mending ourselves and our (?) minds and, and our hearts. That, if it's a (?) healthy grieving, you know, it's (?) gonna bring us, bring us better uh, make us a better person, maybe.

04.35.08 Uh. If it's not, then what we talked about before, with alcoholism and, and suicide and what-not. But if it's a, if it's because we truly miss that person. Uh.

04.35.30 Whether they were a close relative uh, a lover, a wife, a husband uh, an aunt. Uh, or whatever. Uh. There's gonna be a sense of loss. Uh, I uh, it, it would take (~JW~)

JW: What about using the word I instead?

04.36.02 LARRY COURTNEY: Why did I grieve? (PAUSE) I loved Eugene with all my heart. He was the absolute love of my life.

04.36.32 I was married for 15 years. And I, no respect, no disrespect meant to my ex-wife. But there was never, I never had the kind of love for her that I had for Gene. My, you know, my children's love is a whole different kind of love and what-not. Uh.

04.37.00 But that kind of love (CLEARS THROAT) and expecting it to be, to be ongoing, and then for it not to be there, not for that, not that the love stopped, but for the person. Uh, not to be there any longer, to reciprocate that love. Uh.

04.37.34 And I uh, bring me back to me, to I. Gene not being there to reciprocate that love and the sudden loneliness, and just real abject misery and not being able to come home at night and fix dinner for the two of us, and share the day.

04.38.01 Uh, not being able to get up in the morning uh, and have coffee together and, you know, tell each other that we loved each other uh. You know, aside from the obvious physical aspects of it, it, there just were, there (?) were so many dead ends there, you know?

04.38.32 Uh, it (?) you just, it just stopped. It just stopped. And uh. Grieving for Gene was just missing something that I had felt so intensely for so long. Uh.

04.39.04 Being crushed. Or I felt it was being, you know, just crushed. It was and uh, I have to go through the grieving process. I'm not through it yet. I don't think I'll ever be through it.

04.39.31 Uh, and Gloria Vanderbilt said this in that particular interview I was talking about, about Anderson Cooper, is that uh, somebody used the word closure, and she said I don't think there's any such word. And I agree. There's no such word as closure. But the intensity uh.

04.39.58 Thank God doesn't stay at that level, you know? Uh. If it stayed at that level, I certainly can see why people would commit suicide, or whatever. Uh, because you couldn't possibly survive if, I couldn't possibly survive if I was, if the grief were that intense every day. Uh.

04.40.35 But I think, for me, I have to go through a grief process before (PAUSE)

- 04.40.58 Before I can see the uh, that turning point that we were talking about earlier. If I hadn't gone through the grief process, I wouldn't be here uh, I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm, I don't know where I'd be, who I'd be, what I would be.
- 04.41.32 Uh. I know that I went through it, and, and this is where I've, I've come out at this point. Uh. And I've grieved you know, not just for Gene but, you know, for others in my family, certainly my mother. Uh, but it (?) was for different, you know, and different intensities. Uh.
- 04.42.03 With my mother, uh, she was 86. Uh, she had had heart problems for years, uh, and her health had degenerated in to where she was uh, not the person, you know, she was the person you know, but she didn't recognize you and uh, she wasn't able to take care of herself at all and everything.
- 04.42.28 And so I uh, that kind of thing I had kind of built myself up for. That that was going to happen. And that there was a sense of relief when she passed, even, even though I, I missed her so much. But that she was not being subjected to something that she would have hated. You know, she would have hated to be taken care of if she'd known she was being taken care of. She would have hated that. She was a fiercely independent woman.
- 04.43.01 And so I was able, that tempered my grief in knowing that, that's you know, and in some ways that was, that was the case with her. Uh. Being confronted with uh, a death like Eugene's when he was only 50.
- 04.43.30 No, sorry, Gene was only 47 when he died. Uh. A young man, absolutely if anybody had (joy of life?) Gene had it. He loved life. He lived it, loved it, loved everything about it, you know?
- 04.44.00 And in my way of thinking, should have had another 40 years of it at least, you know? Because he was such an intensely alive person. And in a lot of ways he carried me along in that respect. Because I'm much more laid back and uh, introspective, not outgoing the way he was.
- 04.44.28 And uh, I never worked a room at a party. I would sit in one corner and talk to a few friends. Uh, I never saw him at parties because he worked the whole room, you know? And he was just uh, that, that total, you know, just bundle of energy and joy that he had, and then just to have it stop like that when it should have had a lot longer to run, I thought.
- 04.45.00 Uh. Was even more intensely uh, penetrating to me. In that uh, if he'd been, you know, a bitter old man, or whatever, that uh, didn't care whether he lived or died it, I might have been able to, you know, live with the fact that he was gone.

- 04.45.30 But when someone like that is, is just (?) you know, you just wait a minute (LAUGHS). That's not right, that's just not right. And uh, so I think that, that you're grieving, my grieving process was getting through the fact that uh.
- 04.45.58 I don't really have any say in the very fact that I thought he should have had another 40 years of life, if I had no say. In that. So I think uh, I had to (?) get through that grieving process to realize that I have no say in that. And uh, and stop beating myself up for it, that I thought I should have.
- 04.46.27 Again it comes back to that control and responsibility issue is that I, I was not responsible for the fact that he didn't have that other 40 years. You know? So. But that (?) for me, I think that that's what grief uh, why I grieve. Is uh, getting through that process of but I don't have control of it.
- 04.46.57 I didn't have control over the, the time that my mother died. I didn't have, certainly didn't have control over my, my father. Uh. I, I don't have control over life-and-death issues. And, and uh, I think for me, grieving gets me through that, through the process, that, that initial response, what could I have done, what should I have done. How could I have kept this from happening, and, and getting me through all of those issues, besides the absolute uh, loss of, of that companionship or that you know, uh, I guess uh, it got me through that aspect of it.
- 04.47.45 To come to uh, a point where I, (?) I wasn't responsible, you know?

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

04.48.00 END OF TAPE # LC 47

05.01.00 PICTURE UP

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

JW: It's a lot about letting go? Is ego the right word to associate with grief?

05.01.59 LARRY COURTNEY: No, but it's, but it, in a way it is. Because it's, it's like and you'll experience this one day (CLEARS THROAT) when you walk your daughter down the aisle,

and you hand over that which has been your sole responsibility for all of those years, to another man, there is an, at least an instant uh, in my case, you know, there was quite a bit (LAUGHS) quite a, a bit of grief.

- 05.02.35 I didn't recognize it as such. But it was like (?) there was a loss. And it was also uh, as you started to say, a control issue. I had controlled her life basically uh, in (?) some respects, you know, through her growing up adolescent years and whenever.
- 05.03.01 I don't have any of that control anymore, either. Uh, with Gene, well, there wasn't much controlling you could do with Gene, but in some respects, you know, partners uh, husbands and wives have some amounts of control over each other in different, different ways. And yeah, when and then when you don't have any control uh, that's uh, that's, that's a form of loss, is just you know, you're just, you just don't, it's gone.
- 05.03.40 Everything about it is gone. And uh, and I don't think uh, you know, (?) ego is like you say not, not the right word for it. But (?) in a little bit, there is, there is a little bit of ego involved in being responsible for and controlling a person's growth.
- 05.04.06 Of what you, of what you perceive uh, in my case, what I perceived as controlling and being responsible for Eugene's growth in, in our lives. And I lost that. You know? I lost it when my daughter got married, I lost it when my sons moved out of the house.
- 05.04.30 And I (?) totally, I lost total control uh, and responsibility uh, the day Gene was murdered. And that uh, that, that's another part of that vacuum is that uh, one day it's there and the next day it's not, you know?
- 05.04.59 And uh, yeah, I, I definitely think that that's part of the grieving process, and why you have to go through it. Have to, you have to, at some point you have to realize you never had the control to begin with. You never had the responsibility to begin with. We had uh, we think we do. And uh, and in some, some ways that the responsibility is delegated to us with our children, for instance, raising our children.
- 05.05.30 We, we're delegated that responsibility and that control. But it's not really ours. It's not really ours. Uh. So I think uh, uh, coming to the realization that we've lost those things, what we thought were ours. Ours to have. They were, they belong to us. Uh, and they never really did. And in my process, the (?) grieving process has really helped me to understand that they were not mine to have.

05.06.09 I thought they were, but they weren't. And uh, is, it's taken me a long time to get to that point to, to realized that uh, that is the case. For me.

JW: Another word that comes into play, but it hasn't come up, is the word forgiveness?

05.06.57 LARRY COURTNEY: God, I could go, I mean, uh, I could interpret that in many ways. Forgiveness, for those who perpetrated whatever happened, or have I forgiven Eugene for dying, or haven't I, have I forgiven myself for holding all of this in? And.

05.07.31 I (?) can honestly say yes. On all three counts. Uh. The first one is obvious and that goes back to the energy thing. I forgave, I forgive those people, whoever, whatever, uh, for doing what they did. I think it's horrible, it's dastardly. Uh.

05.08.01 But uh, I've been, I have been taught to forgive uh, and it, it's a commandment, you know? So. Uh. And again, the energy thing comes into that. Uh. The second part, forgiving Eugene for dying. I never really thought about that too much, uh.

05.08.33 But there was a point when I was angry with him for not leaving his desk when he told us he did, when he told us he was going to. Because he called me and said he was evacuating. And after that he called my co-worker, and told her he was evacuating.

05.09.02 Now if he'd have been evacuating, he'd have been out of there when, when he told me he was going to, you know, instead of waiting a couple of minutes and then calling my co-worker. What, what happened, I don't know, you know? Uh, whether he was helping people or whether he just or, or whether he felt that they were safe in that, in the South Tower and he didn't have to evacuate.

05.09.31 I don't know what happened in that period of time. Uh, or even if he would have made it out, if he had, if he had left right then, you know? I don't know, I don't know that. But there, there was a, a point uh, that I came to realize that I was angry with him for not getting out of the building. And maybe for being there at all. You know?

05.10.00 Uh, (CLEARS THROAT) but I realized it was an irrational uh, I, I was angry with, with Death, period. Uh. And it was irrational. Uh. Because he may well have done exactly what he said he was doing. And uh, so there, there was no point in me being angry about it.

05.10.29 And, and, and then I had to come to the conclusion but if he didn't, why, why should I be angry with him anyway? Uh. And I, I don't know whether I consciously made a decision to

forgive him for not getting out alive, or not, but I realized that I uh, it wasn't my place to, to, to not.

05.11.03 If, if that was the word, if it wasn't my place to not forgive him. Uh. As for forgiving myself. Uh, for I don't know (?) many things. Uh. In this five-year journey uh, I, I think I was, I've been harder on myself than uh, other people have been on me.

05.11.44 Uh. But I think that uh, in this past year, that's been another, another part of that step is, is uh, forgiving myself for holding onto that grief uh, and not wanting to let it go.

05.12.07 Because uh, for one thing uh, during that period of time, I was sort of afraid that if I let go of it, I would lose Gene altogether. You know? Uh, it, it was a way of uh, not that uh, it wasn't true and real, but uh, probably it was uh, in my mind, it was a way of also holding on to him.

05.12.34 And uh, last year when we talked and I was, and I, I really meant what I said, that I was able to, to let go, I think that's when I started forgiving myself for holding on for so long. And uh, I really, the (?) concept of forgiveness, to me, has been ingrained since I was little, you know?

05.13.04 And I always uh, I, I sometimes had a hard time with forgive uh, particularly when I was uh, I was always the smallest one on the playground and, and I didn't, like I said, I couldn't play sports 'cos I couldn't hit the ball and whatnot. And so I got picked on all the time and, and always bullied.

05.13.27 And then and then uh, (LAUGHS) I'd go home crying and my mother said, well you'd have to forgive that person. They don't understand. They, they don't know what's going on. They uh, you have to forgive them. And I'd be, what do you mean forgive them? You know, I just want to, I, I wish I could hit them. You know? But I (?) just grew up with that concept that, that uh, forgiveness is, is just what we are required to do. We are just absolutely required to forgive. And uh, sometimes it comes a little harder to me than other times.

05.14.04 But uh, again, if you're not forgiving (?) someone, if I'm, well, in my case, if I'm not forgiving someone, then what I'm doing is holding a grudge. And I'm expending energy on that emotion. And I, I don't want to do that. I don't.

05.14.28 And so it's just becomes so much easier for me to forgive and let go of it and not, not hold it in. And I've heard, you know, people say, and Dr. Phil and all these wonderful psychologists and what-not. It's the hardest person to forgive is yourself. I, I think uh, (?) maybe in my case, a little bit.

- 05.15.02 But maybe not, I (?) don't know, you know, and, and uh, (?) and it's kind of been a freeing experience to be able to realize that uh, that's what I've been doing this past year is by letting go of that, that total uh, attachment and (?) that total grief.
- 05.15.28 That I'm, I'm forgiving myself in the process of, of holding on for so long. And by doing that, I'm (?) allowing myself to move forward. And uh, I think if (?) I couldn't forgive myself, if I couldn't do that uh, I, I would just be stagnated. I wouldn't (?) be what's happened this past year. I don't think (?) uh.
- 05.16.00 If I can't forgive myself, I've got resentments against myself. I've got resentments which are going to spill over into other things and (CLEARS THROAT) I just don't think that, I mean, I think that that forgiveness has had to be a part of being able to grow this year. Uh, and being able to spiritually being able to come back to that, that center.
- 05.16.28 And uh, hopefully that'll, that will continue to be a part of my, my very existence.

JW: Anything you'd want to say?

LARRY COURTNEY: No, I don't think so. I think we covered a lot today (LAUGHS).

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 05.17.17 LARRY COURTNEY: You know, at first I contributed it to, a lot to California, and, and in some ways it is, because it's a different you know, it's a totally different lifestyle and, and I, I'm so much closer to my kids now.
- 05.17.31 And uh, so that's been a real part of the healing process, too, but it's uh, yeah, this, this process this past year has been really very uh, healthy for me. So.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

- 05.18.21 LARRY COURTNEY: (MID-STATEMENT) if I'm gonna help her quit, you know, just be a, a support, then, and Davy smokes, also my (?) housemate (~JW~) And he was gonna go on the patch today. I don't know if he was successful.

(OFF CAMERA REMARKS)

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