

Interview with Cliff Chapman and Don Shidler

GALA Interviews, 2006

Narrators: Cliff Chapman [CC] and Don Shidler [DS]

Interviewer: Katrina Maksimuk [I]

Videographer: Sara Goener

Location: The home of Cliff Chapman and Don Shidler, Shell Beach, CA

Length: Approximately 1 hour and 41 minutes (File 1: 61 minutes. File 2: 40 minutes.)

Interview begins at 00:00:00.

Transcript prepared by: Elias Simons and Steven Ruszczycky

[00:00:00] I: And we roll. Did you want to introduce yourselves real quick, maybe introduce yourself and say what sign you are? Something fun and silly like that.

[00:00:12] Cliff Chapman [CC]: Something like that. I'm Clifford Chapman. My sign is Taurus, and I'm 75 years old. And let's see, what else do you want to know? I'm getting shorter as I get older and my feet are getting longer.

[00:00:30] Don Shidler [DS]: And I'm Don Shidler. I'm only sixty-nine years old, soon to be 70. My sign is what is my sign?

[00:00:38] DS: Gemini. And I'm not getting shorter, but I'm getting broader.

[00:00:47] I: So when did you move to San Luis Obispo County and maybe tell the story of why?

[00:00:56] CC: Well, I think that I'll probably go first because I've always lived here. I was born and raised in Guadalupe, which happens to be Santa Barbara County, but it's right on the other side of the line. My family has lived in San Luis Obispo since 1830. And so after I served in the United States Navy in Korea, I came back to Cal Poly to go to school and have

stayed here ever since. And the reason that I stayed here partly was because I have been all over the world. But I like the atmosphere here. When I moved back to San Luis Obispo, the population was about eight thousand people. Cal Poly still was not coeducational. And I think I was probably the only gay person in San Luis Obispo.

[00:01:46] DS: I came up here in 1964 after meeting Clifford and we got together and then I was living in Orange County and couldn't transfer my job up to this county and decided that I would forego the job in order to have Clifford. So I moved up here and went to Cal Poly. It was coeducational by that time, but only about 5000 students. Only about fifteen hundred in my graduating class.

[00:02:17] DS: And I've been here ever since and wouldn't think of living any place else.

[00:02:25] I: And now out of curiosity because you both went to Cal Poly and you're both alumni to maybe let us know what your majors were. Or maybe some of your fondest memories about Cal Poly to kind of connect you back with the community in a way.

[00:02:43] CC: My-- My time at Cal Poly was only about a year because I didn't have any money and I needed to work. And I suppose the thing that I liked the most about the university was the smallness of the school. You were very, it was very easy to know everyone that was there. And especially in your particular major. My major was electronic engineering, because that's what I did in the Navy. And so, I picked up about two years of credits having been in the Navy and that seemed a natural thing to do. When I was here and trying to get into the--some help from the government at that time. If you were a veteran, you got a college and college benefits. They were like the government has-- seems to be all the time-- is, it was very difficult to get things straightened out. The benefits that we got at that time were like eighty-five dollars a month to take care of you and also go to school, which obviously is not enough. And that didn't even come through to me. So I was working part time. Anything I

could do, mowing lawns and babysitting and anything. And that was not unusual as far as I was concerned.

[00:04:05] CC: That was just something that you did to get by with.

[00:04:10] CC: At that time, I was looking for work all the time. One of my great aunts had been friends with the owners of Marshall's Jewelers. I also knew them well and so she felt very sorry for me. And she went in to see if there was some sort of a job that I could do there to help me out. And Arthur Marshall, the owner of the store, gave me a job as janitor at the time. And I went in and worked there for... Well, I work there and as I was working there became more and more interested in the jewelry business and design and also in the repairs and everything to do with it fell right into the line of things that I like to do.

[00:04:51] CC: So they needed someone more than just a janitor and they offered me the job.

[00:04:59] CC: And so I had to decide whether to see if I could get ahead in the jewelry business rather than continue with my electronic engineering. And I decided that I better take the jewelry job. And so I did. And that was kind of a wonderful decision to make. Not that I didn't like electronics, but it was a wonderful decision because the doors opened and I continued on in the jewelry business the rest of my life.

[00:05:31] I: And you? [Directed at DS] About the major at Cal Poly. Maybe some of your favorite memories there.

[00:05:36] DS: Well, I'm an unusual duck as far as Cal Poly is concerned, because at the time I was going to school there. Just like Clifford, I was on the G.I. Bill and I was an English major. So when I graduated, I got a Bachelor of science in English. When you present that degree to people they say "No, you don't get a bachelor of science in English. That's a liberal arts thing." That's, No. I have a Bachelor of Science in English. I enjoyed Cal Poly primarily, I suppose, because it wasn't so large. You were closer to your instructors.

And many of whom were just the best instructors you could possibly have. While I was going to school. I was working as a haberdasher. I worked in a men's clothing store putting clothes on people's backs and that store is no longer there. But that helped me get through college. That and Clifford, because we didn't have to pay any rent, so made it through there.

[00:06:51] I: So you talked about moving to--from Orange County to be with Clifford. So how long have you guys been together?

[00:06:59] DS: We've been together since August 28, 1964.

[00:07:05] I: And how about you tell us the story of how you guys met?

[00:07:09] DS: Well, there are two versions.

[00:07:13] DS: My version is that I met Clifford at a New Year's Eve party, I believe it was, in Costa Mesa. He was with somebody else at the time. But I was pretty much smitten by him, and we danced a couple of dances, which he doesn't remember. And then later I learned that he was no longer with the fellow that he was with. And I did my utmost to get a meeting with him. And we came up here and visited him, a friend of mine. And I came up and visited him and his mother when shortly after they moved in here. And then--then later, one evening at a gay bar in Laguna Beach, I was in there and he walked in and I says, that's my man. And... We got together and three months later I was up here.

[00:08:16] I: Let's hear the other version.

[00:08:19] CC: Well, let's see, my version was I do remember the party quite well and I was with a, I guess, what--I don't know what you'd call him today, but at that time you called him a chicken. I was--I was thirty, I guess, thirty years old at that time. And I had a young man who had just turned seventeen, and this was going very frantic and wonderful. I must say, frantic is not the word for it. It's worse than frantic, but wonderful is--is the word. But we were at this party together, and it seemed to me that I had to be watching him very

carefully all the time. So I don't remember, Don, and because everybody was hot for this chicken, so to speak. And anyway, I do remember that party.

[00:09:09] CC: I don't remember us dancing together. And I guess I don't remember you and your friend coming up here before--

[00:09:17] DS: Daryl.

[00:09:18] CC: and before we went to--

[00:09:20] DS: Before we went to Mexico.

[00:09:22] CC: Really? I don't remember that either. But how did you--

[00:09:26] DS: Your chicken was still living here.

[00:09:29] CC: Oh, I see. OK. OK. All right. Anyway, that was that was an interesting and a wonderful experience, I must say.

[00:09:40] CC: I've--I've had a number of wonderful experiences along that line and feel honored to have known the people that I've known. Certainly, more than honored to end up with Don and it's been an incredibly wonderful relationship. It's a nice learning process. Every day, I must say.

[00:10:04] I: Lets see. So how do you attribute the longevity of your relationship? What--what is it that's made you guys work through all the things?

[00:10:15] CC: Well, for me, I suppose what it is that...

[00:10:22] CC: I think everything has to be in balance, And you work very hard to, at least I do to be in balance on the other side of where your partner is. If your partner is high strung, then you tend to try to be on the other side, to, to bring out a balance there. I think that's very important. Most important, you have to like each other. Even more important, I think, than love each other. Love each other is, is wonderful and special. And that's something that just simply grows with your life. But if you don't like somebody, no matter how much you love them, I don't think it could be a possible good relationship, and each of

you have to, I think, give a great deal more than you think you should give. I know that in Don's particular instance, he gave a great deal of his life, much more than I did, simply because, first of all, we were liv-- my mother was living with me when he came to live here. So we spent twenty five years together with my mother living with us. And that's an incredible strain on a relationship. So you must like each other. He had to also like my mother and he did. And that was, that was nice. But I think probably liking each other is one of the things that works fine. You must be able to work together. Oh, God. After I said that, I can't believe I said it. Because we don't work together.

[00:12:04] CC: We don't work together. We don't do projects together at all. Unless somebody needs just somebody, something, someone to help you lift something, then I'll find him someplace. Otherwise, I much prefer to do my project by myself, and he much prefers to do his project by himself.

[00:12:18] DS: Split the project into pieces.

[00:12:20] CC: Absolutely!

[00:12:21] DS: At opposite ends of the property.

[00:12:23] CC: Usually one over here. One way over there. Absolutely. That's that's a must. Otherwise you don't have a chance in hell. I'll tell you at least we don't because he doesn't do anything right. You know, and I have to redo it. So that's--that's why he does his things and he does his things right. Except that he doesn't do my things right.

[00:12:44] I: What do you attribute to how it's worked? [Directed towards DS]

[00:12:47] DS: Well, everything that he said.

[00:12:51] DS: Yeah, all of the above. But along those same lines and he said, you give more of yourself than you thought you could. I'm not sure that you give more than you thought you could. I think you give as much as you possibly can and overlook the things that

bug you about a person like you learn to to work on projects separately and overcome those things.

[00:13:23] DS: Actually, we could work together if he would work in my way, because all we're doing is attacking the problem from different angles--

[00:13:33] CC: Bullshit!

[00:13:36] DS: --and the end result is, is the same.

[00:13:43] DS: We have a healthy respect for each other, and I think that's very important. We respect each other's space. We respect each other's thinking and thought processes. We respect each other's hurts, likes, dislikes and then console one another when we can praise one another when it's...

[00:14:10] DS: we're praiseworthy--

[00:14:12] CC: Even when it isn't!

[00:14:13] DS: Pat each other on the back when we've done a good job.

[00:14:17] DS: And...

[00:14:21] DS: And I think we've also had such a wonderful support group. In that this area has the most wonderful people that you'd ever hope to know, and they know we know many, many, many people. And they always support us in the things that we do as we support them in projects that they're doing. And I think that's all part of the ball game.

[00:14:45] CC: I would like to add something to that. I think when you said support group, I think that is probably really right up there at the top of everything. Early on in our relationship, we had my family, which was not I couldn't call them a support group, except that they were in their own way. They had no idea what was happening. They were too old to understand gay life, but they still supported us because we were hardworking and we were respectful of them and that kind of thing.

[00:15:14] CC: But then when my family died and even prior to that, we started to get a lot of people that were moving into the area, gay couples that were moving into the area area. And it was easy then to become friendly with them and...

[00:15:30] CC: all of a sudden in our lives, our lives became more normal because of the people we were associating with because of my business. I still had a lot to do as far as heterosexual people are concerned. And I liked heterosexual people very much as much as I like gay people. So they were very important to me also.

[00:15:51] CC: But in our private lives, then we we knew gay couples and even without ever particularly discussing your private life with them just simply because it was a community. It helps you continue in your in your particular particular way. Was very nice. It is very nice.

[00:16:14] I: Who were some of the people you were closest to from this area, and are they still around?

[00:16:19] CC: Well, let's see. In this particular area. Oh, sure, they're still around. I don't know. A few. I don't know. Am I supposed to mention people's names?

[00:16:28] I: Oh, I guess maybe not, huh. Because they might not be out. Actually, never mind. Because they might not be out.

[00:16:31] CC: Oh, I wouldn't mention anybody who's not out. Yeah. Even if they think they're not, they are.

[00:16:39] CC: Well, I guess the first one that I met prior to even--

[00:16:42] I: Or maybe even just what you guys did for social gatherings, or you know what I mean kinda describe what you talk about.

[00:16:47] CC: Not a great deal different than we do today. We got into-- we went to each other's homes for dinner. We, we went on camping trips. No, I didn't do camping trips.

We'd have hiking trips or that kind of thing. And we, we did caravans to different areas that we, we heard about that were beautiful--wildflowers and things like that.

[00:17:07] CC: And... .

[00:17:10] CC: And mostly, I guess, we were social. And along with the sociability, when someone in the community had a tragedy, everyone in the community came forth and was available, not only available, but was incredibly, incredibly supportive of the person and tried to carry through with that throughout their life. And so that you always felt that if and when that happened to you, you would have the same kind of support.

[00:17:40] DS: And along those same lines...

[00:17:44] DS: Well, we had a number of gay friends and built a community around them. We didn't want to live in a ghetto of only gay people.

[00:17:55] DS: And certainly through his business, we've met numerous straight couples and made friends with them. And now when we have a dinner party, it's a mixture of gay and straight. And that's been going on for a long time. And we get the same kind of support from them as we would have or as we do from from gay couples. So it's, it's a nice mixture. Without a ghetto kind of a feeling, it's just we're just people and we all get along together very nicely.

[00:18:26] DS: And if we don't want, then they're not in the group. You're not in their group or whatever it is.

[00:18:31] DS: But. We're really no different than anybody else. We all put our pants on one leg at a time.

[00:18:39] I: And I have a question kind of rewinding into when you're talking about the longevity of your relationship, talking about... Sometimes one person's this and then one person's that and you kind of balance out, I was just kind of curious as one of you more high

strung than the other or more stressed out or more goofy, or how would you describe each other's personalities a little bit?

[00:19:02] DS: Clifford is the calm water. He's also the tour director. And that's what we call the more dominant of our relationship.

[00:19:13] CC: That's because I'm so much bigger than he is.

[00:19:15] DS: I'm afraid of it! But where was I? What did I say?

[00:19:21] CC: You said how dominant I was, was the word?

[00:19:26] DS: I am a little... I'm more high strung.

[00:19:30] DS: I have a hot temper that's instantaneous and then it's cold. So I may drop something and swear up a storm. And he wondered what I'm screaming about. And it's - I've just done it and it's over with. So he's the calming influence. And I'm, for lack of a better term, more hysterical.

[00:19:52] CC: Yeah, he can't make a sandwich and put mustard on the sandwich without cussing.

[00:20:00] DS: Because I can't get the damn bottle open.

[00:20:03] CC: Whatever the reason for sure.

[00:20:04] I: I think you're on the switch camera angles [directed to camera operator]... and we won't make you guys get in a tent! [directed at CC and DS]

[00:20:10] CC: Oh, Son of a gun!

[00:20:12] DS: Have you seen that little poster with Bush and Cheney in front of the Grand Tetons?

[00:20:16] I: Oh, No!

[00:20:18] DS: It says "dumb fuck mountain!"

[00:20:25] I: You got that? [directed to camera operator]

[00:20:27] I: Good thing I hit record! I'm, so one of the things that like the origin of this project is for us. We're looking for inspiration because of the fact that there's not, we don't have visible role models because there's such a huge focus in the gay community on youth that you often don't get to see and you can't identify. Like, if I was to see you guys in the grocery store, I wouldn't know that you guys had been in a relationship for twenty-five years. And all of us usually have heterosexual role models via our parents or who raised us. However, most of us don't really have some sort of a, someone to inspire us and stuff like that, and I was just curious for you, growing up or even in mid or later, did, who, who has inspired you? Has it been your family, your friends, somebody on television, who have been your inspiration? What has it been?

[00:21:22] CC: I suppose when you say you don't have any role models...

[00:21:27] CC: We had no role models either. Even less. You know, because we were, there was no such thing as being out in the community...

[00:21:35] CC: And so you had to become your role model. You had to use your mind and and you had to make up your mind as to what you wanted to do. And then. As far as I was concerned, then you had to bring the community in and make them part of your life. And my particular time, of course, the community was completely straight community. That was not difficult for me. My family was all straight except for some strange queer uncles that I finally found out about that later, you know. But they were also, you know, nobody knew about them. So that was not difficult. In fact, that it I think it enhanced my life and our life to have to be able to then you choose rather than choose a role model.

[00:22:26] CC: I suppose that what I'm hearing from you is probably role models in maybe staying together [In a relationship] are those that type of thing.

[00:22:36] CC: I'm not sure what the gay--young gay community feels. But I think one of the things that is important about being gay, young or old, is that you, you do bring

your life together as a human being within the community that you're living in. Not necessarily all gay community, because the world is never gonna be all gay. And I think it would be horrible if it was. I'd much prefer being a part of this wonderful minority. You know, it's much better than being part of the majority, which stinks as far as the way that they handle the world, you know. So you really have, a, you really are blessed and I say take it and go. Well, you know, it's up to you. Don't lean on anything or anyone. Lean only on yourself, and that will make your life very happy because it will be your accomplishment.

[00:23:42] DS: I don't know about role models and--

[00:23:44] I: Or even just in someone or something--

[00:23:45] DS: We didn't have role models, as Clifford said.

[00:23:49] DS: So we kind of created our own role models or became our, our own role models and... we were appreciative of people who were successful. Whatever they did, and that might be a model to follow. There there's a success story here...

[00:24:17] DS: I can't, I can't... I can't think of role models.

[00:24:24] CC: I think some--

[00:24:25] DS: I think that we did have, but for the young people of today, life is so much different. There are gay people out there. There are broke, mount break broke back mountain movies out [referring to the movie Brokeback Mountain], and it's a controversy. There are more big name people who are coming out and admitting to being homosexual and not being condemned for it. Ellen DeGeneres, for one, and people like this and there's a great deal more acceptance of gay people and so they are going to be the young people's role models. It's part of the problem with young people and old folks like us is a generation gap. You listen to different music than one age than you do to another. You know, I'm not into hip hop and rap and all this kind of stuff. I like old goldies and I mean old from the 40s or something like that. Those kinds of things are just natural separations. Not that I don't accept,

you know, that's fine. Young people want to listen to one kind of music. They like one kind of art. They want to drive one kind of car or something like this. That's fine. But it's hard for me to drive in my little old lady's car and be a role model, I think, for somebody who wants to ride in a spitfire or something like this.

[00:25:57] I: Out of curiosity, on music, what type of music do you guys enjoy listening to and then maybe if you guys have a favorite song or a song that reminds you of each other.

[00:26:08] I'm pretty much--

[00:26:08] I: Hold on a sec. What? Say that one more time. [directed to recording crew, muffled technical back and forth]

[00:26:13] I: That's OK, so it's a different angle.

[00:26:17] I: OK cool. [Muffled technical back and forth] It'll be just kind of a different angle. So what type of music you guys enjoy listening to? And maybe if there's a song?

[00:26:27] CC: I'm pretty much a classical music buff. I just love all classical music, I like very much.

[00:26:39] DS: And that's probably my favorite, is the classical music. However, I like instrumental music that could be the background music from a movie or some of the Beatles tunes that have been orchestrated for large orchestras and these kinds of things.

[00:26:57] DS: I think that's that's a good kind of music. Clifford likes opera and I like to go to the opera, but I don't like to listen to opera music because it demands too much of your attention and I want music in the background that doesn't, doesn't cause me to stop and think about what they're doing.

[00:27:20] I: And do you have a song that you guys like to dance to or remind you of each other?

[00:27:25] CC: We don't dance well together at all. He wants to lead and I want to lead. He's too tall and I'm too short.

[00:27:33] DS: We like "Memories" from "Cats."

[00:27:35] CC: Yeah, that's a nice song. It's very nice.

[00:27:38] DS: And there was a song. Oh, I'd forgotten that woman's name who sang it. Carol, they are. Carol Bayer Sager... well that's not quite right [Melissa Manchester sang the song and co-wrote it with Carol Bayer Sager]. Anyway. It was called "Come In from the Rain" and sometimes when life was tough outside, we would come in from the rain together. That meant something to us.

[00:28:05] I: And on coming out, so it sounds like you were out to your family, Clifford?

[00:28:08] CC: No, I was not out to my family.

[00:28:09] I: Could you explain maybe who you were out to, maybe when you came out to yourself. Like for me, my evolution was coming out to myself, coming out to my friends and then coming out to my family and then community.

[00:28:23] CC: I suppose I really didn't come out even to myself. I came out, of course, obviously even to myself, because I knew that I was in love with Don and I knew all of my friends and we had all of that community. But until I finally allowed myself completely coming out is when my mother died. My mother would never have understood. So it wasn't any and my grandmother either. So it was not even a possibility in my mind. And so that didn't. But after that, it was an incredible release. As far as I was concerned, to think that I had been lying for sixty some years was a horror, and the relief after that was wonderful. So I'm all for people coming out. That doesn't mean that you change your lifestyle. That just simply means that you suggest to people that your lifestyle is different. But you're still you who you are and you still operate the way you do. If you happen to be a drag queen, you still

are a drag queen. But if you don't happen to be a drag queen, if you're a business person and that isn't your interest, just because you come out doesn't turn you into something else. So I think I'm all for being truthful. And = I guess coming out isn't even the word so much as being truthful, because being truthful to yourself is more important than being truthful to anyone else. As far as I'm concerned.

[00:30:02] DS: I was very fortunate in that my elder sister is gay or was gay and when she came out to me is when I realized we're really more alike than I thought we were.

[00:30:19] DS: And I was not out, but I wasn't in either. I was just nobody at that time. I was very young.

[00:30:28] DS: And then later I came out to myself and then to her and...

[00:30:37] DS: And it just was me, and if I was in, I was in, if I was out, I was out. It didn't seem to matter. If I was with a gay crowd, I could swish with the best of them.

[00:30:48] DS: But it wasn't my style. With a straight crowd, I think I acted as straight as I can be. I don't know what that means. With my family, of course, I had only one sister, and I remember one time it was shortly after Clifford's fiftieth birthday and we'd done a big dinner party here at the house and I took a photo album back to Kansas to show my mother the fancy party that we'd had. It was all a black tie dinner party. It was very grand, and she was going through this and she ran into a picture of a friend of ours who lives in San Luis Obispo and she says "Oh, who is that guy there?" And I said, oh, that's so-and-so. I just love him and she raised one eyebrow and said "Oh, are you gay?"

[00:31:42] DS: And I said "Yes. Didn't you know?" And she flipped the page and just went on and that's all that was ever said. So I don't know if she knew what she was saying or not, but it was very easy to come out and be that way with her.

[00:31:58] I: That's a great story.

[00:32:00] CC: Knowing her, I can't believe that she said the word "gay" without and not really not knowing quite what it meant. I don't know.

[00:32:08] CC: It just seems so out of character for her to have said that and so I can imagine that, how you felt.

[00:32:15] I: Are you guys from spiritual or religious backgrounds or where are you at now?

[00:32:22] CC: My family was all Catholic being Spanish, of course, and I was pretty much raised in that area of life. I am absolutely not religious. I don't believe in God. I don't. I believe God is between your ears and in the beauty that you see around you and and in in your friends and in the help that you give people. And I think if there is a God, that will be enough to carry me through.

[00:32:54] DS: The religious people talk about God being love. But they don't practice it. They practice fear. And I can't believe in that at all. So the God between my ears is a God of love who understands all of my inequities and maybe some of my good points too and he's that way with all of us. Organized religion just leaves me so cold.

[00:33:30] CC: I had I had something that I wanted to add there just simply because I heard it, I heard it and I thought it was so beautiful. There was a rabbi who was speaking to one of his charges, an older woman, a Jewish lady, and she had been in Auschwitz and she was in the prison camp. And she went to the they had a synagogue there or a type of a synagogue and she went every day and prayed for her family. As you do, I suppose, in the synagogue. I'm not Jewish, so I'm not sure. But she said that she went and prayed every day and all of her family was killed. She survived and came back to New York, and she was talking to her rabbi one day and he said "I don't see you at synagogue," and she said and she told him this story. So she says, "Now, when I do go to synagogue," she said, "all I do is go

there and say the names of my family. I don't pray anymore." I thought that was pretty significant and it stuck with me, a long time.

[00:34:51] I: That was a great story. Let's see. So on work life and stuff like that,

[00:34:58] I: You did you were in the jewelry business most of your life, and what did you do? [directed at DS]

[00:35:04] DS: I was a schoolteacher with my bachelor's science degree and I taught for a few years and then in the school that I was teaching in I didn't like the way the library was being run, and I made some comment about that, and the librarian says "Well, if you want, you can have the library and I'll teach English." And I thought that wasn't such a bad idea. So we talked with the principal of the school and there was a way that I could grandfather in to become the librarian.

[00:35:39] DS: So I went, I don't know, several years during the summer to San Jose State and got a degree in librarianship and was the librarian for that school, and then Proposition 13 came along, which cut a lot of positions and the other school in my district lost their librarian, so I became the librarian of the district and I worked all the schools.

[00:36:07] CC: In defense of the prop- oh go on, I'm sorry.

[00:36:08] DS: And I loved it and I didn't mind teaching English, but the beauty of being a librarian is that you have such a vast variety of things going on, and Oh, when you can answer somebody's question just like that, the praise they heap on you. It's wonderful. They don't realize that you've had this same assignment for 16 years or so. So, you know, it's that red book up there will give you the answer. But one minute I was working with somebody on an English project and the next it may have been a social science project or a science project in biology or what have you. The only ones I couldn't deal with were the

math problems, and I usually knew enough students well enough to find somebody out in the library who could help the kid that needed help with the math problem.

[00:37:02] DS: But you know, I enjoyed being a librarian.

[00:36:05] CC: And he's still that way today because he watches Jeopardy and he answers all the questions correctly and the ones he doesn't answer correctly, he knows that they're wrong, not him!

[00:37:18] I: So, Clifford you were going to say in defense of prop--

[00:37:22] CC: Oh, in defense of Proposition 13.

[00:37:25] CC: I know that it was hard on the schools, but thank goodness for me as far as paying property taxes is concerned.

[00:37:34] I: So on the side note of Jeopardy, what do you guys usually do for fun besides correct Jeopardy?

[00:37:43] CC: Well, for me, I love gardening. I'm very, I'm a good gardener. It doesn't look like it right now because of the weather. But I am a good gardener and I like to garden.

[00:37:52] CC: I love to cook. I love to entertain.

[00:37:57] CC: I love designing. That's what I did in the jewelry business, and I'm a good businessman and I like business, and I do a lot of business for us, and and I also do some business for some other people that I don't think are as astute as they should be, and so I'm that's, that's what I, that's what I do. I also am, I have served on the foundation board for the Performing Arts Center. I have done a number of other things that I think are worthy and I like to do those kinds of things. I'm a pretty good caregiver too.

[00:38:40] CC: And so we have a small group in the South County here of seventeen people that we've been meeting together for about sixteen or seventeen years. And we meet every other Wednesday for just an hour and a half. And we talk about everything from soup

to nuts and from health, and we've gotten through lots of health crises within the group. We've, we've lost people. We've certainly at this particular point in time. We're talking about politics and seeing if what, what we can possibly do to make some changes in the world, and it has to start with you. It has to start with somebody young and you young people by all means don't forsake, your vote ever, ever, because you will end up without the wonderful freedoms that we've had up until now.

[00:39:34] CC: So those are the kinds of things that I like to do and I'm very nosy. I check everybody out to see if everything's going okay and those kinds of things.

[00:39:45] DS: A more private person, I suppose. I do gardening only more from grunt labor kind of thing.

[00:39:58] CC: He's good at that.

[00:39:59] DS: The boss lays out what he wants done and then I do it. Trying to please him, pruning and trimming and those kinds of things. He plans gardens and plants. This kind of flower here and that kind of flower there and it always comes out right, so I'm not going to step into that one at all. But when it's time to clean out a bed of flowers, I'm very good at pulling them out and getting them in the green waste. I maintain the cars. I like cars, and I'd much rather wax a car than hoe weeds. So I do those kinds of things. I like to read. I've been a reader all my life and so I spend a lot of time reading and we don't have a housekeeper. I try to maintain this house and we get very clean about that point so that there's less labor in the house cleaning.

[00:40:57] CC: He's a good laundress. He does that. He takes care of all of the laundry and the ironing. He sets a beautiful table, and so he does all of those kinds of things that are very much important in a relationship. And we sort of make a very nice team along those lines.

[00:41:17] DS: We mash in those kinds of things.

[00:41:20] CC: I might change something once in a while that he doesn't see, but I don't tally.

[00:41:24] DS: You'd be surprised how many times I've seen you and didn't say anything.

[00:41:31] I: What type of authors do you like out of curiosity, since you said you like to read? [Muffled technical back and forth between recording crew]

[00:41:36] CC: OK.

[00:41:42] I: [Adjusting camera angle] All right, go ahead.

[00:41:46] CC: I must say, at this stage of my life, as far as authors are concerned, as I'm really reading almost all gay novels today. I think for one thing, there are some incredibly wonderful authors out there, and so I'm enjoying those. I've read the other books in my life and I've enjoyed them also. But the dirtier the book is today, the better I like it, you see. So that's where I am. That's what I'm reading today...

[00:42:16] DS: He's full of smoke and beans. He does like the gay books and the gay books, some of the gay books are really very good. You can't call them literature though.

[00:42:25] CC: Oh, of course.

[00:42:26] DS: And well, there's my snobby attitude--

[00:42:29] CC: I'll say!

[00:42:30] DS: Towards, for literature.

[00:42:35] DS: I like mysteries. I like the challenge of a mystery to see if I can figure out before the end of the book "whodunnit?" Who done it? I liked the classics and I've read many, many of them and missed a lot of them that I haven't picked up yet. I like some new authors. We have one up in in Cambria, Catherine Ryan Hyde, who is just an exquisite writer.

[00:43:07] DS: She's wonderful. She writes stories that young people would like because she kind of aims them in a young person's direction and they're not gay, they're not

straight, they're just stories of people and trials and tribulations and and growing up and living.

[00:43:31] DS: Good, good author. She can't write books fast enough for me.

[00:43:36] CC: I think that she has one that hasn't even been published yet. We have it and she is the first time she's used to a gay character and it's it's a lovely, beautiful story. So for sure, when it comes out, everybody should be sure and should read that book. It's lovely.

[00:43:59] I: In *Pay It Forward* in the philosophy behind that and your philanthropic activities in the community, I see some sort of connection there. Can you talk a little bit about that and the things you've done in the community?

[00:44:17] CC: Sure. Thanks.

[00:44:17] I: And explain what *Paying it Forward* is for me.

[00:44:21] I2: It's her, it's one of the books that she's famous for.

[00:44:22] I: Oh, OK, thank you.

[00:44:24] CC: That's one of her books. The one that was, that was made into a movie. I really don't think, I think it was not even close her best book, however, I think there are three or four other ones that are far better than that one. But that's the one that the movie industry picked up on, and I'm, and that help certainly helped her a great deal and I'm happy for that. But she has some other ones that are lovely. My feeling as far as community is concerned and both of us, I think are pretty much in line here, is that we really are into the arts and into people.

[00:44:58] CC: And... I, So we have made most of our life to try to help the community arts people. I've often said the only thing that keeps this world sane is the arts. And so I believe in that strongly. I believe in helping young people get into it, if they, if they

need be. We support the local arts. We also support the EOC [Emergency Operation Center] and specifically in their education section where they're helping young people, especially the Hispanic community in South County that needs a great deal of help as far as education is concerned, sexual education, AIDS, sex education and an education for AIDS and all of those kinds of things, and the way the Hispanics treat the females and those kinds of things. They're, they're wonderful that way and so we do, we do support them. They're probably the only other one that at this time that we're supporting other than the arts, and we stopped that, last year was the first year in about fifteen years that we did not do anything for them and that was because we had a complaint locally from a neighbor that felt that we had too many people here and that's probably very true. We had seven or eight hundred people here and... But they made about fifty thousand dollars a year on that and so last year, they had to cut the aid to South County and that really hit home. So we're doing it again this year. I'm very interested in the university and in the liberal arts section of the university. I try to be very involved there and helping them out and help young people along those lines.

[00:46:55] CC: That's... That's my thought... Strictly there.

[00:47:00] I: We're on the same line on that. I really felt that this project would be really nice not only to get history and understand that, but I didn't understand how much it would be given back to me even while I was in the process. I met Sarah in a Photoshop class at Cuesta and loved her work and really saw her as a person and as a matter of fact, she was Catholic and still in youth group, not youth group, but ran the youth group, that she ran the youth group with the Catholic church--

[00:47:26] CC: I'm sure!

[00:47:27:] I: -when I met her... So-- No, I really did! No, she really did. She was running--

[00:47:32] CC: You look like a priest! [Directed at Sarah]

[00:47:35] I: So I think it's also given us a lot of self-esteem and purpose and kinda things like that.

[00:47:43] CC: Absolutely!

[00:47:43] I really, I believe in the arts so much.

[00:47:44] CC: Yeah, absolutely.

[00:47:45] It's kept my sanity for years.

[00:47:48] CC: Yeah!

[00:47:48] I: Sometimes, everything's kablooey and then the arts come through. So what, I'm curious if you guys have done art yourself or if you're just a voyeur of the arts.

[00:48:00] DS: I want to piggyback on just what you've been saying. You asked a while ago about Catherine Ryan Hyde...

[00:48:05] DS: *Pay It Forward* and you were not familiar with it. What you're doing with this project is a pay it forward project. You are putting something out to the next person for him to pick up and and glean something to improve his life, and his obligation then is to take that and pay it forward. So instead of paying for your mistakes, you're eliminating the mistakes before they're made by paying it forward and... And this is what you're doing and this is why we're doing this with you, because we feel that this is an important project.

[00:48:43] CC: But just look also what is done for you because it's come back to you both. As you say, it's improved your self-esteem and and everything, and so it works. The balance is incredibly wonderful for sure.

[00:48:58] DS: I think the arts... Are so asexual. That that's why they're so wonderful.

[00:49:08] DS: There's no gay, there's no straight, there's no black, there's no white, there's no brown, there's no yellow. It's the arts and the music is music and you like it or you don't like it or you'll tolerate it or whatever your attitude is toward it. Painting is the same way. Sculpture is the same way. Flying Fish on the streets of San Luis Obispo is the same

kind of thing. A lot of people like that project. A lot of people think “uch, it’s terrible.” And... and the, the other sculptures that are downtown, there’s, there’s one of this woman who’s had a mastectomy. Clifford just hates it and I can, I can tolerate it. But then there’s the “Puck” who’s down there.

[00:49:56] DS: Would you believe we had “Puck” here for about three months in front of our garden? And we, we knew Elizabeth [Elizabeth MacQueen, sculptor] quite well and I wanted to keep “Puck” for a long time, but we couldn’t quite swing the price on the “Puck.” But... We’re very strong in...

[00:50:22] DS: No, not pushing, what’s the word I want?

[00:50:24] CC: Pushing.

[00:36:07] DS: Push. Well, we end up supporting the Mozart Festival, the symphony, the youth symphony.

[00:50:35] DS: I used to be a member of the library board only it was “Foundation for the Library” and I can’t remember what title it was. That’s been a couple of years ago. All of these things are the things that everybody needs to see and become...

[00:51:02] I: I have a question, a little bit, Katrina recently was running the Pride Alliance at Cal Poly, the Gay and Lesbian Center, and both of you going to Cal Poly in the days that you did, did you ever imagine that there would be a gay-lesbian center at Cal Poly?

[00:51:18] CC: Absolutely not. I think that is so incredible. I just. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. I am so proud of you for doing that kind of thing and for all of the schools doing that kind of thing and I’m very proud of your gay pride. I cannot take part in it. It’s still not part of my soul. It would be, it’s very hard for me to do those kind of... attend your functions and those kind of things and so it’s not because I don’t think you’re doing the right thing, it’s just simply that I guess I’m too old to to do, to do that publicly and but that doesn’t mean that I don’t admire it and know that it’s helpful. Very helpful.

[00:52:05] DS: Yeah. I went to school at Cal Poly, it was a cowboy school and there were no Brokeback Mountain cowboys that anybody knew of--

[00:52:17] CC: I knew them!

[00:52:18] DS: --going to Cal Poly. Well, I didn't have time to, you know.

[00:52:22] CC: I did!

[00:52:23] DS: I was busy going to school and working.

[00:52:24] CC: I always have time for that!

[00:52:25] DS: Besides, I had my own cowboy!

[00:52:31] I: Yeah. It's still, it's still a cowboy school. [Muffled technical back and forth]

[00:52:38] CC: You ran out of film?

[00:52:40] I: No, no no! We're good, yeah. But just to let you know, I know we're interviewing you but to bring you in on a side note, when I was there this year, we had on the first week of school, there was like a little parents resource fair, maybe a tenth of the students with their parents came into the resource area and we had ten parents with their kids, seventeen- and eighteen-year-old kids, out, parents walking up to me saying, what can you do for my child?

[00:53:00] CC: Oh, my God!

[00:53:01] DS: Wonderful!

[00:53:02] I: Out to their parents!

[00:53:02] DS: Wonderful!

[00:53:05] I: And then the WOW week [Cal Poly's Week Of Welcome] of course. They're with their little WOW groups. It's their first day, school hasn't even started. They're with new peers. We had nearly one hundred people sign up for email list at Cal Poly.

[00:53:15] CC: My God!

[00:53:16] I: Nearly a hundred freshmen in front of their peers--

[00:53:18] CC: Isn't that incredible?

[00:53:19] I: --ready to stand up and to be involved and so I was just, I'm getting goosebumps right now!

[00:53:24] CC: Me too!

[00:53:25] I: The needs are changing so much. Before it was crisis intervention and now people want to be educated. There's people that want to come in there for their sister, for their father, for their friend, for themselves. It's just it's all across the board.

[00:53:39] CC: That's, that's wonderful. It's just it's amazing, and people are coming out as professors now, which is I think the hardest thing is actually for the staff and faculty because they worry about their job sometimes or being seen differently, because, you know, when you integrate gay, like, it's just a little piece of you, it's not you're dominant and they don't want to be looked at as the gay teacher or the gay administrator and stuff like that. Yeah. So a lot of exciting things have happened.

[00:54:06] CC: Let me add to that just a little bit of a personal experience that I had in high school, which was not a happy time for me at all. It was a horrible time. But there was a young man in high school. He was the son of the football coach. Gorgeous young man. He was my age and considerably different stature than, than I was, I was very small in school and he befriended me and, of course, I fell in love with him. I didn't know that I was in love with him, but I truly was, and I don't know. He was a year older than I was. I don't know if he knew or what anyway. But he needed someone also to talk to and had no one and my senior year, he committed suicide and I know that what you just told me that would not have happened if there was someone in this very small school that would have been able to talk to him and to explain life and what was happening to him and, and knowing his family, his father, and where everything was with his family, it just seemed like a normal natural thing

for him to do is just to get out of it and that's always been something in the back of my mind.

So it's wonderful what you just said.

[00:55:31] I: We've had, we've had people come in that have been suicidal. It still happens in the resource there, and not only that, you know, about gay straight alliances on high school campuses. Those are just, those are booming. How many of them are there now? Two thousand? One thousand? Twelve hundred in California? [directed to crew]

[00:55:45] CC: This, Is that right?

[00:55:46] DS: Isn't that great!

[00:55:48] I: And I'm from a little town called Yucaipa, if you know where that is.

[00:55:51] CC: I know. Yeah, absolutely.

[00:55:53] I: My friend got beat up for being gay in high school. So, I'm in the closet.

[00:55:55] CC: I'm sure. Yeah.

[00:55:58] I: Let's see. I kind of got a little sidetracked here.

[00:56:04] Crew Member: I think what we tried to go into some of the, what it was like. Some of the other interviews we've been talking to is the people tell us what it was like. Years ago, being gay and finding that community back then, if it was that, you know, underground gay bar or something--

[00:56:22]: Yeah, that's something, just recently reading *Stone Butch Blues* have you guys either of you ever read that? It just kind of tells a story of what it was like going into the gay bars and a lot of things the youth don't know is understanding that it really was illegal and you could get raided at a bar and wondering if you guys ever went to situations like that or knew of people or how was that fear like to meet other people, because it's kinda hard.

[00:56:47] CC: I suppose. I do remember that very well, and especially being in the Navy. There were certain places that were absolutely off limits that we were told were off limits and you could not go to them, and if you, if you had your civilian clothes, you often

went to them just the same. Just simply, it was second nature, almost. You, you needed to go to them and that's kind of a wonderful thing that happened. That was throughout my four years in the Navy. There's no doubt about that. When I came back to San Luis Obispo, there certainly was no gay bar in San Luis. There was one, believe it or not, that about a year back, I suppose, or maybe two years back. So that would have been 56 or 57 open in Pismo Beach.

[00:57:42] CC: Can you believe it? And there was probably... it was called "The Palace," "The Palace."

[00:57:49] CC: And there was probably any number from maybe thirty-five to fifty people there. On weekends, I remember going in one time and a cousin of mine was there, a girl cousin. And I was just shocked and embarrassed for myself and all, and for her also. That didn't last very long. That got closed down and then there was a gay bar in Monterey called "the Gilded Cage," and so I would drive up there. Also many times I went up Highway 1 when I was still going to school and went to "Nepenthe", which was the very gay, and then there was a-

[00:58:35] DS: "Esalen," or something like that.

[00:58:36] CC: Well, it was, it what? What's Esalen now was a gay bath. It was the baths. They're still there. And they used to bring busloads of people down from San Francisco and I was there early, believe me and I left late.

[00:58:53] CC: I didn't know how the hell I got home. Many times, at two o'clock in the morning, driving Highway 1 in the fog. But I made it. So, I suppose when you're gay and young and you find a way, you know and that didn't make it any less intriguing. You still you still tried not to get arrested and I never did. Thank goodness.

[00:59:23] DS: I think the first gay bar I was ever in was called the "Holler Inn" and it was in Long Beach, California, and it was a girl's bar and my sister and her girlfriend took me and... There weren't very many men in there, and the ones who were, were... Not exactly

cross dressers, but there was an awful lot of eye makeup. Oh, there you go, and one fellow was Tonya, I remember and... Tonya was not a very good role model, but she was a lot of fun. And... I met two or three people there and they told me about other places that were men's bars and that's how I got into the two gay bars. I never had much... I didn't like gay bars. They were just pick up places and I wasn't interested in just pick up all the time at any rate--

[01:00:25] CC: I was and I loved them!

[01:00:31] DS: And somewhere along the line, somebody told me there was a discussion going on and somebody wanted to know, well, how do you--

[End Video File 1]

[Begin Video File 2]

[00:00:00] DS: The gay bar. Well, I wouldn't have had the cojones to ask anybody like a cab driver to take me to a gay bar. So that was out. Somebody else said "go to the bar that's closest to the bus station." So I tried that--every time it worked. It was a gay bar. The closest one to the bus station was a gay bar and then, you know, once you got into one and met some people, then you would learn about other places to go and different organizations and get involved in parties and with people...

[00:00:38] DS: But... It was not exactly a difficult time, but you kind of had to watch yourself and not--not flout things too much or something could happen. There were raids on bars in L.A. and what have you. But I never drove up to L.A. to go to gay bars. I had too many close to home, so I didn't have to get involved in that.

[00:01:07] DS: But on occasion... Halloween...

[00:01:13] DS: And there was another one I can't remember when that was, but they were the drag queens would hold a drag ball.

[00:01:21] DS: And it was wonderful. They got it in all their glory, but it only happened about twice a year and for some reason they could do that because it was Halloween. It was just a costume party or something like that. But normally you didn't see very many, many people in any sort of drag in the bars because they've been arrested.

[00:01:45] DS: Very quickly. But then I think that's changed a lot now.

[00:01:50] CC: I think something else that happened along that same time is that they did a lot of baiting of gay people and they put good looking officers out on the beat or or in bars or in restrooms or places like that and they actually set you up and arrested you in those kinds of instances and so it was, it was a fear. A fearful, fearful time. Then maybe I'd like to say something also about the service. When you were in the military and I suppose for me,

the first time that I really knew that I was a homosexual was when I had some indoctrination into the Navy.

[00:02:39] CC: One of the first meetings, along with telling you about venereal disease, is they also explicitly told you about homosexuals and it was very vivid. I remember as just barely eighteen years old in the Navy becoming violently ill. While it was dark and everybody was watching this film. Because I realized that particular moment that was me that they were talking about, I didn't really know until then and that was a frightening experience and so that explained when bars were out of bounds and that kind of thing. Along that same line, I think it's interesting to note as far as the military is concerned, especially as I've watched through the history of my life and what they're speaking about today is or they did during the Clinton administration of "don't ask, don't tell," which is a bunch of crap. It's interesting to note that in the time of war, especially, I was not in the First World War. But knowing what I know through Korea, there had to be incredible amount of gay soldiers as there were in Korea, and it was never really a pursued part of the government when we were in war, it was allowed because it was OK to kill a gay person. The way I see it.

[00:04:14] CC: Just as soon as the war was over, it was the same thing with the blacks and with the minorities, of course. They were put in a certain section. Believe me, when I was in the Navy, the blacks were still in the forward part of the ship in the hold of the ship because they were servants to the officers. That's that was their role and so it was the same thing along those lines as far as gay people were concerned. You were not pursued if you were a... You were, you were work-- You were working in war and I must say that many of the ships, the ships that I were on, if it weren't for the gay people, things would not have got done as well as they did. But just as soon as the war is over, then they threw a huge purge and they eliminated thousands of gay people. Dishonorably discharged. We go to Vietnam. The same thing happened again. The gays were, we were in war and the gays were not really

pursued. But just as soon as the war was over, they were thrown out and I was very disappointed in Mr. Clinton when he went into running for office and he said that he would see that gays were admitted into the military and this government, I'm sorry to say, is run by the Pentagon, and they would not allow that and so they came up with this don't ask, don't tell. What a bunch of crap. I'm sorry. And.... So that's where it is today. But I think that's going to change one of these days pretty soon. Get rid of some of that religious right stuff. Then it will be better.

[00:05:58] I: Speaking of change and stuff like that, California's [Technology error]. Can you talk maybe about whether you see or don't see this country legalizing same-sex marriage in your lifetime or... And if so, if you were to be able to get married? Well, first answer that first question. If you see, because the way things are changing and swinging back and forth, you see the possibility of that happening?

[00:06:25] CC: Probably not in my lifetime. I don't. You have to make some incredible changes. Are you strictly talking about California?

[00:06:36] I: Yeah, well, even California? Do you see it legalizing here or within the country?

[00:06:39] CC: Well, I think we've already had a ballot initiative in this state that said "no," and the people said "no" to that, and so that kind of... You mean if they have another ballot initiative? Not until we do something about this... This very type of government that we're in right now and we're in a religious run government right now and not until we do something about that, because the powers that be and I must say, not even your president as much as the people who are running-- are running him know that to control this country is to bring up the Bible and because nobody wants to say that they don't believe in God except me, and so they-- just as soon as they bring up the Bible, then people have to vote immediately that they don't like those kind of things and of course, our, we're not supposed to even have

that within our government. But we do, and so when that's gone, then maybe, then maybe for sure. Look at Canada. Look at England. Look at Europe. Look at Spain of all countries here. You know, and here we are and here we are also fighting the Muslims, I mean, if that is a religious war, I'd like to know what we're doing. You know, and you don't need to get me started on that. You'll never have enough film.

[00:08:07] I: I was in England when they legalized it over the Christmas break and that was really cool. The energy there.

[00:08:13] CC: Absolutely! Yeah!

[00:08:15] I: I was--I wanted to walk around with a shirt that said "marry me." But I decided against it. I would have gotten too much action!

[00:08:22] CC: That's right. Absolutely! Never too much action!

[00:08:28] DS: I think one of the problems with legalized gay marriage or same-sex marriage is... Terminology, perhaps? I don't know why, how you define marriage and our government has decided that it is a union between a male and a female and cannot be a union between a male and a male or a female and a female or a dog and a bone. But... It seems to me that...

[00:09:05] DS: If both sides could relax a little bit...

[00:09:11] DS: What people want, what the gay community, as far as I'm concerned, want out of same-sex marriage is all the benefits that heterosexual sex marriage gives them. So if you can get that from some sort of a civil union without the word marriage involved in it, then you're going to get the heterosexual community closer to your side of things and until the gay community gives up on the word marriage and accepts civil union, it seems to me that that would be a big inroad and then later, it could be changed to marriage or whatever, perhaps. But you got to take a first step, and they're trying to take a giant leap. It seems to me.

[00:09:58] I: If you guys were to get married, if it was if it was legal, would you guys have some sort of a union or have you ever had some sort of symbolic... Excuse to throw a party?

[00:10:08] CC: No. No. If-- if the benefits were the same, if we were to be married. If the benefits were the same as a straight couple, then I would say it would be beneficial. Other than that, it's just a word as far as I'm concerned. I can leave anytime I want, or he can leave anytime he wants. Either case, I don't think it's necessary to have a divorce. Those are those are terms that are in marriage also that are again, religious terms. And I don't need that to be with Don. I'm--I'm not... I have a union with him and it's not blessed by anybody but me and he and I think that's sufficient. I don't see any benefit in it.

[00:11:00] DS: We're as married as you can get. We don't have a piece of paper that says so, but what is the paper worth? You can set fire to that and we'll, we're still as married as we're gonna get.

[00:11:11] CC: I don't need a certificate on the wall.

[00:11:16] I: And I have another question. So what is... What is your favorite... kind of favorite thing about each other? A thing that makes you feel gaga googoo.

[00:11:31] CC: Oh, I don't suppose you get gaga googoo--

[00:11:35] DS: Is that [] gaga googoo since that first party in Costa Mesa. Not that I haven't had some moments when I was very angry with him and could have throttled him.

[00:11:48] CC: I don't know when--

[00:11:49] DS: Well... Rarely that happened.

[00:11:53] CC: Or why!

[00:11:59] DS: The knowledge that he is always there for me...

[00:12:04] DS: That makes me gaga googoo and I hope that I give that to him. Because I'm always there for him.

[00:12:12] CC: I think that's probably the thing that is... I don't know if gaga googoo is the word. The most comforting to me. And... and that's what I think marriage, a union, whatever kind of terminology you want to use on it, should be about is comfort. And... And that happens no matter what happens in your life. You don't take that, you don't take it away. It is just simply there and will be as long as one of you is alive. It doesn't even change with the death of one of them. It can't. You don't take that away.

[00:12:54] I: Is there any sweet thing that you guys have ever done for each other, anything romantic or fun, as extravagant or as simple as...?

[00:13:01] CC: Oh, we're terribly extravagant. And it's always for me, I must say! We do a lot of things that are, that have been wonderful fun together. I think we like the theater. We did that, a lot of New York things together. Don bought me the piano when I was fifty. We've... Life has been so good to us. It's terrible to say one particular thing. We've just been... Wow, so lucky. Absolutely. And we worked very hard too!

[00:13:38] DS: There's... On occasion, a time when we do something kind of impetuous--

[00:13:43] CC: Terribly impetuous!

[00:13:45] DS: Like... Clifford will come home from running in the morning, and he'd say, "I think it'd be nice to have crab salad at Swans for lunch." And so I said, "Okay, that's great." Well, Swans is in San Francisco. So we go to San Francisco for lunch for a crab salad. And that's just a wonderful kind of a thing to do.

[00:14:08] CC: For sure!

[00:14:09] DS: Not exactly extravagant, but it's--

[00:14:11] CC: Oh, yes, it is.

[00:14:17] DS: Clifford bought a Rolls Royce.

[00:14:20] CC: That was very extravagant!

[00:14:21] DS: That was extravagant.

[00:14:22] CC: And I want to buy another one, too, I think. One of these days I think.

[00:14:24] DS: As soon as I win the lottery!

[00:14:26] CC: When he wins the lottery, I'll buy another. And I'm already seventy six, so it better be pretty soon because I won't even be able to get into it.

[00:14:35] DS: If we can buy it, we can afford to hire somebody to put you in it.

[00:14:39] CC: Oh, Christ, I don't want to do that.

[00:14:45] DS: Bury you in it.

[00:14:48] I: [speaking to crew member] Did you have something to interrupt with?

[00:14:53] I: I think the carrying of the torch, I think that--

[00:14:56] CC: Oh. Oh, gosh. I'm sorry I forgot all about that. Probably--

[00:14:59] DS: That was a high point.

[00:15:01] CC: Probably one of the greatest, highest times of my life was, I turned sixty five and on the very same day I turned sixty five, I was chosen to carry the torch in San Luis County for the Olympics. And that was an incredible high. And of course, the I think the whole gay community came out, plus all of the rest of the people that I've known. And I think I only had to run like a sixteenth of a mile because they were trying to get everybody in there. And I'm a pretty good runner. But then I had Don running alongside and other people with us. So it was an incredible high. And that was a lovely, lovely time, for sure.

[00:15:46] I: Let's see, did I forget any questions on here?

[00:15:48] CC: Do you want us to end with a song and dance?

[00:15:50] DS: Do you want to know my shoe size or what size shorts I wear?

[00:15:53] I: Well you know what, any--No! Just anything, because what I kinda want to get across is just that a lot of people think we're drastically different, but really we're very

analogous with our struggles, our happiness and like our daily routines. Everything is so similar and stuff like that.

[00:16:12] CC: Routine is very at least to me, routine is terribly important. I'm a very methodical person. I write everything down and I do it, you know. And so that's very important. My life is is really a routine--and Jesus don't--

[00:16:26] DS: Routine and discipline!

[00:16:27] CC: And don't screw it up because I'm not going to be happy if you do!

[00:16:34] DS: I'm pretty much the opposite.

[00:16:36] CC: Yeah, he is!

[00:16:36] DS: Undisciplined!

[00:16:38] CC: I'm very disciplined.

[00:16:39] DS: No routine!

[00:16:40] I: In the area because you're from here a long time. And your family's all from here and stuff like that. I have actually a lot of family history, too, here as well. And for me, it was really... I lived here eight years ago before moving back, and then I met someone and she asked if I could come out. I said, no way too much family here and you still have to... I'm assuming you still have a lot of distant relatives and family and people know you. How has that kind of impacted your relationship and your interactions and stuff like that?

[00:17:12] CC: Well, let's see. I'm going to use a term that probably maybe it's gonna be hard to explain down the line. But... I'm going to tell you that... We've had many terms for gay people throughout our history. Right. From very derogatory terms to the new ones that you're using now as 'gay people' like that. And somebody asked me that question at one time, actually a straight person. And I said that one thing that hasn't bothered at all, as far as I'm concerned, is just as soon as when you don't have any money, you're a queer. And just as soon as you have some money, you turn gay. So at this particular stage of my life, because

we've been very successful, even the people who have hated me. You know, I don't think anybody ever hated me, but who disliked me and members of my family also because I am gay. Oh, there's a smile all the time now. So it's a... there's a... it's OK. You know, I don't have anybody that I have to answer to anymore. And a lot of that has to do with success.

[00:18:24] DS: And age.

[00:18:27] CC: I suppose.

[00:18:28] DS: You can afford to--

[00:18:29] CC: They've probably--

[00:18:30] DS: You can afford to be who you are.

[00:18:30] CC: Probably age, probably age, because then if they say anything bad, they're afraid you're gonna die of a heart attack, then they're going to feel guilty.

[00:18:43] DS: And I have nobody to answer to because I'm practically an orphan. I have one living cousin who is fifteen years older than me and in a nursing home with a-- after having a stroke and... I'm sure she knows and has just been discreet enough not to say anything.

[00:19:03] CC: Or scared!

[00:19:04] DS: It hasn't changed our relationship.

[00:19:06] DS: She used to come up here and visit with us and she brought her mother up to visit with us. She brought her children up, her child and her grandchild up to visit with us. So. I'm sure she knows that we are a gay couple. But... Didn't matter to her. As it shouldn't to anybody.

[00:19:32] I: You guys have talked a little bit about you being together for so long. Living here with your mother, I was wondering about how you... how that worked for you?

[00:19:43] I: I just thought that [unintelligible]

[00:19:47] CC: I suppose... Looking back on it. It worked better than that while it was happening. It's a strain. There's no doubt about that. It's. It is even if my mother knew even everything. I guess the best part of it is that the house was large and so we were in separate sections of the house. That would be the best part of it. Also that my mother was an interesting woman and she was... all of the gay friends loved her. She was nicer to all of them, nicer than she was to me. I was, It was hard for her to... or she made it difficult for me and that she expected a great many things from me. And never really to me personally ever gave me the success that I wanted to hear from her. She told everybody else. But she didn't tell me. And I don't-- That's not against her. That's just simply saying that the way it was. We lived... Pretty much we were both working full time. So you don't spend a lot of time together anyway. You see each other barely in the morning and then of course, in the evening. And we've always had... We've always slept together even....

Even then, even though we had separate bedrooms. But sometimes you close the door and I don't think you hid anything from anybody. It's not easy to have another person in the house. There's no doubt about that. It doesn't mean that it won't work. The other thing I think that you learn, of course, going through life. And I've always said this about gay people also, they're probably the best caregivers. The Filipino race and and gay people are the best caregivers there are. We take care of the people that we love or that we know better than heterosexuals for sure. I can tell you that from experience. And... So you learn about that. And I guess that comes from just knowing that you've had to put up with some things that were not so nice. So you learn to be nice to people who are not putting up or putting up well with things that are happening to them. I think that's probably historically correct.

[00:22:27] DS: I.... Was concerned about coming up here and living with Clifford's mother. Because that was going to be kind of an unusual situation. Fortunately, his mother liked me.

[00:22:45] CC: That's because she didn't like the young one that I had!

[00:22:49] DS: I liked her. We got along very well. Usually. But she had her part of the house and she stayed in it. And we each had our parts of the house. And as Clifford said, we were busy during the day working and we had projects on weekends with two-acre ranch that we were working on by ourselves. And we did all the maintenance and everything. So we didn't have time to be doing anything that would be offensive to anybody, I think. And along that line.... We've lived our lives that way. Is to not do anything that would offend somebody. So if we're out in the straight community, we are a part of that straight community and we're not putting on the high heels and the false eyelashes. And if we're in the gay community, why we're just the same as we are anyway. We don't run into that problem.

[00:24:00] CC: We raise cattle. We had a cattle ranch at one point. And we did some... a lot of work with that. Very interesting changes in our lives. And that looked a little strange if you, if you did that. But those things all taught us something and... Were wonderful. I've always been interested in... in everything, everything, and I've been a collector of everything. I've never collected one thing for very long, but I've been interested in everything and researched as much as I could and went into it. And Don was wonderful. He went along with it. I don't know if he really went along with it, but he didn't have much chance to object.

[00:24:50] DS: And we've had animals--

[00:24:52] CC: Yeah.

[00:24:53] DS: I can't remember how many dogs and how many cats.

[00:24:57] CC: Oh, you've never been without a dog. I couldn't think...

[00:24:59] DS: I can't remember all of their names.

[00:25:01] DS: Domino was a wonderful puppy that we had. He was a diamond ring.

What did he pay for?

[00:25:12] DS: Something out of the jewelry store?

[00:25:12] CC: Oh, yeah.

[00:25:13] DS: He traded the--

[00:25:14] CC: Yeah I did.

[00:25:15] DS: That diamond ring for the dog.

[00:25:16] CC: It was a runt! A runt puppy... Somebody wanted a diamond.

[00:25:21] DS: Yeah. Then we had... Oh well... I don't know how many dogs we've had. But they've been a big part of our lives. We've had...

[00:25:33] DS: Several cats.

[00:25:34] CC: I had a parrot.

[00:25:36] DS: It hated me, that son of a bitch! I'd feed him every morning and then he tried to eat me alive. And we also had a Mexican Eagle.

[00:25:46] CC: Oh, yes.

[00:25:47] DS: And we had two little... Those little sparrow hawks.

[00:25:51] CC: Oh, yes.

[00:25:52] DS: We've had a number of--

[00:25:54] CC: I'm very interested in birds all my life and bird egging.

[00:25:58] CC: I bought a fledgling Mexican eagle, which was a Carracarra... Cheriway from Los Angeles once and brought it home in the car and raised it. We had... What you saw out there, the refectory used to be a room that we call the barbeque room.

[00:26:17] CC: And I raised it in there and it turned out to be about this tall and with incredible talons. And I taught it to fly in there and fed it in there. And I never wanted one that was going to be kept caged. So the day came when I decided I had to let it go and still swallow. And I... We took the cage out into the front yard and we opened the door and Carlos was his name. And Carlos came out of the cage and walked around there and decided

to fly to the top of the roof. So he flew up to the roof and barely made it. You know, this is a big job for this bird that had not flown any distance prior to that. And he was looking around and saw seagulls on the rock out there and decided they had to be friends. And so he decided to fly to the rock. Well, they are not friends. He's... he was--

[00:27:21] DS: Predator.

[00:27:22] CC: A predator! And so the seagulls knew immediately. And so they started to dove bomb him, and he barely made it to the rock. And the fog came in and seagulls were dive bombing him. And anyway--

[00:27:37] DS: That means mother was fit to be tied.

[00:27:39] CC: And so the fog came in. And the next morning, the fog was still in. And... Just I went to work and Don went to work. And my mother called just as soon as it cleared a little bit. And Carlos was still on the rock, but the seagulls were dive, dive bombing him yet. And so there was a young man who... little kid that lived up the street here who befriended my mother. And he used to come over all the time. And so he came home from school. And my mother told him about it. So he went and got his inner tube and he swam out to the rock to get Carlos. And of course, that frightened the bird. And so the bird took off. And just as the bird took off, a seagull came and hit him and knocked him into the ocean. And so Rick jumped into the ocean with his inner tube and swam to him and got Carlos and put him inside the inner tube and then swam ashore. And my mother and he and we built a fire out there and dried him and everything. And so everything--

[00:28:39] DS: He was angry!

[00:28:40] CC: He was very pissed. He didn't like that at all. And so the next weekend, we decided he had to go again so--

[00:28:49] DS: No, you decided--

[00:28:50] CC: I decided.

[00:28:51] DS: The rest of us were ready to keep him in for a while!

[00:28:53] CC: No I didn't. And so he went again. This time, however, he was smart enough not to fly to the rock. And he... Then worked in the area here for, oh, maybe three or four weeks strengthening himself. And then he decided, I'm going to get even with those seagulls. And he started taking out after them. And that was a wonderful experience because he was free and he came... And came home every night and he lived on the dormer and roosted there right off my bedroom.

[00:29:23] DS: And we would feed him in the evening.

[00:29:24] CC: Yeah. Feed him here in the courtyard.

[00:29:26] DS: In the courtyard. And we had two kittens at the time, Tula and Tulito.

[00:29:34]CC: They were raised together.

[00:29:35] DS: They were raised together on the... Cats and the--

[00:29:40] CC: Carlos

[00:29:40] DS: Mexican Eagle. And so feeding time at the zoo was in the evening, and Clifford would throw out this meat because... Mexican Eagle is a carrion eater, and so were those. So were those kittens. But we have people lined up along the fence watching, feeding time.

[00:30:02] CC: It was a wonderful--

[00:30:03] DS: And it was just a wonderful thing. Everybody knew who Carlos was.

[00:30:08] CC: In fact, he was in the newspaper. "Strange bird visits Oceano Lagoon," which is down here. And there was Carlos. They had a picture of him sitting there. And I said "My God, there's Carlos." It came out in the paper and I called them and they came and did a whole history story on him. And he stayed about two and a half years here. And I really don't know what happened to him. He was frightened by an owl one night. And he was incredible. He'd come looking for me and we would have... I had a big vegetable

garden at that time out on that part of the property. And he was standing on the greenhouse watching me out there one day.

[00:30:52] CC: And so when he wasn't looking at me, I turned and I hid in among the corn and he took off and he flew way up high.

[00:31:00] CC: And he looked down. I watched him and he looked down and he saw me.

[00:31:02] CC: And he came tearing down. And he landed right next to me, like, you know, like he was looking for me. It was a wonderful experience. Incredibly wonderful experience.

[00:31:12] I: That's really cool. Carlos!

[00:31:15] CC: Carlos!

[00:31:15] I: When was this out of curiosity?

[00:31:16] CC: Pardon?

[00:31:17] I: When was this? How many years ago?

[00:31:19] CC: Oh, gosh...

[00:31:20] DS: Twenty?

[00:31:21] CC: Little more than that.

[00:31:23] CC: Thirty years ago, I suppose. I would imagine. Yeah, something like that.

[00:31:27] I: And how has this area here-- Because you've been living in this house for how many years?

[00:31:31] CC: forty years.

[00:31:32] I: So how has this area here changed?

[00:31:36] CC: Well, you can imagine. There was nothing here you know.

[00:31:39] DS: There were more empty lots than there were houses.

[00:31:42] Yeah. Just very... This house here was built in 1930. And but, you know, just just spotted around the area at that time.

[00:31:54] I: Have you lived anywhere else ever in San Luis Obispo besides Guadalupe?

[00:31:58] CC: Oh, yeah. I lived in San Luis. I lived in San Luis at 132 Del Sur. And then at 777 and a half Higuera street upstairs there. I lived at 555 Higuera and at 497 Marsh Street in San Luis Obispo. Oh, and--

[00:32:17] DS: Left Street!

[00:32:18] CC: 1025 Left street. I bought that ghetto up there and remodeled that at night. Yeah, it was wonderful.

[00:32:29] DS: And some of those projects involve moving refrigerators and what have you and...

[00:32:34] CC: [Interviewer sneezes] Bless you!

[00:32:36] DS: So we led... We couldn't afford to hire a moving company.

[00:32:41] DS: So if we would furnish a place, we would haul a refrigerator from one place to another and going around corners.

[00:32:47] DS: We had some friends who gave us... A custom made sofa must have been ten feet long and...

[00:33:00] DS: We were going to put it in one of the apartments and his great aunt was going to live in this apartment. It was an upstairs apartment and the stairway went right straight up and made a 'T' one door going into this side and one going in this side. The ceiling was not big enough. And there was no way you're going to bend a ten-foot couch around that area.

[00:33:20] DS: So we took it up the back and... The porch that was falling off and we finally got it around. He was on the porch and I was kind of standing out in midair with the

other end of this couch, taking it in. So we left it to him. When he sold the house, he says
“The couch is not going.” Well, they’ll burn the house down with that couch in it!

[00:33:44] CC: He had to use a chainsaw to get it out of there, I’m sure.

[00:33:49] I: Yeah. Sarah and I actually have been moving. She just moved to Los
Osos yesterday, we’ve been spending all day yesterday and then tonight--

[00:33:55] CC: They don’t even have sewer in Los Osos, Sarah!

[00:34:00] I: I feel like I got beat up. At the end of the day. I felt like I had--

[00:34:02] CC: I’ll say!

[00:34:04] I: Just wailed on myself!

[00:34:06] CC: [Jokingly] You bitch! You still have to work today? Well why don’t--
You better call this quits here.

[00:34:09] I: Still gotta move the fridge!

[00:34:11] CC: A fridge?!

[00:34:12] I: We still have a fridge. That’s why I looked at her and I laughed when
you said we have to move the fridge. There’s a giant fridge still.

[00:34:17] CC: Rent a dolly.

[00:34:19] I: We have a dolly. A refrigerator dolly.

[00:34:21] CC: You have a regular refrigerator dolly. I have another kind you can use,
but get the refrigerator dolly. That you need! And get--

[00:34:28] I: Because we have to move the one out of the house and then take the one
that’s in the garage back in the house.

[00:34:33] CC: Good luck.

[00:34:34] I: So what are your, what are some of your favorite things to do in the area
when you’re out about town? Is there... Do you like to go to, like, a coffee shop or do you go
is there somewhere you like birds so you go to an estuary or...

[00:34:47] CC: No, we have, this is a bird flyway. So this is perfect for me right here. That's easy. We like the Palm Theater in San Luis Obispo. Of course, we like the Performing Arts Center and Cal Poly and visit our friends. That's probably... And I go to bed early.

[00:35:06] DS: And get up early.

[00:35:09] I: Are you the one-- Do you sleep more than he does or--

[00:35:12] CC: He requires more sleep than I do. Yeah

[00:35:15] DS: This is a hulking body. It needs a lot of rest.

[00:35:18] CC: I don't.

[00:35:22] I: Let's see. So do you have any more... I want to make sure I'm including you guys because I know things will come up when you're thinking. You know, you actually answered some questions that I had in my head when you were talking about, like, the gay bar. I think I had heard one of the times that they've got a gay bar in Pismo or somewhere in this area.

[00:35:43] CC: In Pismo. Yeah. The corner is still there, by the way. Yeah, right.

[00:35:47] I: Where was it?

[00:35:49] You know where Esquire News is down on Cyprus Street.

[00:35:55] CC: You know, when you come off of the parking lot of the pier now and it's one way, going I guess towards Price Canyon. It would be as you make the first stop sign. It would be that corner there. It had been a kind of a--

[00:36:10] DS: Another T-shirt shop. But it's something else now.

[00:36:11] CC: Yeah. And it's closed. It closed and it's something else now. But that old brick building there, Esquire news is on this side of the street and then on that side. That was the old Palace bar. It was pretty notorious.

[00:36:28] I: Do you know what's in the area now or--

[00:36:29] CC: Gay bars here?

[00:36:31] I: There's one gay night at Tortilla Flats. But the problem is, is that it's eighteen and up versus twenty one and up so you have, like, a lot of really, really young people--

[00:36:39] I2: [Member of crew] That's chickens.

[00:36:40] I: [Interviewer agreeing] Lots of chickens!

[00:36:42] CC: Oh, that's for me!

[00:36:44] I: Is that why you got the hawk?

[00:36:48] CC: Touché!

[00:36:49] I: You need to learn something from him!

[00:36:52] CC: Well, I had already learned. That was later. Yeah.

[00:36:56] I: And then there is, I think, one gay night at Corner View too. Right? Is that still going on?

[00:37:00] I2: I don't know!

[00:37:01] I: There's no-- There's not a gay bar here anymore--

[00:37:03] CC: But there is a gay night at Tortilla Flats?

[00:37:05] I: One gay night at Tortilla Flats.

[00:37:06] CC: Oh forevermore!

[00:37:08] I: Yeah, and there's probably-- How many people do you think go there? Maybe a 100? 200?

[00:37:12] I2: I don't know. I don't even go anymore.

[00:37:13] I: It just gets full. Yeah but that's all.

[00:37:16] CC: You don't have time to go if you're going to be moving refrigerators.

[00:37:21] DS: Starting...

[00:37:24] I: So let's see, Sarah, is there anything? You're over there in video land. You're good? Yeah?

[00:37:29] I: Is there anything that maybe we haven't included in this interview yet that you feel like... Would be beneficial to kind of.... Either let people know about yourselves something unique, something that defines character, characteristics or personality or something that you feel really good that you've accomplished or something that you think might connect you with the rest of the community. And because for me, I want this to be not just a film for people who are gay, but also just even educational as like an educational tool like for the community. So.

[00:38:07] CC: Oh, I probably said too much already, probably.

[00:38:11] DS: Well, I think your objective here is to... Teach the youth of the community. That it's OK to be gay. And I hope that we've proved that that's the case, that you can have a lasting relationship in it. It's OK and it's it can be accepted by... The straight as well as the gay community. But even more important is... There are places that you can go to seek help and to seek knowledge and find out about yourself and and build your own self-esteem.

[00:38:58] DS: And... Ward off any possible bad things you might want to do.

[00:39:06] CC: It would seem to me that it would still be difficult for you or for some young people, even though they know of all of these wonderful benefits that they have, if even if they know, if they need it, if they need them... It's still so delicate of a thing for some people to accept for, speaking only for men, for a young boy who has brought up been brought up in a community where it is strictly male and female kinds of a relationship, and then to have him realize that perhaps he's not the same. And especially if he's timid and has been made timid by his associations with, with his family and with other young people. There's so many questions. It's so difficult. I know it's easier now, but it still has to it's still a

very personal thing. And you fight all kinds of wars with yourself. That is frightening. And you have a lot of hope. Well, I think I hope they do. Yeah. And you're certainly working in that direction for them.

[00:40:27] I: You have enough stuff? Are we good? so we can let you get back to your gorgeous Sunday afternoon and--

[00:40:32] DS: Nap time!

[00:40:33] I: All that good stuff! Nap!

[00:40:37] CC: Don't be laughing at naps. You're going to need one one of these days.

[00:40:41] DS: Go move that refrigerator and then see if you might want a nap!

[00:40:44] CC: Who's going to make lunch when you move the refrigerator?

[00:40:48] CC: Sarah, do you do that? Do you-- Do you do lunch?

[00:40:52] I: They've never set me up, they should though! There's not really--
There's not really--

[00:40:55] DS: It's not set you up, it's fix you up. Set you up is another-- shut down really nicely. That's not set you straight. It's set you up with the numbers. Thank you so much. I really mean a lot. Thank you so much. There's a lot of bullshit there. So your films are so big, they have boots maybe.