

Queer Newark Oral History Project

Interviewee: Louie Crew Clay

Interviewer: Timothy Stewart-Winter and Whitney Strub

Date: November 19, 2015

Location: East Orange, New Jersey

Tim Stewart-Winter: So we're here with Louie Crew Clay. This is Timothy Stewart-Winter and Whitney Strub on November 19, 2015. Do you want to...

Whitney Strub: Sure, sure. Just to get the ball rolling. You know normally we would ask a full life history for the Queer Newark Oral History Project but both because Louie is recovering from surgery and we don't want to take your whole day up and also because Louie just published this fantastic book *Letters from Samaria* which I think we'll talk a little bit more and certainly provide a link because we want people to read it. It's such a great history but that tells so much of your history about, you know, your youthful experiences, you know, your struggles with identity and sexuality up to the age of 28, your early years with Ernest in rural Georgia as an interracial couple who's married in Atlanta in 1973 I believe?

Louie Crew Clay: '74.

Whitney Strub: '74 sorry.

Louie Crew Clay: Met in '73, though

Whitney Strub: Okay yeah that's... and it's a powerful, just a powerful book. I mean it's so fantastic and we really recommend it but for the sake of this interview we're going to cut in with your entrance to Newark and really focus on your experiences and memories and perceptions, and so maybe to get the ball rolling if you could just

tell us when and why and how you arrived in Newark and your early perceptions of the city.

Louie Crew Clay: Well, I arrived in Newark in the summer of 1989 and I was hired by the Academic Foundations Department which was a developmental department trying to take the brightest people who had survived the worst living conditions in Newark and surrounding areas and gave them an intensive course in how to present their intelligence. We already started out, it was not-- the intelligence was not something we were not going to give them. It's something they brought to us and we had great respect for them. I really loved that program and I worked in that department for about...for, fall of '91 or '92 and then I went to the English Department. [The Academic Foundations department was later merged with the Education Department, I believe.]

Tim Stewart-Winter: And this is at Rutgers?

Louie Crew Clay: Yes.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So you moved in '89. Where did you live in Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: I lived in the North Ward on Mount Prospect Avenue right near Ballantine Parkway which goes down in to Branch Brook Park, a lovely place to live and greatly diverse community. I lived first in a high rise of 12 floors. It was way too expensive, however, and when Ernest was still living in Hong Kong finishing a commitment, actually in China, at the time Guilin, and so when he got back he found us a much more reasonably priced place two doors down, an old Tudor place, apartment building and lived there

until '89 yeah [Louie Crew Clay correction: actually 1998, when we moved to East Orange].

Whitney Strub: And can you say a little about...

Louie Crew Clay: '89 sorry.

Whitney Strub: Oh sorry. Can you say a little about the campus environment at Rutgers in Newark for LGBTQ students and faculty and staff at the time?

Louie Crew Clay: Well I would say it was capricious. There were just pockets of great support but it was like a minefield trying to find them.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I also felt very much that some of the things that were hostile were culturally induced but not emotionally invested in. Let me give you an example. I became because of my interest in computers I'd to sneak to one of the first affordable computers in to China for example

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: calling it a Hollywood typewriter, not a spy machine

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: but because of my interest in computers I became very good friends with a member of the Computer Science department and so I was on their mailing list. I would often have questions and would share--this is a staff meeting list and I often taught my classes... I got very early almost all the work turned in to me on computers so I can give them... make good full use of my editing skills in a

faster speed. Well, at one point, I have told Bob offline, not on purpose to be offline, I told him I have been invited to speak to a class by someone else. So I prefer to do this in other people's classes rather on my own to talk about gay issues and take any questions that they might have and I have a very good session with the class so I told him about it. I didn't realize that I had mistakenly replied to all other than just to Bob.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: So this went to all which was no big deal except to one young man, very handsome young African-American guy who wrote back "What do you mean faggot? Why are we having faggots in this discussion group," he said. Well because Rutgers has had one of the earliest anti-harassment statements about gays and lesbians in the country largely because of the work of Jim Anderson down at New Brunswick who was head of library and a good friend and also, one of the persons most connected with the starting of the Presbyterian Lesbian and Gay group. They were prepared and Bob was talking in terms of getting this guy expelled or at least suspended. I said, "No, just let me meet with him." I guess I don't know what they thought I was going to do to him or I mean why don't we... this is an educational institution and when we met one of the first questions I asked him--he was already quite chagrined.

Tim Stewart-Winter: This is a student?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah a student. And Bob insisted on being there. I would have preferred not having him there but later I guess that was a good idea given the institution misinterpretations that might otherwise have been made. I asked him whether he had any gay friends, and

he said, "Not that I know of." Oh I think he did mention somebody he knew who was gay. I said, "Well, did he ever try to harm you?" "No he was a really nice guy." He started thinking, he just became really about what he was doing in responding to this was simply a knee-jerk cultural response from his culture. I said, "Well, you know, that's alright. That's what your culture is but you're in another now. You may not have to get rid of your culture but you have to learn how to survive in this one." I said, "Your first job may be with a very strong lesbian. You're not going to do very well on that job if you bring this kind of attitude to the work." This is the kind of simple education, then he went back to work, he so glad that I was nice to him. Later, someone threatened me with murder. This is a student who had come in to the lab that my class was using because I was following them all on the monitor and not much was being said. He sat down and took one of the positions, well since one was available, fine, but I had access to his computer as well, and then at that point I thought well this isn't wise so I asked him leave and explained that this was a class. But then he sent me an email threatening to murder me-- not knowing of course that I had ways of... he had masked who he was but I had ways of finding out because I could read the headers. I know something about messages and they ended up firing, I mean dismissing, him and at the university senate when I worked in the university senate I said, "You know, what we need is not firing people. If we're not getting people with these attitudes we're not teaching the right people because this is northern New Jersey and believe me these are the attitudes in northern New Jersey, overwhelmingly." And I said, "What we need to be concerned about is what are their attitudes, more important, what

are their behaviors when they leave here. I don't care whether they love me or not."

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I just care about proper civil behavior, and that didn't sit very well. So, that would give you a taste, enough of a taste.

Whitney Strub: So were there many other out faculty or staff members at the time?

Louie Crew Clay: James Credle was the major leader of it

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and did a wonderful job of just being the dean, worked in student services and so he was not as I guess as threatening in terms of an academic status, as a faculty member. There were some people who were known to be gay and lesbian, some of whom are still involved in the queer group, but I would say not a very visible presence.

Whitney Strub: Yeah and what about students? Were there--

Louie Crew Clay: Students tended to be, and James Credle was my source of information early on about this I wouldn't want to fault him for my reduction of it this many years later, but students tended not to go to the campus for their gay life. We [00:10:00] are only, what, 20 minutes away by midtown direct and it just made sense with them especially in some of the more hostile departments like business and nursing and so on, made sense for them to have their social life divorced from their other social life. It's not a sexual life in any definitive way but in an integral way it is. That's been a very helpful distinction for me. I see my sexuality not as defining me

but as integral to who I am so to understand who I am you need to know it but it doesn't define me more than my being green eyed or left handed.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm. Did you have gay friends or other folks you knew in Newark in particular?

Louie Crew Clay: Oh yes and because I was out... even though I did not intentionally talk about gay issues much in my class I always made it a point and sometimes I would forget and have to do it last week to come to say, "Oh my gay husband and I" or rather just, my husband and I, saw the same thing you're talking about and gave him an example. I later found out from some of the students that one of the reasons I had a high class attendance was that they wanted to be there on the day that I would do this. They're already waiting for this happen. It was kind of like watch the pearl drop, so there was this positive sense about it too--

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and I would say in terms of quantifying, you know, the positive is always more ubiquitous and, well you can't be *more* ubiquitous, approaching ubiquity more than hostility but the hostility defines, the same thing about terrorism in the world. I mean I don't think I need to go any farther, the parallel is so obvious.

Tim Stewart-Winter: And what about off campus, were there gay bars or clubs in Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: I'm not a bar person

Tim Stewart-Winter: Fair enough.

Louie Crew Clay: and a bar is a place to me that you go to when you're waiting for your dinner table to be opened up or where you're going to the theater in a few minutes and getting a libation and also, I don't like smoke and almost all of the bars, certainly the two gay bars in Newark at that time, were smoke filled to the point that you needed to have your sweater dry cleaned just by going and...

Whitney Strub: Which bars were these?

Louie Crew Clay: One was Murphy's

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and another one was... I've forgotten what it was. It was way out of Ferry Street near the cinema complex, right before you get to the cinema complex. I'm not even sure if the cinema complex is still there, which had originally been a drive-in, it's right opposite the—although you don't see it at the time-- right opposite the Newark airport, the north side.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So out Ferry Street towards the airport?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Not the Cactus Club? I thought that was closed by then.

Louie Crew Clay: It was closed.

Whitney Strub: Okay.

Louie Crew Clay: I would recognize it.

Whitney Strub: We'll have to fact check it.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Huh.

Louie Crew Clay: I mean... I have records of every dollar I spent, my mother was head teller at the bank, all these records and I could document how many times I went to Murphy's, probably no more than six or seven and always because somebody had arrived in town and wanted to see it

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and the other one because it was so much farther away and also because both of those places did not have a really obvious gay presence until after I was already going to bed.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I mean Murphy's was a good Irish pub in the middle of the day.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: It may still be. I don't know.

Whitney Strub: That's gone now.

Louie Crew Clay: It's gone?

Whitney Strub: Yeah, yeah. I think it's a parking lot now.

Louie Crew Clay: Okay.

Whitney Strub: So what about other kind of gay social life in Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: Oh well I'm director of my church, many members of the parish, many members of the neighborhood. I have more opportunities for social interaction and I think I've ever had. Suppose if I were in to

wanting sexual partners which I wasn't, I was near a very big cruising area in Branch Brook Park, which was pretty obvious when you went by and I was a jogger so certainly I always liked to *look*—

Whitney Strub/Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: but no I didn't have any problem there at all but most of my social life which is fairly limited anyway. A lot of my social life is social media. I was doing social media before the name came along.

Whitney Strub: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I created one of the... well, the first list of bishops and deputies to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. I could only get about... I have actually got figures somewhere that it was a very [00:15:00] limited number of people and I became a deputy the first time. I think I started I think about '91 before I became a deputy. '94 I was a deputy and by the time I left, it's still going so huge I don't go to it anymore because I'm not active in that, I moved on since I actually became more a member of executive council which is the governing body,

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: core governing body, which, I didn't have time but... no I just and was like you had to... and I remember in Rutgers it was so hard to get anybody on the faculty to use email

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: or the computer because when they found out I was doing it they thought I was just playing games.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: They didn't realize that you could wonderful intellectual especially in composition. I mean my goodness, talking about writing is like learning about classical music by talking about the composers. It's like Presbyterians taking over NPR, and only *talking* about it, you gotta listen to the damn music.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: Let it get to you. Music has a language of its own and it's just... so anyway I got worked up about that, but I was quite involved. I loved that in China too when I was teaching in Hong Kong there was no Internet. Students always had to bring copies of anything they wrote from my classes and they wrote something every day. They brought copy of the disc to me

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and a copy to these two other people in class. Because they were writing for me they were willing to take a lower grade, you know, if you're writing for somebody else, you might want the wrong thing someone spending hours on their phones and little on what they wrote. But you know this is the greatest revival of epistolary composition since the 18th century.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Wow!

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Cool. That's a good way to think about it.

Louie Crew Clay: And the other thing that's so particularly nice if you want to find out new language study for example, I created... I think I was the first one in the world to do it, the word lesbigay.

Whitney Strub: Which you used in the book.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Yes.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah. Well, unfortunately, trans kind of came in and railroaded away, and lesbigaytran, it begins to get too long, it was a word of utility and that was...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Well, I could go online and for example, Gaynet. All of that stuff in the whole beginning is still on user groups, still online to collect my search. You could trick... In fact, I wrote an article tracing the use of that term, increased use of that term, of course it's not used at all anymore. But to take a neologism like that or anything else and you want to see what people are calling themselves. It's just fascinating material. You can have a freshman class in the Bible as literature for example, doing things. I always try to arrive early in my classes because I can have personal conversations, and usually I go in as soon as the teacher got out of the room and there was some young woman with a nose ring and she was so happy about the assignment. I said, "Why?" She said, "Oh I just love this assignment." And gave Rebecca a nose ring as a gift to get her to be the bride of Isaac. She went on and on about she's going to

tell her mother to leave her alone about her nose ring. It's in the Bible

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: and I said, "What are you going to write next paper on?" So I always have them do a prospectus and they got my approval because I couldn't identify 95% of them maybe stolen so this way I wouldn't approve anything that could just be lifted out of something and I wanted them to learn how to do research and we have access to the Bible with electronic text. I said well... we worked it out. She did a study of jewelry in the Old Testament and it grew into... and there are people who've written about that but because she had already invested I said, "don't just don't take this out. Argue with some of these people."

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: Well, this is the correct way to teach composition because tactics of teaching, her mind is engaged in doing it.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, yeah, totally.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So okay. When you moved to Newark the kind of anchors of your life were Rutgers, your parish

Louie Crew Clay: And the diocese.

Tim Stewart-Winter: And diocese.

Louie Crew Clay: I spent more time working in the diocese than my parish.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Okay.

Louie Crew Clay: The parish was sort of like a refueling station.

Tim Stewart-Winter: And were there... and you were out at the diocese?

Louie Crew Clay: Oh yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: And what was that like?

Louie Crew Clay: Well, we had the most supportive bishop in the whole Anglican Communion is the Bishop of Newark, Jack Spong.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Jack Spong?

Louie Crew Clay: And when I, it was like a... and when I came up for my interview in March, for the job that I had that summer, and had all the way through, teaching at Rutgers

Tim Stewart-Winter: At Rutgers.

Louie Crew Clay: They put me up at the Hilton, Gateway Hilton, and Jack Spong and I let him know I was coming and he had me at his, he was courting the person who's been his bride since 2000 and he was having dinner at her house and he had Bishop [Yonah] Okuth, who was the Archbishop of Uganda is there staying as a house guest and I went out there and had a wonderful exchange with her and it was really something, and Jack has never been one to like small talk and he will always ask you to what we were saying earlier the question you're not supposed to ask: tell Yonah here about being gay

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and I said, "Well, first Yonah, how many gay people do you know in...?" "There are no gay people in all of Uganda." I said, "Well,

Yonah, I know six Ugandan priests who were here in this country because they were so unsafe for them to say if they were gay in Uganda” and at that point, Uganda had the highest infection rate of AIDS, higher than Newark’s which was huge and 22% of all according to an article that I would have on freshman read and then it wasn’t in Standard English. I mean in readable English, not this medicalese and 22% of all young men between the ages of 21 and 44 tested positive by anonymous testing at a major hospital in Newark at that time.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Could you tell us more about AIDS in Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: Well, it’s devastating because there was so much dishonesty and James Credle was absolutely brilliant in his ways of handling. James and I knew each other before I came here. James is the founder of a group called Black and White Men Together which later became People of All Colors Together and I was a keynoter for them very early. Adrienne Rich and I were co-keynoters at one of their conventions and later 15, 20 years later after I was at Rutgers I was a keynoter again for them but James and the people who work their realize you got to work through racism before you start just--because have sex in the darkest of night and there’s nothing wrong with that but my goodness you’re going to have an organization that’s gonna carry you anywhere beyond the bedroom you need to start dealing with humanities of each other and strict details. Well James also realized that people were using Branch Brook Park as a great assignation place.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: You can ride by in the broad daylight and see guys screwing each other, not minding the bushes but right out – sometimes, not always – on one of the bridge things where you’re driving under it.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: James had a party one evening. It was so difficult for me to stay up till 11:30.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: It’s when it started.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: What is the cult movie that’s so popular, *La Cage aux Folles*, everybody would go to that when it first came out after midnight dressed as one of the characters

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: but James had a coffee table that was probably six times as big as this and on it he had what I would call the Baptist altar cloth, cover just a sheet, you pick it up and instead of finding communion cups and wafers you found sex toys.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: And he already had some already arranged, to pick up a huge dildo and throw it to this one over here who wasn’t expecting it, and just to play with it in public. These are people who might’ve played with their own thing, in public even, of sorts, and then to talk about, you know, that the message of the whole evening was *lifesaving*, more than... I would have to say more than any Baptist

sermon or Episcopal sermon I've ever heard: if you love yourself you won't have unsafe sex.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: It saved lives!

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: I decided at one point to send a letter to 8 or 10 of the—I went to the library and got the directory, Sargent's Directory, of all the private schools in the country, I picked out 8 or 10 of them, the best "name" ones in New Jersey, got invited about five of them. One of them was the Peddie School [note: Louie misspoke here, and intended to say the Blair Academy, in Blairstown, New Jersey] which is way out in, I don't know, anyway, way out in wonderful rural America, and the chaplain was going to invite me but he was afraid to do it, so the historian invited me. The chaplain came out afterward, they had a little reception for me. He said, "You were saving lives in there." He made certain I got invited back about eight years later.

Tim Stewart-Winter: You spoke about HIV prevention?

Louie Crew Clay: What I did was to come in to the class and I said, "I will never be invited back here so let me just have some fun. I want to give you a fantasy. Close your eyes. No, leave them open so you can see." I said, "I want you to imagine that you're in a room with a person of this gender that most attracts you and that person is in bed with you and you're both naked. So do you like that? Think about that for a minute. Look at all the parts even the parts that usually are covered, uncover them. Do you like that fantasy? You know, so

go for it. Touch that person. You like that?" You know. I said, "Now the person reaches underneath and pulls out a gun and opens it up for you and shows you the chambers and says none of them are loaded. Take this gun and if you love me, you got to trust me and you take the gun and put it to my temple and fire."

Everybody's looking at me so strange. I said, "What's wrong with this picture?" And I told them the rate of infection. I said, "This chamber is not free." One out of four or one out of five, let's count them all one, two, three yes, one, two, three, four yes, all around the room. It was a very wonderful moment. At another point, I decided to tease one. I said, "Alright, who's the most Don Juan like character in the room?"

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: And everybody started pointing to the same guy. I said, "I mean he really flirts a lot does he?" and all that. I said, "Well young man, they just volunteered you. Come on up here." He came up and I shook his hand. I didn't let go. Looked around, I had my finger down in to his palm hopefully so as many people can see. So what am I doing? He didn't say. I'm running my finger down his palm. I said, "Have I done anything sexual yet?" He said no and I said... and I did a couple of other playful things but he's looking very disturbed because he's used to being in control and everybody in the audience is giggling and enjoying this immensely and I said, "Well why don't you come up and look at my etchings and let's have some fun." He said, "No." I said, "Well thank you, because you're not really invited and I have a husband and I don't want to do that either." I said, "When did that ever become sexual all those other things that you're so disturbed about in the room, to

the whole room? What is that kind of thing?” So I mean I was... and I did some of that in classes, again I tried not to do it in my own classes because I had other things for them to write about, but I was always interested as a composition teacher, and I realize most people in the English department did not do this but I was, you know, senior, I could go and do what I wanted. I felt that the major job here was to learn how to write and not to be writing necessarily some paper that you just simply went over, read scholars on scholars on scholars on one writer.

Whitney Strub: Well can I do a follow-up question

Louie Crew Clay: Sure.

Whitney Strub: about HIV in Newark? In *Letters from Samaria* you've got this great essay "Barry and Me,

Louie Crew Clay: Oh yeah.

Whitney Strub: and the Angels," which was published...

Louie Crew Clay: It's a true story.

Whitney Strub: It was published in *Christianity & Crisis* in 1992

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: and you talk about this young man. Barry was 28, brilliant, black. He and his Puerto Rican lover were together for eight years before the lover died which sent Barry on this downward spiral and he wound up in a bed in a shelter for people with AIDS, the only one in all of Newark, and you write this and I want to hear about this...

Louie Crew Clay: Okay.

Whitney Strub: You write, “the shelter was for HIV positive drug addicts most of them macho straights who, quote, ‘know to handle a sissy,’ and so this was the only HIV/AIDS shelter in Newark, and it sounds violently homophobic and I wonder if you could just **[00:30:00]** talk more about that, like how did that come to be and where did men like Barry go then.

Louie Crew Clay: I’m sorry. I don’t know that I ever did know who created it. I don’t think it was church.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Most of the churches in Newark and most of the funeral homes in Newark were not knowingly burying anyone who had AIDS.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Tell you more about that in a bit

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: but I remember driving him home one night and clearly wanting me to at least play with him...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Barry this is?

Louie Crew Clay: Barry yeah, and taking him back to that shelter.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm. From where?

Louie Crew Clay: From I think maybe we had been at a friend’s house.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: He was a very good friend of... somebody's name will come up in some of your research Derek Winans.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: who was at odds with James Credle. Derek was a Harvard graduate, had an African American lover and was from a very prominent family and a very wealthy family but sort of got disowned by them, [unintelligible - 00:31:10] in my parish, but he was [unintelligible - 00:31:18] and he was the one who introduced me to Barry, so that's probably where--

Tim Stewart-Winter: Derek is the one who introduced you to Barry?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: I think so.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Where was this shelter?

Louie Crew Clay: When you go down Martin Luther King Drive all the way down to Springfield Avenue and you got that called **Father** Divine hotel there.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: It was near there.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm. Do you remember the name?

Louie Crew Clay: I don't, sorry.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Can you describe it a little just to sort of flesh it out and make it
[unintelligible - 00:31:51]?

Louie Crew Clay: I didn't go in it so, I don't took him outside, I don't really
remember. Just the storefront.

Whitney Strub: So gay men who read as gay would want to avoid that place
because of--

Louie Crew Clay: Well I guess if you needed some help, you know, and you're cold
enough or need food or shelter you'd go there.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: You heard about the conditions from Barry?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: But they, much of the article that you were just reading from is
about... is when I went to visit in

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: St. Michael's Hospital

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: Right there opposite Rutgers-Newark, yeah.

Whitney Strub: And he died

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: very shortly

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: thereafter?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

[the following italicized section added by Louie Crew Clay while reviewing the transcript]

I ran across these details searching for “Barry Godfrey” in my diaries of the time:

1/12/1991

11:00p Barry Godfrey called wanting money to pay his extra day in the Quality Inn

10/20/1991

1:00p to St. Michael's with Barry Godfrey

11/22/1991

10:30p long time on andromeda, after writing my obit-narrative regarding [that narrative became the article in Christianity & Crisis and collected in Letters from Samaria]

Barry Godfrey

11/26/1991

08:30a up

09:00a working, long bday visits

12:00p Godfrey's funeral

01:30p KY Fried (\$4.85)

0:200p Dana Library

06:00p w/ Cummings for AIDS network [That's Charles Cummings, the creator of the Newark Collection at the Newark Public Library and a member of my parish, Grace Church in Newark]

09:00p processing agent; mail

12:30a bed

Whitney Strub: Can you talk about the issue of AIDS and burial services ?

Louie Crew Clay: Yes. The dean of our Episcopal cathedral is at Trinity & St. Philips there on Military Park, which will have to move if they ever make that steeple anything but white. Interesting thing **[unintelligible - 00:32:53]**. I was the **diocesan** historian for a while.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: [Petero] Sabune was Ugandan, or *is* Ugandan, and one of the nicest human beings on the planet. His wife was one of the founders of St. Philips Academy which is one of the best schools in the area and Sabune told me early on that he had done a burial for somebody that didn't really want to have, somebody died in the

parish, on the cathedral. They didn't want to let them do the funeral. I think it was at the Perry funeral home but I'm not really sure cause that's where they ended up burying Barry as well but... so Sabune, this is before that. Sabune went around to the various funeral homes, and he told me this, and he said, "Look you have to bury these people." They hadn't realized, by law by this time. "But if you have anybody that, no minister will come to the funeral, I will do it. You may have to wait on me." And if you're waiting on anyone from Uganda you're gonna wait forever because they have a different clock – and I mean that with great respect, cause he'll stop and help everybody on the way getting there

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: but that was the story and it was just really awful.

Whitney Strub: Yeah I know and so I knew there was a lot of underreporting of AIDS fatalities in the media. There'd be a lot of euphemisms or evasions so when somebody like Barry died I mean would there be an obituary and if so did they identify him as an AIDS-related death?

Louie Crew Clay: I'm embarrassed to say because in my youth and up till about 40 I read obituaries all the time. It was one of my favorite things to do to understand my community [unintelligible - 00:34:46] because it's a little composition that everybody writes, you know, but I have not done so during this period, so

Whitney Strub: Oh.

Louie Crew Clay: I don't really know about the obituary but my guess is that few did.

Whitney Strub: Yeah that's my sentence.

Louie Crew Clay: And I know that one young man who was a member of the Black and White Men Together group from Newark who was a reporter for the Star Ledger and quite a good one. I forgot his name but he died of AIDS and...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: James Credle said that he one of the best collections of good gay erotica I mean like really fine paintings of anybody that he had ever known and he felt that he wasn't sure but he thought the family probably burned them all.

Whitney Strub: Would James

Tim Stewart-Winter: Wow!

Whitney Strub: remember his name?

Louie Crew Clay: Ask him. [I'm guessing but believe his last name may have been Byrd. James will remember him.]

Whitney Strub: Yeah definitely.

Louie Crew Clay: Mm-hmm.

Tim Stewart-Winter: This is someone who is in the Black and White Man Together group?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Could you tell us about that group?

Louie Crew Clay: The group...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Did you join

Louie Crew Clay: I joined

Whitney Strub: soon as you got...

Louie Crew Clay: shortly after it started but I was not living near enough to go to any of the meetings

Tim Stewart-Winter: Ah!

Louie Crew Clay: except in Milwaukee when I was in Stevens Point and I did go to some in Milwaukee and spoke to the groups there

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and that's how I got on their circuit so to speak but I also wrote for their publication occasionally and...

Tim Stewart-Winter: But in Newark you weren't as connected?

Louie Crew Clay: Not as such in Newark.

Whitney Strub: Got it.

Louie Crew Clay: The Newark folks all live in the gay center mainly, in Manhattan.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Ah.

Louie Crew Clay: I got so spread out that I realized I can't do anything if I go to everything so.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Sure.

Louie Crew Clay: So I did more and more of Integrity stuff at one point.

Whitney Strub: I want to come back to Integrity but just to follow up a thread that we started a minute ago. Could we talk a little bit more about Derek Winans, who's somebody I'm very interested in, you know, he's not with us

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah

Whitney Strub: to speak...

Louie Crew Clay: Derek was a splendid community organizer.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I don't know what he majored in Harvard but he was brilliant anyway and I was quite surprised when he became so neurotic, *so* neurotic. Drive me crazy to be around him for half an hour. I mean I thought I was in a Tennessee Williams novel that even Tennessee had thrown away.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter]. Was he southern?

Louie Crew Clay: No. Derek was very much New Jersey.

Whitney Strub: But neurotic?

Louie Crew Clay: Neurotic. Mm-hmm.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Or *and* neurotic.

Louie Crew Clay: Like he took it out a **[unintelligible - 00:37:17]** on it. But at his funeral at Grace [?] Church, they packed the church and it holds 600 people. I wouldn't say it's absolutely full but it was bigger than we can get from most Easters and Christmases and we got

good crowds. He was much beloved because of his service in writing grants. Writing grant proposals, rather.

Whitney Strub: Huh.

Louie Crew Clay: He was a master of getting grants.

Whitney Strub: For?

Louie Crew Clay: Which you need for your programs too. All of the—everybody needs.

Whitney Strub: Yeah and he ran the People with AIDS Coalition

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: in Newark. Were you involved with that? Do you have memories of that? It seems like it was a short-lived group but I'm not exactly sure about that.

Louie Crew Clay: All I sensed was that there was a battle for hegemony between the Winans group and the Credle group,

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Credle group obviously should ascend because it was the larger community and representing the complexion, and I say that with three of us not of the complexion, of, you know, the community. It would've been in my mind so much nicer if they could've joined.

Whitney Strub: So why... what was the--

Louie Crew Clay: I can't give you the dynamics cause I – frankly, I'm a conflict avoider when I don't need to be involved in a conflict, especially

when I don't see a role for myself. And I want to love both those guys and I wanted to continue to love both those guys.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Even if Derek did piss in my car on the seat every time I took him to church.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Piss?

Louie Crew Clay: Poor guy. Oh yeah, well he had a prostate problem.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh, oh, oh, oh.

Louie Crew Clay: When he didn't use Depends, which I'm wearing now.

Tim Stewart-Winter: This is when he got... when he was ill and dying or...

Louie Crew Clay: No. It was well before.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Well before, okay and do you remember his... he had...AIDS, right?

Louie Crew Clay: I've always assumed Derek did but

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh, not clear, okay.

Louie Crew Clay: I've never been...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Not for sure.

Louie Crew Clay: He has never had that clearly stated and he told me no. I did ask him at one point because his lover died of AIDS.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm. Ah okay but Derek lived until like 2004?

[the following italicized section added by Louie Crew Clay while reviewing the transcript]

More tidbits from my diaries of the time. I do not have any diaries for the time of his death.:

5/12/1991

08:30a up

10:00a Grace

12:30p Derek Winans peed in my car; he seems terribly depressed

6/19/1991

08:00a up; all day on the tenure packet, except for crisis Derek Winans perpetuated with Ciancamino [I don't remember who he was or what that was about]

7/2/1991

08:00a up; calling Ernest

09:00a grocery shopping

11:00a making labels for tenure notebooks

02:00p fetching notebooks and putting on labels

03:30p fetching ac, ax, and ma parts of tenure packet; putting in notebooks

05:30p fetch Derek and Al

07:30p boat ride on Hudson [Black and White Men Together, if memory serves me well]

8/11/1991

08:00a up

08:30a stuffing letters to bishops

10:00a Grace

12:00p stuffing letters to bishops; copies to relevant Integrity connections....

04:00p Derek called to report that he had found Al dead, sitting up in his chair

06:30p at Derek's

09:00p stuffing envelopes w/ Integrity mailing

12:30a video

1:00 bed

8/12/1991

09:00a up; worked all day on the latest stuffings and the mailing to Integrity chapters

08:00p took Derek Winans to dinner at diner in Bloomfield (\$24)

10:00p revised 3 of the general convention graphs; all others also require my correcting of Bp. of Western NY (whom I had put in VA as an assistant!

9:02 am, Friday, January 31, 1992

#U Figueres follow-up on payroll person; apply for spousal coverage

#U Oasis draft for fund-raising; send to Rich w/ Canterbury letter

#U Network w/ Chris Ambridge

#U FAX to Wylie-Kellerman....., re: Ferry; coverage in general

#U See Derek on way to the movie; supper in Orange at Mexican restaurant

#T 926-8562 Derek's Room at Beth Israel (main no. 926-7000)3/7/1992

07.5 up

Derek Winans is down with the flu.

6/15/1992

Long conversations w/ Bill Lorentz (see T.), Kim, Derek Winans (quite depressed; thinks he has AIDS.

8:20 am, Monday, June 15, 1992

Call George re: Derek Winans's sad condition.

That's when I stopped keeping these logs.

Louie Crew Clay: Something like that yeah.

Whitney Strub: well beyond...

Louie Crew Clay: And I think Al died probably in the 90s.

Whitney Strub: Can you talk about Al a little? He's also a really fascinating figure.

Louie Crew Clay: He was as I recall a clothes maker and a good designer.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: I may be wrong on that. Could as easily have been porcelain, it may be my memory playing tricks on me.

Whitney Strub: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: But he was an artist. I would say. Have you seen this wonderful book by the guy named Johnson, Ice Tea? It's about black men.

Whitney Strub: Oh yeah, yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Sweat Tea.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Sweat Tea. If you ever watch any of the videos of him on YouTube, Johnson's a little nicer looking than Al was but they have the same sort of wonderful, prissy ambience which I love.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: I worked so hard on it, I can't do it.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter]. Can I ask one more follow-up question to all of this, then? I mean by this period Newark seems like a very racially segregated city and yet you, James Credle, Derek, and Al are all interracial couples,

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: could you talk a little about how race worked here in sort of gay Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: Well, I think it worked, among those you just named, I know it worked on a personal level. Credle went off to a very rural all black community in the South, North Carolina, to the army

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and the army was very crucial to James's development

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and he had friends there and had lovers there who were white and

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: he got treated as a human being in ways that sometimes even African Americans have a hard time of not being racist themselves, but James never abandoned his people, nor has Ernest. We have never felt that there was ever any sense that he... in fact I've been amazed in 41 years I've never picked up on anybody ever even accusing him of trying to be white or whatever, and it's one of the reasons it was such a great moment—I can't mention it without crying-- to be able to take his last name legally.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm. Yeah that's very, that's lovely.

Louie Crew Clay: Because I mean I've been a Clay, been working at **[unintelligible - 00:41:55]** growing at one, [unintelligible] rubbed off, and I never meant by that to deny my privilege, my whiteness, and my gratitude for my loving, wonderful parents. It's not that at all.

Whitney Strub: That's fantastic! It also makes me wonder I mean were other gay social worlds in Newark more segregated. I mean is there a white gay world and a black world?

Louie Crew Clay: I would ask you that, you're the one who's studying all these other worlds!

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: I'm telling you about the ones I know.

Whitney Strub: Okay so your experience--

Louie Crew Clay: Though you have done a good job of picking out some things I would not have thought of telling you about like **the** funeral homes and things like that.

Whitney Strub: Okay. No that's very helpful. I mean it's counterintuitive in a lot of ways.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: I think.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah. What is?

Whitney Strub: Well I guess I mean the suggestion – at least in your experience gay Newark was not hypersegregated racially the way that, like, residential patterns in Newark were broadly were?

Louie Crew Clay: No. No. Well there were some wonderful - one of the major events too is a catalyst I think of building

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: community in a stronger public sense was the murder of Sakia Gunn, and the fact that Cory Booker, I don't know whether you've seen the pictures I have him on my website that I took of him standing there with that wonderful guy from that **[unintelligible - 00:43:18] [Liberation in Truth Unity Fellowship Church]** church or whatever it's called at the same podium, and here he is just a council member and you know taking on this issue and knowing that he's a bachelor, and knowing that there are all kinds of rumors about him

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: and still are, and also knowing that there are all kinds of rumors about the guy he needed to succeed, so it's a whole big mess. It's like America.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: Like the Republican Party.

Whitney Strub: Oh boy.

Louie Crew Clay: How many folks have they had that have been exposed?

Whitney Strub: Right.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So if you think about the Sakia Gunn murder, most of my, you know, my students who are from Newark grew up later. How was it different *before* - in the nineties, say? Do you know what I mean?

Louie Crew Clay: I think the fact that we have the parade [shortly after her murder on May 11, 2003] [unintelligible - 00:44:15] they stand on the steps and I remember Michael Francaviglia who was the chief administrator of the Diocese of Newark and his partner Bill Lorentz a lawyer for the state

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Whitney Strub: were there with us,

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Carr Holland (the rector of my parish) and his lover, an AIDS specialist doctor physician Timothy Mundy [Thomas Maxwell Mindy] were there. Ernest, I don't think Ernest was there, yes, he

wasn't there but anyway this young people came up and said, "Why are you here?" And they mentioned they'd been together. Bill had been together at that time [They became a couple on June 27, 1972, so 31 years before our participation in the demonstration on the steps of City Hall] longer than [unintelligible - 00:44:58] [than the young questioner thought] would be so true [00:45:00] longer than we had...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Who have?

Whitney Strub: Bill **Lorentz** and Michael Francaviglia and it was something, 35 or 40 years, or whatever it was, *years*, their mamas weren't even born 35 years ago, and they were just amazed and the fact that we were there and the fact we got them even at one point to come down and use our space at Grace Church a block away. And then I think the fact that not a whole lot but a significant number nevertheless of white gay folks and our allies came out and stood with us. The bishop came.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So the public, the willingness of people to be in public

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: is what I'm

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: hearing, yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: And one of the demands they had at the time was to get a community center.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: which we now have, right?

Whitney Strub: Yeah. So can I shift back to another topic

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: about religion in Newark?

Louie Crew Clay: Okay.

Whitney Strub: And another thing that comes out of your book. So Bishop Spong, I wanted to hear more about because he looms pretty large over the history of sort of progressive religion in Newark, but one thing you mentioned in the book which I hadn't known is that he was, as you say, an unholy terror to gay priests in

Louie Crew Clay: Oh, he was horrible.

Whitney Strub: the 70s and then at some point he comes around and becomes a very strong supporter and ally. Could you talk about that because I'm not familiar with that story?

Louie Crew Clay: The story he gives and I think it's in *Living in Sin*, one of his books

Whitney Strub: okay.

Louie Crew Clay: I've certainly heard him tell it to me personally, and it's in one of the books, I mean, a couple of them. His wife had schizophrenia and during the last years of her life, they had to live apart. He lived – she lived in their home in Morristown and he lived in a carriage house behind the diocesan center, which is now that

horribly-decorated thing for New Jersey **[unintelligible - 00:47:12]** on Rector Street.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: He lived in, there's a little carriage house behind what used to be the deanery **[unintelligible - 00:47:17]** the building that fronts the back of the cathedral and he was mugged one night there as well, robbed, but when his wife died, the funeral was in Richmond. He had been the rector of the largest parish in Richmond. Here he is grieving, hasn't been a good relationship at all, they had I think three and maybe four wonderful daughters and he is hurting so much at the funeral and he comes outside and I don't think the woman spat, but somebody came up and said, "You are the scum of the earth" or something. I'm not quoting exactly, something really hostile and the Integrity members of that parish who were gay came up and gathered around him and held him and prayed with him or some other show of affection. He said it changed his life. How wrong could I be? And he's, oh, so – he's no dummy. He's a very bright guy. He's not what some people want to make him into being, nor does he claim to be. He's not the pioneering theologian. He is a popularist and he's better at it than most people and they're jealous as hell.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: Among the theologians and the ones who, and they're afraid that he's getting more of a reputation than he deserves, but he deserves a reputation of being a great popularist, such as St. Paul who was no great theologian either!

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: I'd love to rewrite some of *his* sentences [laughter]! But it's just, that was the transformation and I met him shortly thereafter on his sort of [unintelligible - 00:49:09] [I met him at the Integrity Convention in San Francisco at Grace Cathedral in 1988] experience and there's a great picture on my website of the two of us, Malcolm Boyd is sort of around the corner and someone else I don't know.



I am talking to Jack. Next Malcolm. And I don't remember the woman's name. This is just outside Grace Cathedral. I was hired at Rutgers the following year.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Outside in the shade at a break in the Integrity convention of 1989 or 88. Yeah it was the summer of, it would have been the summer of '89, I was already here, went there for the convention or whatever. Or it could've been several before, because at that time you had to get in touch with him, when I got the interview and that's how we made the connection. It was almost like an answer to the needs of both of us, I don't know if we prayed for it, but we both ended up in the same community and he was very close to John Boswell. John Boswell

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: became close to me and, now John Boswell *was* a theologian, or a historian rather, quite a good one, and I'm in, really infrequent but contact, at least twice or so a year, with his sister.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Whose sister?

Louie Crew Clay: John Boswell's. [Pat Boswell]

Tim Stewart-Winter: John Boswell's sister.

Louie Crew Clay: But, you know, I don't know whether that's enough answer to that.

Whitney Strub: Yeah no. That's fascinating. So your own religious sort of activism in Newark, could you speak more of that? I mean, you

know, you're an incredibly important figure in, you know, the history of Integrity and Gay Episcopal politics and I'm just wondering how that translated to Newark specifically once you were here. I mean what resistance did you encounter or conversely, you know, acceptance did you encounter that you might have expected or not?

Louie Crew Clay: I did not try to organize anything in Newark.

Whitney Strub: Okay.

Louie Crew Clay: I've always felt like if something's already going. I mean Jesus even talks about that they're not for him they're against – no I mean, he says, "If they're not against me, they're for me," is the way he puts it." Jesus says "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold, and them I love also"; I think that's everybody, that's Buddhists and the whole world. I engaged myself where I thought I could be helpful and where it also could be helpful to me, and it so happened that Jack Spong made a horrible mistake in his choice of the person to run The Oasis. [Recently ordained Robert Williams]

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: He wanted this new ministry of the diocese with gay and lesbian people--

Tim Stewart-Winter: Which is called Oasis?

Louie Crew Clay: Hmm?

Tim Stewart-Winter: That's what Oasis is?

Louie Crew Clay: That's what is Oasis. The first... well the second diocesan ministry, but the first one doing it this way. The first one was The Parsonage in San Francisco which was mainly an old house storefront place where they kept somebody on staff all the time to be there in the Castro, which, it may still be going I don't know, I think it folded for a while. For the Oasis, Jack wanted to have a full-time missionary who would run it. It'd be a priest and function at the most respected levels, the highest levels of the diocese. Jack wanted to find a really bright guy. He got one, but a bright guy at a bar who is always going to be a bright guy and always at the bar and who had a good notion of who God is, got Robert Williams, but if you someone want somebody to help you work institutionally and they hold your back when you're up to fire, the last you need is some blowhard like Robert Williams who when the press is there and he's asked about... he makes the remark that Mother Teresa should've had a good lay.

Whitney Strub: Oh god!

Tim Stewart-Winter: Whoa!

Louie Crew Clay: Can you imagine when the bottom drops out?

Whitney Strub: Wow!

Louie Crew Clay: This is, and I had *just* come on the board of The Oasis. I was Robert's pick to be on it, because I'd just moved, and I remember going to talk to Robert. This is not off the record by the way, this is so long ago.

Tim Stewart-Winter: I'm just going to write a few notes.

Louie Crew Clay: I remember going to talk to Robert and saying, “Robert, here’s what you could say. We have a the possibility to preserve your job....” I really am a church politician. I know how to do it and I had written something that I could say with great belief which showed great respect for Mother Teresa and great respect for Robert’s real notion behind that wonderful remark, because at the bar it is a wonderful remark, and we all need to go to the bar once in a while

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: but I came back, he agreed to it. This is a telephone conversation to Hoboken from the diocesan convention where we had been in session throughout most of the convention **as** board of directors. Cynthia Black, a priest at the diocese **and now rector of the Church of the Redeemer in** Morristown, a wonderful human being, said, “Louie that’s fine, but you wrote that, didn’t you?”

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: “And Robert signed on to it. I love you both. We can’t take as Robert’s what you wrote, and Robert’s incapable of writing this or living it right now. So we fired him.”

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh.

Louie Crew Clay: It was a hard time.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: We were lucky we got David Norgard.

Tim Stewart-Winter: **[00:55:00]**When was this by the way, I’m sorry to interrupt?

Louie Crew Clay: This was right after I got here so it would have been the convention of 1990, January.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Okay.

Louie Crew Clay: And...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Continue.

Louie Crew Clay: David Norgard came in. Then following David Norgard there was short term of a monk who came in, and then Elizabeth Kaeton, who had AIDS work as a nurse who was a priest in Baltimore and she was given Canon status and is one of the leading figures in the Episcopal Church. She's retired now, retired from St. Paul's in Chatham. She lives in Long Neck, Delaware, down near Rehoboth, and has been many times head of the Women's Caucus of the Episcopal Church not only in the diocese but overall quite a strategist, tough, lesbian, and Portuguese. She's been such an advocate for me in my illness, I can't tell you how grateful I am.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: Just, miracles have just dropped down, support's come in and things I've needed and been strapped to provide, it's just amazing, she just knows where the people are to go tap, and these angels appear and don't even have names.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter]. That's fantastic! So this is kind of out of the blue and I think the answer might be no but did you know Raymond Proctor in Newark at all?

Louie Crew Clay: No

Tim Stewart-Winter: Was that before your time?

Louie Crew Clay: **[Unintelligible - 00:56:39]**.

Whitney Strub: Okay, okay. I thought that you might have just missed. Tim are you gearing up for questions?

Tim Stewart-Winter: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: Can we stop by 3?

Whitney Strub: Oh yeah, yeah, absolutely. I mean in fact, yeah, we want to watch your time and maybe...

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: I think we've actually covered all of the topics I was going to ask about. I mean we usually wrap up asking what else should we be asking about like else should we put on the record for the Queer Newark Oral History Project.

Louie Crew Clay: [Laughter]. **[Unintelligible - 00:57:09]**. I wrote myself in to the tombstone.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: **[Unintelligible - 00:57:14]** I'm going to be blowing in the wind, not even in a long jar.

Whitney Strub: But just thinking about the Queer History of Newark I mean what else are we not thinking to ask you that we really should because you would be a good resource on it?

Louie Crew Clay: I don't know. It occurs to me there are some real questions about Hart Crane.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Whitney Strub: Hmm.

Whitney Strub: Yes, yes.

Louie Crew Clay: And why the one book he wrote about gay prostitutes, the manuscript disappeared.

Whitney Strub: I don't know that story.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Me either.

Louie Crew Clay: Well, I don't know the details, but call up Ulysses Dietz over at

Tim Stewart-Winter: Ah.

Louie Crew Clay: the Newark Museum.

Whitney Strub: Yeah we met him last year.

Louie Crew Clay: He was one of the presidents

Tim Stewart-Winter: Ah yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: of The Oasis

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: you know who he is in terms of

Tim Stewart-Winter: Hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: his history of America. He's a great grandson or great, great grandson of the president, and he got to take his Jewish lawyer... I don't know that Gary's a lawyer but he got to take his Jewish lover, husband, and they got to adopt two or three, adopted children to an event that Reagan organized when he was in the White House, of descendants of famous Americans.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Huh.

Louie Crew Clay: They even had Robert E. Lee's great, great, great granddaughter and Ulysses got to introduce Gary as his lover.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Wow!

Louie Crew Clay: [laughing] It is wonderful. I don't think I should tell his story. My mistake.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: You can ask Ulysses.

Whitney Strub: Yeah that's a good thought and someone to talk to.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Are there other people who could tell us things about gay life in Newark

Louie Crew Clay: There was a guy. I'm trying to think. His name is Warner. He's dead.

Whitney Strub: Where?

Louie Crew Clay: He lived at at Princeton, one of the original gay activists from a very wealthy family. He became blacklisted as a lawyer because he was exposed.

Whitney Strub: Oh!

Louie Crew Clay: Forgotten his name. Kim Byham, my friend Kim Byham is a historian and gay and I can give you his telephone number. He'd be glad to tell you. Arthur Warner, I think was his name.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh!

Louie Crew Clay: But Kim...

Tim Stewart-Winter: I know that name.

Louie Crew Clay: Kim knows the story.

Tim Stewart-Winter: What's he got to do with--

Louie Crew Clay: Well, Arthur Warner knew all the tricking places in Newark and he even I think probably tried to have sex with me once. It was one of the nicest bits of flattery I ever got from anyone. He was about the age I am now, and this was 30 years ago. He said, "Well I mean look Louie." He said, "I had sex with so and so who had sex with Walt Whitman. If you will just do that, you put yourself in to a great daisy chain.

Whitney Strub: [Laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: I said, "Oh, sugar, that is so sweet. Well, thanks but no thanks."

Whitney Strub: That's quite a line.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah. I remember a rabbi after I had gone to a National Gay Task Force meeting in New York in '75. I was staying with someone in Brooklyn. I got the last train to Brooklyn and I had a long wait and this rabbi was busy trying to seduce me and I said, "But you're a rabbi. You're can't be having sex with a man, as with a woman." He said, "Honey I want to have sex with you as with a man, not as with a woman."

Tim Stewart-Winter: No [laughter].

Louie Crew Clay: I know it's one of the best exegeses I'd heard.

Tim Stewart-Winter: So Arthur knew all the tricking spots in Newark

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah

Tim Stewart-Winter: and he...

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah he

Tim Stewart-Winter: But he lived in Princeton?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah and lived in the

Tim Stewart-Winter: He...

Louie Crew Clay: old family home and knew everything.

Tim Stewart-Winter: He would come here to?

Louie Crew Clay: Cruise

Tim Stewart-Winter: Cruise.

Louie Crew Clay: for younger men.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Ah.

Louie Crew Clay: He once told me he got, because he was on my mailing list, he probably even got notices about my book because of my mailing list.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yes.

Louie Crew Clay: I gave it to the publisher.

Tim Stewart-Winter: That's great.

Louie Crew Clay: but I gave it to... they were raising money for Louie Crew Scholarship at EDS several years ago—still have it, some millionaire, who looked like Colonel Sanders who's gay, who's a cancer surgeon gave them the money to start the endowment but Arthur got this thing from the Louie Crew Endowment for a scholarship to EDS. That's Episcopal Divinity School, right adjacent to the... right across from the Longfellow home, right next to Harvard, and he started crying, talking to me, saying, "Louie don't you know my story about EDS?" I said, "No." He said, "Well I was walking by one day because I was on my way to class and the dean was in his study and the study is in one of those windows that looks 2 feet away from you as you're walking by, you know, right there on the side wall" and said, "he just glared down at me" and later he said, "I was invited by one of the seminarians to spend the night." He said, "I spent the night." He said, "Course there's communal showers, and so I take a bath. I took a bath, came out, and the dean had me blacklisted or something," I don't remember. I said oh Arthur, I'm so sorry, I wish I'd known, I would have pulled your email. He said, "Oh no!

I'm going to thank you. It's so good to live to see this happen. I'm crying for joy not for sadness." You know what, I'd forgotten that story, thanks for the prompt.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. That's wonderful.

Louie Crew Clay: What are some more questions?

Whitney Strub: What about documents? I saw your papers are at the University of Michigan.

Louie Crew Clay: Called the Labadie Collection.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh really?

Louie Crew Clay: Labadie was an anarchist

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah I know the collection.

Louie Crew Clay: and...

Tim Stewart-Winter: Your papers are there?

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Why there?

Louie Crew Clay: Well, in 1980, you know, taught in Beijing from '84 to '85. I got offered the job at Rutgers. No wait. That's not right, I'm getting this wrong. Yeah. I know I got offered the... I was teaching at Wisconsin. I got offered the job and took a leave of absence from the University of Wisconsin from '84 to '85. I even got the job at the Chinese university

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: which meant I had to resign from the University of Wisconsin and we had inherited all my parents furniture much of which is in here though a lot of this is Ernest's stuff too. Actually, when he was working for **a furniture store** but the... we had to get rid of a whole bunch of stuff in a hurry and I'm a pack rat, I never threw away anything and with all the bat shit in the attic at that place in Stevens Point, it came out just under 2 tons on papers and I realized that I could not sort through that and I might throw away things that were important and keep some things that weren't. And so I listed these four or five Ivy League schools and I figured they'd be the most money and said the only thing I want is for somebody to take it, take all of it and keep it all until I die, and allow me [01:05:00] easy access to it and pay for the shipment to you and for shipments on an ongoing basis thereafter. I don't want any money for the collection [unintelligible - 01:05:07]. Well, every one of those places sent back saying, "This is a great idea but we're not the ones you should have." The University of Michigan Labadie Collection just sent out a call for to improve their collection in this area. It turned out that Edward Weber was in charge of the collection.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Oh.

Louie Crew Clay: He is dead now.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: He had a black lover and

Whitney Strub: Huh.

Louie Crew Clay: and he just jumped at the opportunity. They spent, they put a cataloger on it for a year. It doesn't have a high priority now **[unintelligible - 01:05:47]**.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah. I corresponded with her about other things.

Louie Crew Clay: Yeah

Louie Crew Clay: and Andrew Grossman, a Rutgers graduate **who had taken a course in** queer lit did a documentary on me. He went to the Labadie Collections, spent I think a week after and they were just wonderful in getting him access to everything.

Tim Stewart-Winter: You've shipped them materials

Louie Crew Clay: **Yes.**

Whitney Strub: since then?

Louie Crew Clay: **[Unintelligible - 01:06:23] Almost all of it is** electronic.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Louie Crew Clay: That was BC, before the computer.

Tim Stewart-Winter: [Laughter].

Whitney Strub: Got you. What about the documentary? Is that seeable?

Louie Crew Clay: You want a copy? I'll give you a copy **[unintelligible - 01:06:35]**.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Yeah?

Whitney Strub: Yeah, yeah.

Louie Crew Clay: I think I have one extra so you can copy it.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Sure, sure.

Whitney Strub: Copy and return it to you.

Whitney Strub: Yeah we can copy and return it.

Louie Crew Clay: **[Unintelligible - 01:06:43]**.

Whitney Strub: Yeah that would be great.

Tim Stewart-Winter: That would be great.

Louie Crew Clay: Don't ever forget that when we have to get

Whitney Strub: Sure.

Louie Crew Clay: I think I can put my head on it fairly quickly and also, what's the other thing I was going to send you... I can even print out for you the Oasis description of the scholarship.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Great and you mentioned your friend Kim.

Louie Crew Clay: Kim Byham.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Byham.

Louie Crew Clay: I've got his number here .

Tim Stewart-Winter: We can follow up on...

Whitney Strub: We can do on this stop recording,

Tim Stewart-Winter: Are we done?

Louie Crew Clay: Fine with me.

Whitney Strub: Yeah well thank you.

Tim Stewart-Winter: Okay. Thank you much.

Louie Crew Clay: Kim is a historian himself. He's a lawyer retired from the New York /AT/rj/