

**So usually I'm in a room with just me and a person, usually one person. So today is a little different, just a bit different. Usually I start off by saying, so may I connect my recorder in this outlet?**

I am to connect you?

**No, no, no. So if I'm in your house, I would ask, is it okay?**

You're welcome anytime, as is everybody else. It's an open door in our home.

**And then I would ask them to spell their names, but in this case I don't think I have to do that. So we're just going to start with the oral interview. I'd like to start by talking about your early life, and we can do this in a couple of ways. I want to know about your family life, early family, and why you decided to come to Las Vegas. So we'll start with...**

**[Laughter] And I'd like for you to—**

What time is this over?

**Oh, about two minutes each for this portion.**

Oh, I love this. Let's start with Oscar in two minutes.

**So I'm in control, right?**

*Claytee, I have a hard time speaking without a martini in my hand and showgirls on my arms, so I have very little to talk to you about. No. I grew up in Philadelphia.*

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yea. [Laughter]

*Forget about it.*

*I grew up in Philadelphia. My dad was a lawyer. He was in the district attorney's office there for many, many years and then went into private practice. He ran for congress; he did not win. But he felt he was entitled to a judgeship, a federal judgeship because of all the work that he had done in the community and he was very well respected. And the party that he belonged to*

said, "You'll get the judgeship if you pay twenty-five thousand dollars for it." And he said, "I'm not going to pay for something that I earned." And that taught me an awful lot about politics when I wasn't even interested in politics.

*I went to a wonderful, wonderful college, Haverford College. It was a Quaker school outside of Philadelphia. It had four hundred and thirty men students there. And if you could stand up, they gave you a football helmet. I got my football helmet and the coaches used to pray that if I got in that I wouldn't be hurt beyond repair.*

*My mom was a very interesting woman before her time. She was a Bohemian, in effect, an artist, and very well recognized in the Philadelphia area as a sculptress and had won several professional sculptress prizes there. She got her Ph.D.—how old was she?*

In her eighties.

*In her eighties. She got her Ph.D. in her eighties.*

**Ah, it's not too late.**

O-No, not too late. They did something with me that I write about in my book, *Being Oscar*, which I think is very important and what makes me into the character that I am. From the time I was a little fellow they always told me how handsome I was, how smart I was, and what a great person I was. And when you do that with a child when the child is small, the child doesn't know any better and believes it. And when you believe something that's the way you live. And I've always thought I'm the most handsome person in the world. Matter of fact, people say, "Well, who's going to play you in the Broadway play about you?" And I said, "Whoever is the most handsome actor at the time."

*So with that I'm going to turn you over to the boss of the family, the mayor. People ask me whether I miss being the mayor, Claytee. I tell them every single moment, but it's better sleeping*

*with the mayor.*

And I'm here to promote his book, *Being Oscar*. If you want some wonderful beach reading after season, it's really great, very easy. And I'm not allowed to do this being mayor, but I could really care. Oscar always said when you're the mayor you can do whatever you want, so I've picked that up and gone bravado. So *Being Oscar*, Amazon dot com.

Very quickly, because that was four minutes, first of all, it was his mother who spoiled him rotten and I have done that every day of my life, continuing on everything his mother did for him, telling him every day of his life. When I go to his side of the bed and I clap—you've heard me say this—to welcome him when he wakes up...how wonderful he is; that he is the most handsome, the most brilliant, the most fun. And actually, I believe it.

I'm born and raised in the heart of Manhattan. My father was a physician, an obstetrician and gynecologist. You have no idea where you're born, in what country, or what means or without; what is is. And I was very fortunate. I had parents, who like Oscar's parents, exactly believed that the most important thing for a child was to learn, get a good education. It was the adult in the family who was the one with the wisdom and you sort of did the best you could and admired and loved your parents and would not step out of line very far because of the fear of having to go tell your parents this.

Anyway, we lived in the heart of Manhattan. Very well educated in the arts and in music. Just had the advantages of growing up in that phenomenal city. Went on to college. Went to a women's college called Bryn Mawr in those days, which still accepted the graduate school, doesn't allow men except an occasional classmate here and there. Anyway, I was running for president of the school and ran into this gentleman here on my left and...wow.

*It was not love at first sight.*

**So talk about that. I want the two of you to talk together about how you met.**

All right. Well, very, very, very briefly, my sophomore roommate, actually, who happened to be African American, said to me, "If you will look out for African-American guys for me, I'll find you a nice Jewish fellow." And I said, "Terrific." Bryn Mawr at that time with a student body of about eight hundred, I think there were four African-American girls. And so the pickings weren't so terrific over at Haverford, either, which was nearby. But, of course, they had the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton. So I mean there was a mix.

But anyway, she came home one day and she said, "I have met this fabulous guy. He has these henchmen around him all the time. He's, of course, Jewish. How about we set up a meeting?" I said, "Fine, get it on."

So we go over to the theater on his campus and I'm in one place. He walks in with three or four other of his buddies, but he's in front with his collar up and being very macho. Walks in. My roommate Jane says to Oscar, "Hi, Oscar, here's my roommate Carolyn." And Oscar says, "Hi." He looks at me; I look at him. [Laughter]

And then senior year in September I decided...my major was sociology and anthropology and I decided to take a class called Small Groups. And you can imagine what small groups are. We are a small group. And I look up and here monitoring my table of four is this man. And he's hovering and doing. Actually, he was doing because he was the personification of a con, easy A's, easy A's. Conned the professor of the sociology department; if you'll give me an A, I'll take over the small groups as a monitor.

Fast forward. Our first date was October 21st, 1960. That will take an hour to tell you about. But I was besotted. I was blown...I mean forget it.

*She was besotted; I was drunk. [Laughter]*

Well, now, he ruined it. I mean we're never going to get past anything. I have to defend everything because you can imagine...you know his personality. He's going to attack, attack, and I don't take it. Fifty-two years later I am still not taking it.

The reality was, I heard from his roommates, he was scared to come over for the first date and had a drink or two before and he picked me up and he said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "Anything." He said, "Well, I have to stop by home first, but how about we go get a drink?" So I said, "Fine."

So we go to a bar around the corner from his home. And he said, "What do you drink?" And I wasn't the drinker. I mean you're in college, for heaven's sakes. Well, that's not true. So I said—what did you order, a bull shot?

*A bull shot.*

Which is?

*It's a beer with some whiskey in it.*

No. In a shot glass thrown in it.

*Right. You drop the glass in with the whiskey and then you drink it quickly.*

I was not besotted at that time. But anyway, we went back to his house. He did live in a nearby area and we went back to his home. In walks his younger sister, who is the cutest, sweetest. She was at that point fourteen, fifteen. And I knew that he couldn't be so awful, a drunk or whatever, if, in fact, his parents had a daughter this wonderful. And so that was the beginning. I met his father and everything. But that first date started off with the bull shot. And then he tried to kiss me good night the first night and I said, "No." But, of course, I could smell the liquor. But I'm telling you he was just phenomenally fun, brilliant and just everything that he is. So after all these years it's still there. [Applause] That was the quiet one. That's the calm one.

**So do you agree with this?**

*Do I agree with what, Claytee?*

**With her story.**

*I wasn't even listening to her.*

**So do you have anything to add about—**

*If I was out there, I would listen. Here, I don't have to listen.*

No, no, no. Tell about me asking you to ask my parents if we could get married.

*Oh. Got off to a great start there. Carolyn came from an old-fashion family, and in her family it was expected that if someone were to ask somebody to get married that they would go to that person's father and seek permission. So I said, "I never heard of a custom like this. I know it's not a Jewish custom." She said, "I don't know where it came from, but you'd better ask my father."*

*I didn't even like her father to be honest with you. I had to go up and ask her father.*

*Carolyn and her mother were at the door like this, listening in. I said to her father, who was a very, very prominent physician—he was the president of the New York Medical Society, very respected in the medical community—I said, "Doctor, I'd like to marry your daughter." Well, he thought she would marry a prince or some ambassador to the United Nations and not this guy who was in his first year of law school. He said, "Well, how are you going to support her?" I said, "She's going to support me." [Laughter] "I've got two more years of law school." He said, "Well, I want you to know something. If you marry her"—*

Say it nicely.

*I will say it nicely. "I want you to know something. If you marry my daughter, you better keep her in the style to which she's become accustomed or else I will kick your...from here to 76th*

*Street.” And they lived on 75th Street. And I said—this started the whole marriage off on the right foot—I said, “If you're big enough.” That was it.*

And so my parents in those days, for those of you who remember...it cost, at least Back East, ten cents for a minute on the phone. And my father, because I have an older sister, had given us a timer, a sand timer to flip over. That was a three-minute timer. Because there was one phone in the house and we were frugal, you better be off that phone or you don't have phone privileges. The parents ruled. It's not like today where the children rule. And so he said and my mother said, “If you will wait for a whole year to marry him, we will allow you unlimited time on the phone.” [Laughter] “We”—they—”will pay for, every weekend, trips from New York City to Philadelphia by train. But the caveat is, you will wait for a whole year to get married.” Figuring it would die, of course.

But they also said to me, “With your fancy college degree, what do you think you can do, dear? You're going to go teach.” And I said, “I've been in the classroom for seventeen years. I'd really like to do something else.” And so my mother said, “What are your talents? What could you do to support the two of you?” And I said, “Uh.” She said, “We'll send you to secretarial school for a year and then you will be able to get a job.”

So all that, it didn't work and here we are. It should be fifty-three years later, but it was fifty-two last June. And they came to love him and everything worked out fine.

### **So why Las Vegas?**

*Well, I was very unhappy with myself being supported by my wife, really. It takes a little bit of the masculinity away from you. So I said, “I have to get a job.” Now, I was going to an Ivy League law school and I was the only person in my class who had a job other than to study. I went down to the DA's Office in City Hall in Philadelphia and didn't know a soul and knocked on*

*the door of the district attorney and said, "I'd like a job." He said, "What can you do?" I said, "I'm at Penn Law. I'd like to be a clerk for somebody." So he said, "Well, Arlen Specter is in charge of our Appeals Division." He had just won the first conviction of a Teamster official in the United States. "Why don't you talk to Arlen?" So I went in and Arlen hired me.*

A dollar an hour.

*A dollar an hour, a forty-hour week. It was well worth it because he was a stern taskmaster and I learned some great habits from him. And a wealthy widow was killed in Philadelphia and the fellows who killed her took three hundred thousand dollars from under her mattress and brought it out to Las Vegas to launder it at the crap tables. They were arrested out here and they raised an illegal search-and-seizure issue back in Philadelphia. And Arlen assigned me to work up the testimony of the police officers who were involved in the arrest. So it was a cold, dreary—and don't you start—November night.*

You got it right. He makes up history with this. This is right so far.

*The wind was going through this old stone City Hall building, just blowing there. When we got through with the interview, they said, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "Where else is there?" And they said, "Las Vegas." They said, "The opportunities are phenomenal." I had never even given it a thought. I went home that night and woke Carolyn up and I said, "Sweetheart, how would you like to go to the land of milk and honey?" She said, "I love you, sweetheart, but I'm not moving to Israel." [Laughter]*

*So I applied for a job and I didn't even know it was the district attorney of Clark County and not the district attorney of Las Vegas. But fortunately, it got into the right hands. Ted Marshall was the DA at the time here. Ted invited me out for an interview and we came out and fell in love with Las Vegas. It was a Saturday where we were walking around—well, Carolyn*



*had mono [mononucleosis]. So poor thing was in the hotel room. But I left her there and went downtown. I went into all the law offices because that's where the lawyers were in those days. Along Third Street and Fourth Street they had these little storefront offices. And I would go in on a Saturday morning when they were all there and I would say, "Is Las Vegas the place for a young lawyer to come to?" And without any hesitation and to a person, they said, "The opportunities are great."*

*So with that we came out here. Didn't know a soul. Arrived here in 1964, August the 28th of '64, with eighty-seven dollars in our pocket.*

**So Carolyn, tell me about the first house where you lived and what that was like.**

Forget the house. How about driving into Las Vegas?

**Okay, yes.**

Oh, my god, all I could think of was my parents were right. We drove in over—we went through the Hoover Dam. We opened the car door. It was a hundred and twenty. Then we came in over Railroad Pass and he stopped the car because it says *stop*. So he stopped the car and as far as you could see, forever, nothing. Rolling sagebrush. Some buildings along the left going back to the north. And then far away these little tiny buildings. Those little tiny buildings were Fremont Street. And, of course, this was the Strip. And I looked at him and I thought, oh, my gosh, I'm too proud to tell my parents that we made a terrible mistake. This is awful. But we'll get this done.

So in we came and we moved to the Palms Apartments that are still there on Sahara just east of Paradise. They're still there. It was glorious because the apartment we had in Philadelphia, the bedroom was so small—we had a king bed, of course—you couldn't make the bed except by sitting on the bed because the walls were right up against the bed. And so we

went to the Palms and it was glorious. We had a patio and it was a two-bedroom. The bottom floor was just the living room and a little dinette area. Upstairs, two bedrooms and one bathroom for the whole thing, and so up and down. And then a common laundry mat by the swimming pool for everybody. It's still there. It's wonderful.

And Oscar said to me, “We have eighty-seven dollars. I have a job. I think you need to go get a job.” So I had been working. I thought I was due some time off, but out I went. In those days you went to an employment agency that took a piece of your salary back and I went to work. I got a job because I could write with my great education from Bryn Mawr. I went to work for advertising, marketing and publicity at the Riviera Hotel. And was that fun. My job was to entertain all the newspapers, Variety, all the PR people that came in for every opening at the hotel. Just, it was fabulous. Of course, I was out until the wee hours of the morning. But anyway, it was a grand time until it was time for Oscar—we found out—at least we thought when we were coming here that he would have a—a six-month?—a six-month wait to be able to take the bar and become an attorney. In those days it was a year. And so he had to stay—did you stay the whole time at the DA's Office or you went with Mort?

*I did. I did. And then I went to work for Mort Delane. Many of you will remember him. He was a wonderful, wonderful civil attorney here. Then I went to work for the public defender.*

*Richard Bryan was the public defender; I was his assistant. I won my first six cases there and never got a thank-you from the client. And I said, “I'm not doing this anymore.” And I went into private practice, hung out the shingle. My first client...I lost the case; he thanked me.*

And where was your first office?

*My first office—well, I've had a lot of offices.*

No, but the one.

*Well, I had an office over the Little Flower Shop that we call it at Las Vegas Boulevard and Bridger. Remember that one? It was terrific because the flowers would waft up and my office smelled beautiful. It was great. It was a wonderful place. I didn't get too much work done, but it was great smelling the roses.*

**So tell me about the first house. I'm trying to get to the Scotch...**

Okay. We were at the Palms until '69. And I had worked—

*I have to interrupt there, though, please. The Palms were terrific apartments. They were beautiful at the time. Carolyn said, "Even though we don't have any money, we have to go to one of the nicest places because you'll meet nice people and they'll become your clients over the years." Everybody who lived at the Palms was a hooker. [Laughter]*

Now, that's what Oscar thought. To our left was the head of all the bars at the Sahara and on our right was Del Webb's executive secretary. Jess Goodman, who was the president of the Riviera, was in the next complex. You lie. Don't believe him. He's ridiculous. But there were two across the street, very popular.

**So did they become your clients?**

*Did they become my clients? The hookers did.*

But anyway, so I worked. In '66, right after Caesars opened I went to work at Caesars Palace. I worked for the president of the hotel, Nate Jacobson, and Jerry Zarowitz, the head of the casino. The third of the group was, of course, the brilliant and creative Jay Sarno. So I worked there for a couple of years and then decided I really wanted to do something different and I got a job with the Department of Labor to work at H and Owens on our Westside doing counseling. In those days we were a hundred percent segregated. The only jobs for African-Americans were maids, porters, maintenance, low-end maintenance. And so that became very much a passion of mine.

In fact, I was always very proud of the fact that I got one of my first clients one of the first integrated jobs dealing at the Hacienda.

*But Claytee wanted to know about your first home.*

Well, I'm getting there. This was all part of getting to '69.

**And this is more exciting**

So that went on and all of a sudden I thought, oh, my goodness, time for a family.

**So was this at the EOB?**

They were hooked up with EOB. But anyway, that's a whole other five hours.

**Okay, good.**

So this little piece...it became time for us to have children. All the fun that we were having wasn't paying off. I stopped taking everything you're supposed to take so you don't get pregnant. We both decided, well, we'll go ahead and if God's willing we'll have our own children and if not we'll have our own children through adoption. And so thank heavens for Nevada Catholic Charities. We have four magnificent children, the first of whom was born in '69. And I said to Oscar, "We can't live here anymore; we have to have a house." And so we went looking and for forty-nine thousand dollars was the first home, believe it or not, and it was beautiful. It was on over a half-acre on Viking, east of Eastern on Viking, beautiful property. The only thing I cared about was trees, trees, trees, trees, and grass. It was all brick and pine wood inside and just very feeling of country and eastern stuff. That was the first home. Then we tore part of it down as the family grew to four children and also included Oscar's—what year anniversary birthday gift was that when we got a shoat? A baby pig was given to him. So we had dogs and we had a shoat in that home.

**Tell me about community at that point. Did you get to know your neighbors?**

*Well, there's an interesting story about our neighbors over there. One of my neighbors was a fellow by the name of Jimmy Chagra. I didn't know Jimmy at the time. Jimmy it turns out not only to be a prolific gambler but also one of the biggest marijuana and cocaine drug smugglers in the world. I was retained by Johnny Quinn, that you may know who was at the Plaza. A relative of his was a suspect in a murder case of Jimmy's brother. I had to go down with them even though once they saw who he was, they said, "This isn't the man." He came back to Las Vegas. But when I was there a fellow introduces himself. He says, "I'm Jimmy Chagra." And I said, "I've heard of you, but never had the pleasure of meeting you." He says, "Well, I may need your services; I think I'm going to be indicted on some very serious drug charges." I said, "Well, that's what I do for a living; I represent people who are charged with serious offenses." He says, "Well, I'll be in touch with you." And he says, "In the meantime, though, you could do me a favor. There's a home that is across the street from where I live." And describes it. "It's a home on about a little more than a half an acre and it has a wonderful oxen yoke in its driveway." He said, "I'd like to buy that for my maid." That's where Carolyn and myself were staying.*

Now, for those of you who have been here longer, the home was built—not our home, but that home that Jimmy bought was built by Bob Riesling who developed Commercial Center. And across the street from us lived a family of—one, two, three—four children, wonderful, wonderful members of this community, the Jaramillos. They've remained very close friends of ours all these years. So, yes, we got to know a few of our neighbors.

**Wonderful. So I'd like to stop here. I can go on? Okay, good. I think I have time for one more question.**

*Wait. Are we running out of film? [Laughter] It's almost five o'clock and, Claytee, my liver*

*begins to quiver.*

**I understand, but I think we have you covered.**

**You live in a community now and one of the things that happened in that community is that there is a walking club that got started. And I've heard good things about that walking club. Can you tell me more about it?**

*Yes. It was great. When I was first elected back in 1999, I was very fat. It was not healthy to be as fat as I was and I decided to be an example for the city. I said, "I'm going to walk every morning." I went out. It was almost like the Pied Piper because the first morning I came out at six o'clock in the morning to start the walk, there were about five people saying, "Could we walk with you?" And I said, "That's what it's all about." We got up to about twenty-five, thirty people walking every single day. We went from walking twenty minutes, to do a mile in twenty minutes, and we ended up doing three miles in forty minutes. I was very, very healthy and I was in great shape. And then the mayor's responsibilities took over. Every meeting it seemed was at seven o'clock in the morning and it was too dark to get out there and start walking much earlier than we had. So basically, I let it go by the way, which is a shame because not only was it great for us physically and healthwise, but we made some fast friends because there's nothing like spending twenty minutes with a person you don't know and going on a leisurely walk, in effect, and finding out about the person. They would ask about the city; I would ask them their impressions. They were a great help to me when I first started to be the mayor.*

I want you to know that George Rudiak and his wife, Gertrude, were long-time people here and George was a wonderful attorney here and lived around the corner. Gertrude is ninety-three and she was part of the group.

*No. She's ninety-nine.*

Right. See what happens? Right. We just celebrated that in (inaudible). Ninety-nine.

*We built the Lou Ruvo Center for that kind of conduct. [Laughter]*

**So I want you to know that the people who started that walking club still talk about it.**

*Well, it was great. Frank Butterfield, who is working at the Las Vegas Athletic Club, he actually led the group after a while. Everybody was in great shape. It was a lot of fun. It was great.*

**They miss it.**

**Tell me about how you educated your children.**

With a whip. [Laughter] No. Really we had both been given by our parents—we didn't know any better—we were just given the right sense of the quality of the need for being able to read well and to do what's expected while you're learning, but to always reach higher and not just accept the average, just do the best you can do. And so those were instilled in us early on and that's the way we had our four children raised and we're very proud. Yes, they had time free and they had a great life, too. But I know Oscar and I have always been so grateful of the parents to whom we were born. We really attribute everything, if there is any quality of success, which to me is just feeling good inside yourself that you've tried your best and you've been honest in what you do and haven't just followed the path of people who are something you aspire to, but cut your own road, I think it all goes back to the fact of how we were raised and the value of education. It doesn't mean necessarily you have to be an advantaged person. Really, of course, as you well know, it has to do with parenting. We attribute everything back to our parents. And so we did that.

*Yeah, my father, he was a very kind, gentle person, a quiet soul. But the one thing that he did when we were being raised—and I say made us, but he didn't spank us, he didn't take a switch, but because of his guidance, we had to do our homework on a blackboard in our basement. We*

*don't have basements out here, all of us. But we had a basement with a blackboard and we had to write our homework out for him to approve it before we could put it on the paper to take it to school. So that shows you his commitment.*

*But I'm a great believer that what ruined our country, for all intents and purposes, is television because then we had the TV dinners, the television went on, and instead of the family talking to each during—what did you do today? How was school today?—about things that were important, everybody like a moron would stare at the stupid TV. I think that was the beginning of the end and that's why everybody dumbs down today. It started with that.*

And that was never—we had one television in our apartment in New York and it was not—dinners were always at the dining room table. That's why I got to be a good cook because my sister used to bribe me; “I'll let you stay up fifteen minutes later; you cook.”

**That's great. So there are other questions, hundreds of other questions that I could ask, but I think that I will allow some of you to ask just a few questions. So is there anyone in the room who would be interested in asking a question? I see...two, three, four. And your name is?**

**ESTHER: My name is Esther (Finder). What would you like us to know about you that maybe we don't already know?**

**CLAYTEE: It's not my question.**

You give me up; I'm going to give you up. [Laughter]

*I'm taking the fifth.*

I think unfortunately so much of us is out there even things that aren't factual that I don't think there's much to tell you. We have a daughter here. Where are you, Cara? My baby is here.

Could you stand up, please? This is my baby. [Applause] Would you please, could you come



up to the microphone? You give up one thing of Daddy's and mine, and mine better be nicer. Right there. The mike is right here with Esther, right here.

**ESTHER: Oh, I don't have it anymore.**

You may never come back to our house again. [Laughter]

One on Daddy first before you do me. Am I easier? Oh, yes, tell about my clothes.

That's fine.

**CARA: No.**

No, it's all right. It's all right. When I introduced you to that lady who said, "I love the way you dress," I said, "Let me take you to my daughter."

**CARA: Well, no.**

The shirt. You could do that story.

**CARA: Well, my mother is just an incredibly beautiful woman.**

Oh.

**CARA: She's just so poised and so grateful and so beautiful.**

Oh. Ooh. [Laughter]

**CARA: People think that she must shop and spend, but really her clothes are from Target and she takes my father's shirts that are shriveled in the sleeves and cuts them off and wears them under her blazers and buys her makeup at Smith's and is embarrassed; will not let me take her shopping.**

That's enough. Do Daddy.

**CARA: And still has the jacket that I bought her from my first job at Banana Republic when I was sixteen. It's just so long ago. Patches on the elbows, still.**

Okay. That's enough, enough. Daddy. That's enough. [Laughter]

**CARA:** But what I will tell you about my parents is that what you see is what you get. I and my brothers are—I'll try not to cry through this because it's very emotional for me—I am the luckiest and my brothers and I are the luckiest because, yes, we were adopted. And I thank God or whomever put me in this family and gave me these parents because I am so lucky to have been in this family and have these parents who raised me without a TV.

All right. Enough, enough. Get Daddy. What is this, Cara? Get Daddy.

**CARA:** No. And the family dinners. And like Michelle said, because we did grow up and we were best friends, and it is; it is a beautiful upbringing because they taught us about what it is to be a human being and what it is to have morals and values and what it is to be part of a community and to be...a human being. They gave me so much love.

Okay, enough, enough, enough. You got off. That's enough. Give it back to Claytee. You were supposed to take Daddy on.

*No. No. You were fine. [Laughter]*

Thank you, sweetheart.

*And I'm proud of all my children, but Cara just started a new position, which is phenomenal. It takes a special kind of person to do what she does. She's the therapist in the burn unit at UMC.*

*So that's really something special. [Applause]*

**FRIEDA:** I'm (Frieda Rules). I've been in Las Vegas since 1952. So we go back a long ways, story. Anyway [getting emotional].

It's all right. It's Cara's fault. Cara started all of this. So just remember her name, Cara.

**FRIEDA:** Actually, the one thing I want to ask is that having been around during your mob days, I was curious to know what your reaction was when you became the mayor of Las Vegas, as the mob...? Okay, this is a good lead-on for you.

*That's good. It was very interesting. I loved being a lawyer for people who were high profile individuals, very unpopular people and very unpopular causes. It gave me the opportunity to appear all of the country in courts trying to protect their constitutional rights and make sure that the government did its job in an appropriate way; that's the way I looked at my role as a criminal defense lawyer and never had a problem in getting a good night's sleep doing it that way because I figured that if I could protect my very unpopular clients, then I'm protecting everybody in this room here to make sure that they're not going to be taken advantage of.*

*So when I became the mayor...I thought I was going to become the mayor for four years as a sabbatical because I had worked very hard for thirty-five years, actively practicing law. And I found out that I loved it and that you couldn't be a good mayor and you couldn't be a good lawyer at the same time because it wasn't a full-time job. I made it into a full-time job and now it is a full-time job, but at that time you could have another outside way of earning a living. I thought to myself how easy it was being the mayor, and I'll tell you why. When I represented my clients—and I didn't win all my cases, believe me. Anybody who tried cases didn't win all their cases. And I lost the case and the client was next to me and I couldn't do anything for him at that point because the jury had already returned its verdict, the judge had already read the presentence report, and what was going to be was going to be. And most of my clients, when they were found guilty, were sent away forever. So I would toss and turn and feel the burden. The bed was wet because I sweated—sweat, sweated?*

You're hanging yourself, dear.

*Okay. Well, I sweated all night. Being the mayor, if I made a mistake, you put it back and revote it. It was so easy compared to being a criminal defense lawyer with my kind of clientele. So the mayor's job was an absolute pleasure every single day because you'd wake up in the morning, as*

*Carolyn does, and you know all you're going to do is try to make the city a better place. That's the job of a mayor, make it better than when you found it. What's better than that of doing that every day? [Applause]*

**STEPHEN: First of all, I would like to welcome you, of course, like everybody else does. My name is (Stephen Natzer) and we have met several different occasions. Here are the two greatest humanitarians I can think of, Carolyn and Oscar. And I have to take my hat off even though I don't have one, but I would have to do it. Now, my question is...I do know that you established a fantastic educational facility called the Meadows. I do know because you invited me a couple of times and I spoke. Would you please give a little background how were you able to establish that facility, which is an outstanding, very well-known educational place? And thank you for whatever both of you have done. So if you would answer that question, I would appreciate it.**

We thank you for all that you do. And you could be president because you have all your hair. Oscar always said to me, "What's the formula for being president?" I said, "Have all your hair."  
[Laughter]

**STEPHEN: (Inaudible.)**

He'd like it. It really was; it was really very clear to us early on because of our education we wanted to give our children the same advantage that we could. It was clear to us that continuum in education, to be able to have every year roll off the previous one, but most importantly not everybody has to go to college. But the focus was how do we prepare children to be competitive with everybody else coming in from around the world to take places in our colleges and universities? It's not about a specific locale. So when you look at where you want to get, how do you get there? How do you make your child or the children of an area competitive with the

world? And so our focus really was on that, based on our own educations, and giving children the opportunity to get to that top point. And so it's a process actually working backwards. But we saw early on in the early seventies that the community was going to be bilingual in Spanish. I grew up Back East; my second language was French. One school did teach a foreign language here because the ownership happened to be German. But it was clear that in a job, if, in fact, there were no college or even if there were college after high school, when you had two applicants for a job, be it a bank or be it in education or be it in anything, be it in a supermarket, you have one that speaks one language and one that speaks two, the one with the two languages is going to get it. So early on it was about at the end result making our children here competitive with those coming in from around the world so they could get the spots here and creating that continuum so every year built on the previous one. And then when you got to the last four years—well, actually even before that exposing them to the arts and music and computer early on.

It was a big fight, I'll tell you. When Oscar talked about his clients, I will tell you for twenty-six years if the school failed the responsibility was right here, with my board, but it was really here for all those people, all the teachers and all the staff that worked at the school to be able to have the wherewithal not only to do what they loved to do but to be able to live. And I will tell you to become mayor and not have to wake up in the middle of the night and worry about increases in salary and competing for the best teachers from around the country to get them in every single classroom and providing rewards—I mean there were so many things—that it was so wonderful to be mayor—first of all, because you mix with such a wonderful group of people and there's so much opportunity and we all love our community or we wouldn't live here—b t to have that huge boulder off my back, worrying about a hundred and thirty-five adults

who were dependent upon the success of the school. And it has been successful. It's not been mine alone. But it's been a wonderful, hold the line, tight, and just keep doing what you're doing. We have placed or have had accepted a hundred percent of our students in four-year colleges. So many of the things...they come back. We have over sixteen hundred graduates. Our first graduating class was Cara's class of '91 of which there were three graduates and she went on to Stanford and did her undergraduate and first graduate program at Stanford. Of course, while I feel we're connected through every pore in my body, I know it's about parenting and having a child love to learn, which is what happened to us.

So thank you for the question. I love the Meadows. I still love it. It's a wonderful thing because it's a not-for-profit school. Nobody owns it; it owns itself and every parent to the best of their ability pays their own way. About a fifth of the students are low-income. It's largely parents working two jobs to keep their children there.

*When Cara applied to Stanford, she said in her application, "I know you only consider the top ten percent of the graduating class." She said, "I am the top thirty." [Laughter]*

That's right. I forget.

**Last question, please.**

**SUZANNE: Hi. My name is Suzanne Dalitz. I'm Moe Dalitz' daughter.**

Oh, wow.

**SUZANNE: My question is not a mob question. I don't think my father was ever needing your representation, fortunately. My father thought of himself as a city father.**

Yes, he was.

**SUZANNE: And so my question is a bit reflective about city fathers and city fathers that you saw when you first came here and how the long journey was for you to become city**

**father, city mother, and how you look back on your predecessors and how you kind of see the future city fathers and mothers coming up.**

*Well, I look around the room here and I see Thalia Dondero, who is a city father. It's the first time that I've ever seen her without a notebook. Whenever she goes, she writes down everything that takes place. She's like an FBI agent. And I see Lou La Porta, who was a very prominent county commissioner in Las Vegas.*

And Katie Crockett, Peg and George's daughter. As you all know, friend of Howard Hughes and part of the building out at the airport. I mean just so many of you have made such a complete difference and change and built this community.

*I think the thing that why I can't answer the question specifically is I never thought of being the mayor and I don't think Carolyn ever thought of being the mayor. This was something that...I filed on the last day of filing. It was almost a lark. As I said, I was looking for a way to retire and I thought it was a good way to retire, as the mayor. Carolyn waited until just about the last day in order to file and she had no intention, desire whatsoever to become the mayor. She basically ran because my children said, "Who's going to carry on what Oscar started and didn't finish?" And it's true. Whoever the mayor is has their own agenda. The predecessor could be thought of less because you have a finite time in the job to get something done.*

*I think we've been blessed here in this community. It's a very interesting community. We don't have a cast system here. People said, "What is like being part of society in Las Vegas?" And with all due respect, folks, there isn't any society in Las Vegas. Some people think when they go to these functions that they're society, but not like we're used to on the East Coast where you're born into a position and it goes back to the Mayflower. I mean that's the way it is there. Here, if you work hard and you have half a brain, you're going to succeed, and a little bit of luck.*

*But that doesn't happen anyplace else. We're very, very lucky to live in this community.*

It's a very accepting community. Everybody has worked hard and worked in their own way. Everybody's made a part of building this community. You can go all the way back to the very beginning days. Much like our veterans were serving us and those who have died on the pathway to get us where we are today. So it is a great community. I wouldn't believe it. We know so many people who have left this town only to come back to it. But your grandfather—was it grandfather?

**SUZANNE: Father.**

Ooh. Had you late, huh?

**SUZANNE: A little late, yeah.**

Yeah. But really wonderful, wonderful personality. I remember him at Las Vegas Country Club. I remember when the country club went on strike and I served him drinks. I decided to do cocktails. I thought that would be fun. So it's so many people. I just finished reading the—what's the name of the author of the Binion book? Oh, goodness, terrible. Alzheimer's, no less. The book on Benny Binion, simply fabulous. But again, I go back to this—is Moe mentioned in here?

*My one experience with your dad was...I was asked by one of my very unpopular clients to get him into the country club. Your father apparently didn't want him to be a member of the country club. Some reputed mobsters came to me and said, "Well, you go up to Mr. Dalitz and you convince him that So-and-so can become a member of the country club." And I said, "No."*

*[Laughter]*

But that's always good. A little distance is always good. But one last thing I want to say. I think when we came here in '64, not in '52, I think the Yellow Pages—they don't exist anymore, I



guess—but there were three pages of attorneys.

**?THALIA: And it was a five by seven.**

Yes. And now they're a hundred on the page. Simply incredible to me how the town has grown.

But the memories are good ones.

**?THALIA: I just wanted to say I have a 1932 telephone book and I just told Claytee I'm going to donate it to the library.**

Oh, is that fabulous? Nineteen thirty-three?

**?THALIA: Thirty-two.**

Thirty-two phone book.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How many pages (inaudible)?**

**?THALIA: Very few because it has Lovelock and Elko and all those places.**

Oh, my god. Isn't that fabulous?

**CLAYTEE: So would either one of you like to say anything about the future of the city, of downtown?**

Well, I would tell you we're working very hard to be very aggressive. He started bringing back what was a wonderful downtown, bringing it back to life, energy and investment and development. [Applause] It's true. I was the lucky one because unfortunately—well, he had from 1999 to 2006 when we were *shoop*. And then seven was still there and then eight and then this started. And so I came in. All the pieces were in place. But when I came in, in '11, all the little dominos just started to fall and the buildings opened and it was wonderful—the Smith Center, of course; Discovery; the Lou Ruvo Cleveland Clinic. World Market was up, but now we're expanding and we've got thirty-six new stores in the Premium Outlets. Our music and our arts are just growing leaps and bounds. Of course, you know I'm about to kill myself on the

soccer stadium. People think it's going to take tax dollars. And we're not increasing sales tax and we're not taking property tax or increasing that. But we really need to develop the sixty-one acres of Symphony Park because there are so many investors that have been sitting, waiting for something, some spirit to take place.

But what's happened is for the whole community we are going to be beyond the forty million tourists this year, which is phenomenal. We've opened SLS, the Westgate, the LINQ, the High Roller. MGM is building its arena. There's so much going on overall in the city. Everybody calls Las Vegas the county. But the reality is that the core of the city...it's critical that we continue to help fill the beds that are down there and continue to build on everything that was planned during Oscar's twelve years. And so it's a great time. I think we're bringing in fashions now taking hold here beyond our arts and our music. IT is beginning to have little clusters developing.

My heart is broken because we had an eighty-million-dollar pilot program to bring the film industry in and, unfortunately, seventy million of it was taken for the Tesla project. So we sort of have to work back through the legislature on the film industry because I'm sure many of you—how many of you have had the good fortune to see the movie “Casino?” He had a little, tiny, bitty part.

*A little tiny...? I starred with De Niro and Pesci and John. No. No. You know why she said that? Because when the movie came out, my mother called me and she said, “It's a good thing you're a lawyer.” [Laughter]*

But the reason I said it was in 1996 or '95 when they did “Casino” here, everything, everything, all of our tech people, everybody was involved and the city was filmed entirely here. Since that time we've never had the entirety of a film developed. And so attracting the film industry here,

it's so reasonable because our weather is so wonderful, as you know, and we have so many talented people that can do filming. So I'm hopeful that that will be another big thrust going forward as we continue to work, all of us, to make—and the biggest bag we have to care is fix our education.

*And I think our future is great. This is the kind of community that you can get something done.*

*The only thing that will limit our success and our growth is if man's imagination is limited. But if you have an idea, you're more likely to get it realized, if you had a dream, you're more likely to have it accomplished here in Las Vegas I think than any other place in the world. I really do.*

And I would like to make two comments to that because I hear it all the time, just so that you know and can spread the worm—word—worm, word. And I'm not drinking nor have I had one. Lottery. I did bring that to many of our people in the legislature. Of course, everybody thinks the push back is from the hotels. The hotels could sell the lottery tickets, but there's not an appetite. I think it's going to be a long way off.

The other piece I wanted to tell you...we have been starving here for passenger trains. Amtrak stopped in '95. I was fortunate to be back in Washington with Oscar probably in beginning of his third term and there was a symposium on transportation and rail. And so he was busy with all of his meetings and I said, “Can I go?” He said, “Yeah, they'll never know any difference, go in.”

Well, lo and behold, the president of Amtrak and the chairman of the board were presented. So I waited till everybody left and they were, of course, talking. And I went up to them and I said, “I'm married to the mayor of Las Vegas and we're dying. You haven't had any passenger rail come through Las Vegas.” And they said, “As much as we understand what you're saying, first of all, our concentration is on the connectivity of the East Coast and working

into more central area, but we are working on a regional plan, and until that regional plan is developed, Amtrak will not be bringing passenger rail here. And it's because there's one track, one track that goes back and forth, and freight takes priority.” And so just as you hear this...I mean really working on it knowing full well—we do have private folk working very hard on speed train. That's still alive, but it's the piece from Victorville on to get connected.

But the Amtrak and those two lottery questions, I get them all the time when I go out to speak. And the reality is unless more rail is put down, we're not going to see that till the whole Southwest is satisfied by Amtrak that they have a good plan to connect it. So I just wanted to say that. Sorry.

*Well, that's a great way to end it.*

I'm the mayor. You said I can do anything.

**So this is the typical interview that we do in the Oral History Research Center. So Barbara is here. So I just want you to know that this is what we do. This is our typical day doing this kind of interview. So thank you so very much.**

Thank you, Claytee. So nice to be here. Thank you all for coming. [Applause]

**[End of recorded interview]**