

**Transcription:** Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History

**Interviewees:** Cathy Lasby Natall (CLN), Paul Natall (PN), Lea Lasby Garcia (LLG), Adam Natall (AN), Yvonne Newell (YV), Brian

**Interviewer:** Tom Martin (TM)

**Subject:** United and TWA Airplane Accident of 1956

**Date of Interview:** June 30, 2014

**Method of Interview:** At Shrine of the Ages, Grand Canyon National Park

**Transcriber:** Dannie Derryberry

**Date of Transcription:** Began March 18, 2019

**Transcription Reviewer:** Sue Priest

**Keys:** The Ray Lasby family recounts the United and TWA Airplane Accident of 1956

TM: Today is June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This is the Shrine of the Ages, Grand Canyon National Park. Today is the commemoration with a wreath laying of the United and Trans World Airlines airplane accident of 1956. Today with this oral interview are:

CLN: Cathy Lasby Natall.

LLG: Lea Lasby Garcia.

AN: Adam Natall, Cathy's son.

VN: Victoria Natall, Adam's wife.

AN: Sebastian Natall, Victoria and Adam's son. Giovanni Natall, also our son, and our twin daughters, Trinity Ray Natall and Sophia Marina Natall.

TM: and

CLN: That's my husband, Paul.

TM: Thank you. And my name's Tom Martin. Cathy thank you so much for your willingness to be interviewed today. I'd just like to turn you over to this machine. What would you tell your family about this event? How did you hear about the accident? Which family member did you lose? How did it impact your family?

CLN: We lost our dad.

TM: How was he on the flight?

CLN: He was on a business trip. He had gone to California. He was gone one week. We had just moved into our first home. Mom and Dad, they'd always wanted to buy a house and they'd saved. That was back when people saved. They had bought the house, they lived there for one month when the accident happened. My memories of Dad are pretty small because I was only four. It was just before my fifth birthday. I remember little things about him, more like feelings. The day of the accident we were so excited he was coming home. I remember dressing up, putting on a new dress and a hat. We were so excited. We were on our way to the airport. Mom had the radio on and all of a sudden she got quiet and she started to cry. She said to my brother, who was nine, "Did you hear the flight? Did you hear what

they said?" He said, "No, I don't. I didn't hear it." She started to cry. She cried the rest of the way to the airport. I don't remember any of the details, parking or any of that, but that was when you went to the airport and the family met at the gate. You just all went there, you could wait. We got there and there was no one at the gate. No one was waiting for this plane. So she immediately knew something was wrong. A couple of men came out and they walked over to her. They started talking to her and she started crying. There was a lady who was with them. She came over to my brother and myself and escorted us out of the room. I don't remember much else about that day. I don't remember anything that preceded that. I mean, there was just a blur. We went home. The next thing I know my aunt and uncle have flown out. They lived in Colorado, it was my dad's sister. They flew out and they started getting us packed and we moved to Colorado. Mom was seven months pregnant with my sister. I think that's what made her survive. [emotional] She had to survive for her.

LLG: And the children she had already.

CLN: Yep. But the baby, she... We were old enough somebody else could have taken care of us, but that baby was what pulled her together. She doesn't know the joy that we all had. We were so excited when this baby was part of life because the loss was huge. [emotional] Financially it was devastating. My dad was making a good salary. Mom settled out of court cause she was so afraid they wouldn't give her enough. There was also flight insurance which dad had for some reason decided to take out, so we got that. She bought a house and paid for it. Mom didn't work. She didn't work till, do you remember when she went to work? Were you out of school or was it when you were in high school?

LLG: I think junior high or high school, I think.

CLN: Money had gotten real tight by that point. She had gone through everything. She raised us on Social Security and what he had. She was determined to be able to be home with us but it got to a point where finances were bad. She knew she wasn't gonna be able to really survive for the rest of her life so she started back to work probably in her mid-50s. She worked till she was 72, which to us was heartbreaking. She shouldn't have had to do that. Our dad was a design engineer, he was a very talented design engineer. He was making extremely good salary at the time he died. It was something that she shouldn't have had to face but it was reality. We were...

TM: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

CLN: We have an older brother. I'm the middle.

TM: How old was he again?

CLN: He was nine.

TM: Nine? Okay. You were four, just on five.

CLN: Yep, and Lea was born about two and a half months after dad died. Dad was working on some kind of a top secret government job. We don't know, we never did know. Mom told us that his briefcase and his partner's briefcase had very, very important papers. They hired this Swiss mountain climber specifically to go try and research and find his briefcase. They didn't want the papers to get in the wrong hands. We've seen in the papers and the history and the articles in the newspapers and the magazines, it talks about the Swiss mountain climber looking for items. Mom said they were looking specifically for

his briefcase and his partner's briefcase. I assume that's true. She didn't know what he was working on. He was very quiet, he would not talk about it. But [pause] he was an intelligent man, a lot of gifts.

TM: How did this impact you then?

CLN: Probably made me stronger in some ways.

TM: How?

CLN: Well, you watch your mom fight through everything. She had to do it all. Made our brother weaker cause she babied him. Lea and I are too independent sometimes, to the detriment of [laughter] our husbands cause when you see somebody doing everything you just assume to do it, you don't wait for somebody else to do it.

LLG: Mom had nobody else to rely on. She had three little children to take care of and she did it by herself with not really much support system available other than a few family members.

CLN: Most of the time the family members just wanted to try and hook onto her money.

LLG: Right.

CLN: She got a lot of letters from family who thought she was wealthy cause she got this big cash so they all wanted to borrow. Our grandmother moved in with us, which was supposed to be temporary, her mother, to help out. She stayed there till she passed. It was a good and bad thing. It was one of those things that had its good points. It helped her in some aspects and then there were other aspects it wasn't cause she never had a life and she became her caretaker. I remember her saying she wished she had a summer sometime where she could actually spend it just with her kids but that didn't happen. She had five siblings, our mother had five siblings, but our grandmother was always with us because that was kind of easier for them. Our dad had two siblings and they were never a close family. The one lived in Colorado when we lived there but his job took him someplace, or her husband's job took him someplace. He had an older brother and they ended up both in California. They weren't close to the family, not close to mom.

LLG: Dad's parents lived in Denver.

CLN: She became a caretaker for them, too.

LLG: Yeah, she did. I'm sure it was devastating for them as well.

TM: Did they ever talk about it?

LLG: Not that I recall.

CLN: They were older.

LLG: Yeah, they were. Quite a bit older.

CLN: They were in their 70s and 80s by the time he passed.

TM: So they were probably passed by the time you were out of high school?

LLG: They passed when I was in high school and shortly. They lived...

CLN: They lived into their 90s.

LLG: Yeah, grandpa lived to be 97 and Nonnie would have been, she might have been about 88 or so. Yeah, she was in her late 80s.

CLN: Their other kids were busy in California. They would come occasionally but mom was the one who went over regularly and took care of them, saw her.

TM: Where were you living at the time again?

CLN: We moved to Denver.

TM: You did? Okay.

CLN: Yep, and that's where we all basically live, in the Denver area, now. All three of us. Our dad went to Colorado University in Boulder. That's where he got his degree. It was funny, he got out of the service and he went right into the university. He was even smart then. He recognized all these men were getting out of the service. They were all going to university to get degrees, so he went straight through. He didn't take a summer off, he didn't take off any breaks, he went straight through. He worked part time. Our mom worked. They had our brother while he was in school. He finished a whole semester early and he finished with honors. He got out before the rest of them and he landed a job cause there weren't any people out there in the workplace. All the men had been in the service. Some of the men he was in school with they had got out six months later or whatever and they couldn't find work because everything was inundated with the amount of men that were out now with their education. So, he even thought that out, thought it through. Its funny cause dad was very, very, very smart, but in high school he did very, very poor. He was one of those men who just if he didn't like it he was bored. His grades showed it. But once he went into the service and he served his time and he realized that education was important he did phenomenally. Oh, in going through our mother's memorabilia we found a number of things from our dad's desk when he was alive. One of those items was a list of basically who's who in the White House in the early '50s, in '53 or '54, listing who all the important players were and how they influenced the president.

CLN: And the order of how they should, what they would be considered a contact.

LLG: So that was a very, very unusual find and interesting to see that.

TM: He worked for the government?

LLG: He worked for Ream Manufacturing who was doing government contracts. They had...

CLN: That was before they specialized in air conditioning and heating. They were doing other things back at that point. It was different. Dad originally worked for RCA. That's the company that took him back there, back to the East Coast. He was in Colorado. Cause his parents had moved from Minnesota to

Colorado when he went into the service, and then his sister lived in Colorado. So when he went into the service he went to Colorado to go to the school and then he took his job back East and that's where they were at the time. They were living in New Jersey. He was working for Ream at the time he died.

LLG: He was a project engineer. He had worked on the design of a Air Force flight simulator and the gunnery trainer. From what I've seen online the concepts that they came up with were used later on in developing simulators for NASA. That's papers that I've come across where they've referenced it as something that they took ideas from.

TM: Lea, how did this impact you?

LLG: [emotional] I missed out on knowing a wonderful father. [pause] He was so excited about a third child. They didn't know children and they didn't know what they were gonna have, that wasn't even available at the time but he was so excited about having another kid in the house.

CLN: It was funny, I was telling Lea the other day that when he left they had seeded our lawn in the new house, that was part of what they did. They didn't sod then, they seeded the grass. Mom had told me, oh, many times growing up that she remembered them seeding the grass and it was just coming up with a tinge of green the day he was supposed to come back. She said they seeded it and she thought that Ray's never gonna see this. She said that haunted her. She never knew why she felt that way, but he never did. She said she thought God was preparing her. [pause] She had kind of a stoic attitude. Sometimes we'd talk about Dad's death as hard as it was and as much as she desperately loved him. Made him a saint in many ways. She said she thought death happens sometimes in ways that are what you can handle as a spouse. She said for her having it suddenly might have been easier than watching him waste away with an illness. When my father-in-law passed he was sick a long time. I think in that situation it gave his wife a chance to let go a little piece at a time. So for her that was probably better, but Mom thought in many ways she didn't think she could watch him be devastated through sickness. She said maybe that was a blessing. I mean, her attitude towards things like that was amazing. It's just...

LLG: But her heart was broken.

CLN: Oh, it was broken. Yep.

LLG: He was the only one she ever loved and she loved him till she passed away a few years ago. He was the only one for her.

TM: She sounds like she was an inspiration for you two.

LLG: She was. Taking care of us, she was strong but there were countless, countless nights when you would hear her sobbing her loneliness and her heartbreak. [emotional]

CLN: She kept every letter he sent her, she kept everything he'd ever given her. She had it to the day she died. We still have it. So she never got over it. She remembered every anniversary. She'd talk about when they dated. She'd talk about when he passed, the anniversary. To the day she died she still on this date she would talk about it—your daddy died this day. It was a forever loss.

TM: What other stories did she tell about your father?

CLN: Oh. I was so little. I remember living in the apartment, getting stung by a bee and, of course, he came out and comforted and soothed me. I remember my brother and I getting in trouble, or he got in trouble, I watched it happen. The janitor at the apartment building came out. Actually Stan wasn't involved, he was just there. Some boys had set a fire in the garbage cans so the janitor came out and was yelling at all us kids. Dad came out and got involved in that. I remember that. Stan actually didn't do anything, he was just present. Just little things like that. I remember we'd moved into the new house and dad was putting plywood down in the attic so that he could store things up there. I wanted to go up with him and I remember him telling me, "Now, Cathy, if you step off this board you're gonna go through the ceiling." I was terrified. I just sat on that board cause I was so afraid of going through that ceiling [laughter]. I was sure that's what was gonna happen. That had to be within a month of his death because we hadn't been at the house any length of time. I remember the thunder. I remember being in the new house. It was new and it was a little scary. A rain storm and the thunder and him coming in and talking to me and telling me it was all okay, it was just thunder, it was nothing to be scared of. But the memories are very few that I have specifically with my dad.

Male: How did you learn about his death or learn about the circumstance? Wasn't there a mischievous boy in the neighborhood that told you about it?

CLN: No, we heard about it on the radio in the car.

Male: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry.

CLN: Yeah. We did talk about that early on. We had talked about the car radio. It was funny because to this day, all through the present, she would not have the radio in the car. It took quite a few years before it finally triggered. Mom hated if you turned the radio on. She hated to have the radio on and I know it was psychological. It reminded her of what she had heard because she obviously had had it on before and there was music playing and they came on with this newsbreak that this accident had occurred. So it was something that it just really bothered her. She didn't like to have the radio on at all. She never would fly, had never flown, but never would fly. We had been in Colorado. We went back to New Jersey, oh gosh, I think Lea was maybe two. I don't think you remember. I think you were about two when we back. She wanted to see friends cause, I mean, we swooped out of there. I mean, boom, we were gone. We went back but we went by train. Travel by plane wasn't that commonplace. Families didn't generally do it. She wasn't about to try and drive it, so we did go back by train. We went back and saw some of the friends we had known. I think she needed some closure for that for her. She did make car trips. We drove to California. She took on three small kids and her mom came with us and we drove to California. Went to Disneyland. We did come to the Grand Canyon once with her.

TM: How old were you when you came to the Canyon?

CLN: Oh, man.

LLG: Was it on that same trip coming back or...

CLN: Probably.

LLG: I don't recall it, though.

CLN: Yeah, you were real little when we went to Disneyland. In fact, I think you were in a stroller. I don't know, I was probably seven maybe.

LLG: Yeah, that sounds right.

CLN: I was pretty small.

TM: Have you been back since?

CLN: Once. My husband and I came here. I don't even remember what year. That was on our honeymoon we came back by?

PN: Yeah.

CLN: Haven't been out since. Have you been?

Male: Never been.

CLN: I didn't think so. You came before Adam then, huh?

LLG: Umm hmm.

CLN: Our daughter-in-law, she was born in Russia, and one of the places she always wanted to come when she came to the U.S. was to see the Grand Canyon. The reason she met our son was because she came on a... When she was in the university in Russia she had opportunity to come to practice her English. Her girlfriend had come a couple of times to do that. You would work for the summer and then go back. So she did that. Different companies would hire you just to come out and that way they get the experience. So she came and she saw on the map that Colorado was close to the Grand Canyon. So she thought [laughter]... Yeah, that was one of the jobs, that was the closest job she could find that was gonna be close to the Grand Canyon. She wanted to see it. So it was interesting draw that that's one of the things, and that's how they ended up meeting.

TM: That's cool. So what else would you like to say, thinking about this now, looking back?

CLN: I think there's some solace in the fact that this led to the FAA actually turning around and becoming an organization to protect people in air travel. Knowing that this brought to a head what they probably knew they needed to do and the devastation that it created for everybody involved, the country as a whole. I mean, this was a big deal at the time. I think there's some comfort in that, to know that other people's lives are protected [pause] and we're not the only people who've lost someone in a plane crash, we're not the only people who lost somebody when you were young. It happens. Just the size, the monumentalness of this kind of thing. There's a lot of people whose lives were affected. I think of the pilots. You think of the people who were on the ground, on the radio control towers, who made the mistakes they made. Their lives were affected. They might not have lost somebody but their lives were affected. You can't not. [pause] It was funny, I was looking in some of the articles that Lea has found on the internet and there was one about the first climber who came down to try and find the wreckage. He was from Boulder, Colorado, which is so close to where we are. He was 20 years old and I thought, I wonder what does that feel like. I mean, that's gotta be so hard.

LLG: And all the people that had to try and recover, what they had to see and try and deal with in their own way.

TM: Yeah, the impact was huge, to the family, to mothers and fathers, to children. To the employees, to the flight controllers.

LLG: Oh, yeah.

TM: To rescuers at site.

LLG: Yeah.

TM: I think your point about the benefits to the many from the loss of a few, it doesn't make that loss any less...

CLN: It doesn't balance it out there's at least a...

TM: Oh, no. It's a huge point.

CLN: Yeah, there's something that comes out of it. There's something good that was a result of it.

TM: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. So those of us that fly today give thanks that we'll never be able to repay.

CLN: Yeah. This was nice. This memorial was probably something overdue. Not as a criticism to anybody, but it was nice meeting our dad's partner's son. We'd never met him. I'm sure we never met him. It was nice. It was nice to have a connection. He contacted Lea through the program here and was able to... We're going to exchange some information, some photographs. His mother never remarried. I mean, there was a loyalty at that point.

TM: Yeah. This is my second interview for today and the similarities in the stories... You people need to talk. We need to get out of the way. I'm amazed it's taken so long to have this happen. The similar issues, devastating, absolutely. One of the things that I mentioned to Raymond here earlier, there's a healing journey that will happen for the rest of your lives and your families' lives. The Park needs this information, the personal touch. We all have the *Life* magazines and the pieces of newspaper clippings, but we don't have the personal touch so as you continue on your journey, this sort of stuff which you've written down, your remembrances, it's really important to continue sending that material to Special Collections so they can continue working on their understanding of this event. It's a place in history, it's a place in the lives of America, the lives of the country. So I want to encourage you to keep thinking about that as well.

LLG: Okay.

TM: Anything else? Anything just thinking?

CLN: We tried to get our brother to write down something and we didn't, but we'll work on him.

TM: Yeah, please.

CLN: We'll see if we can't get him to send something we can send you. He was 9. He was at a different point. He was a male, a different loss.

Brian: You've written something up, haven't you?

CLN: I did and I gave it to him.

TM: Brian, can you introduce yourself, please, to the machine?

Brian: I'm Brian. Hi, machine. [laughter]

TM: I'm gonna have you sign this Deed of Gift here so you've given this interview. Anything else you were thinking that we should ask?

Brian: I found the fascination of the photograph of the Pacific Palisades. Did you share any of that on there?

LLG: Our father and his business associate were photographed the day before they got on that flight and someone was kind enough to send those photos to our mothers to be able to have the last photograph ever taken of them. Tom's son has been trying to figure out where that photograph was specifically taken. We knew it was taken in Santa Monica, California and so we'd shared a few emails in trying to pinpoint possibly where it was taken based on what we can see in the background.

TM: Would you know the date of the photograph?

LLG: Yeah, I have a letter from the Ream Corporation. Whoever took the photos in Santa Monica sent them to Ream and to our fathers superior. He wrote a letter stating that they had been taken the day before, on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1956 in Santa Monica. There were two other photographs apparently but I haven't located the others.

Male: They're very classy dressed. Very sharp dressers, right?

LLG: Yeah.

CLN: Yeah, full suits on a hot day in California. [laughs] One of the things that I wanted to add is when my brother was born, mom wanted to carry my dad's name down, but neither one of them wanted our brother to be named after him. So instead... My dad's first name is Ray. So they decided when I was born they were gonna carry it down but it was gonna be my middle name, R-a-e. In turn, my husband and I passed it to our son, and his middle name is Ray. He in turn passed it to their oldest daughter and her middle name is Rae.

Male: Oh, super.

CLN: We wanted to have something to be a memory.

TM: That's wonderful.

Male: I'll tell you, you have the best behaved grandchildren I've ever seen. [laughter]

LLG: They are sweeties, all of them.

TM: What was your name again?

PN: Paul. I'm Cathy's husband.

TM: Okay. Can I have you sit over here because I am interested to know some of your thoughts on how this impacted you. Cathy and you heard the story of what happened to her father and as your relationship...

PN: When I first met them, it was a family of women. It was the two girls, mom and grandma. So it was kind of scary for me [laughter] to go in. Her brother was in the service so I hadn't met him till the wedding?

CLN: It was after we were married.

PN: After the wedding. I knew there was a boy but, I mean, trying to go into this family of women was...

CLN: That were very strong.

PN: Very strong, I mean, extreme. You could tell, don't be messing with any of my family. She was a tough woman. The part was she never weakened. Right up till the end, her mind was as sharp as you can imagine. My son is the sports fan. I think it skips a generation, maybe. They could sit and talk about trades on football and baseball and hockey. She watched bowling and she could tell you who was making the most money. She was a phenomenal woman. You try to bring the good out of a horrible situation. Who knows what would have happened. I know I would have never met my wife had Ken not died because he would have risen ranks and become some famous engineer or something. But they definitely made... She was tough, she was definitely tough on the two girls. I mean, not mean tough, tough where she expected them to do and they did and both girls wound up being so independent. Nobody was gonna have to take care of them. It was good. It was fun because I came from New Jersey where it was a different atmosphere.

CLN: See, I think we were destined to meet. You came from New Jersey, I was born in New Jersey, we just happened to meet in Colorado.

PN: It was funny because where their house was in New Jersey is less than a mile than where my brother had settled in New Jersey. I mean, it's so weird to see how everything crosses. Our first house looked exactly like the house that they had bought in New Jersey. It was funny until we showed mom the picture of the house. Did you know?

CLN: Afterwards I thought about it but it wasn't at the time that I realized it was the same model.

PN: And here we're moving in the exact type house, yeah.

CLN: I mean, the floor plan was almost identical.

PN: Identical. So it's weird how the world works, how things just cross. So strange. But she was tough. She knew exactly what she was doing. That work didn't bother her. She needed to go back to work because there wasn't enough money so she went back to work. She was home when the kids were young, which was real impressive. We don't even watch that happen now.

TM: That's right.

PN: Yeah. That was an enormous thing, enormous thing.

CLN: And she helped us. She helped us with our daughter. She watched our daughter when I was going back to school to try and get some education. She watched her so that I could go to school.

PN: We got married in '71. It's funny because she said, "Oh, my dad made a \$1000 a month in '54 or '56."

CLN: '56.

PN: I came out here to Colorado, I was making \$633 a month and I thought I was rich.

TM: 1956 the average family was earning between \$3,500/\$4,000 a year so \$1000 a month...

CLN: That gives you an idea what he would have continued in his career. That's one of the things that was hard. Because of the situation, mom was very fearful. She did not go to a lawsuit. She sued them and settled out of court. She never went to court because she was so afraid that she would... I guess she didn't think jurors would have the sympathy and the understanding of the loss so when they offered her money she settled. The hard part for that, and the good and the bad, it was good for us kids in a way but in New Jersey at the time, which is where this took place, they had rules. A third of that money went straight to the kids and was put away in a trust fund. So even part of what she got was taken away from her for raising us. I remember saying, "Mom, take some of that money." She was a co-executor of the trust. She could say, "I need some of the money to help do this." She wouldn't take a penny. We had braces, she took that out of her income. We had this, she took it out of her income. She wouldn't take a penny out of that trust. She put the bank as the main executor and her as the secondary because she didn't want to use any of that money because that was to be for us kids.

Male: She was thinking about you.

CLN: Yep.

PN: But everybody turned out okay and she lived a long life. Watching the generations, the next generation down has done phenomenal. There's some click in there, some Lasby thing, that got passed down. So it was good. [pause] And you're tough. I knew you'd make it through. [laughter]

TM: What would you like to add? What was your name, again?

AN: Adam. So obviously, not having a grandpa's kind of hard. It's real hard. Growing up, my father's family was all in New Jersey so I didn't really have a grandfather. [emotional pause] I never knew him, I only knew of him. That position in the family I think is huge. It was hard. It was always exciting going back to New Jersey and seeing my father's family. That was always exciting. I know my grandfather on

that side was always so proud of everything that I did. I enjoyed sports. I enjoyed having a grandpa. Then when I went to Grandma Ada's, to Gigi's house... I didn't realize it till I was grown but she was kind of like my grandpa. My dad mentioned it earlier, she knew more about sports than anybody I knew in my life, seriously. She and I could have conversations about... The Broncos would have hired us. We would have won Super Bowls in the '80s and stuff and in the 90s [laughter] because the two of us could absolutely have conversations about in-depth theories of athletics. She loved her sports.

TM: Was she into sports as a young woman before she met your granddad?

AN: She skated.

CLN: Yeah. She was born in 1918, so not really. She roller skated, that was a big deal but, no. They grew up very, very poor. She was raised in the Depression and they were just lucky to have bread on the table. Her mom baked bread and killed chickens and the whole bit. So, no, she didn't have money for sports. I don't know, she just always loved sports.

AN: We would get babysat, my sister and I. While my parents would either be working or would be in an activity my sister and I would go over there. The loss was always hard. People always talked about losing grandpas. As you get older, the age progresses and so whatever that age is when you're, it's in your college or high school years, your friends are losing their grandparents. I had already lost one and basically had never had one. What else? I'm proud to have his name, my middle name, I think. [pause] My father had mentioned the butterfly effect of events that happened. Obviously, had it not happened I probably wouldn't be sitting here just because things you don't know, maybe they never knew, moved to Colorado and therefore my mom and my dad couldn't have met. So I mean, obviously I like being here, [laughter] but I feel bad for my uncle, who's not here. He lost his dad. [pause]

CLN: He was the same age as Adam's oldest son so he can really relate.

AN: I have four kids and both of my daughters are the age that my mom was. And my eldest boy is the age that my uncle had been. My wife and I were talking and if I was just gone one day to the next it changes everything. We're in a situation similar to what my grandmother and my grandfather were. My wife, she dedicates her life to the family and I do what I can to provide for the family. If I just disappeared it would just be... And not the stuff, it's not the stuff, it's the...

CLN: It's those little people.

AN: It's the walking my daughters down the aisle. [emotional] The fact that that's something I want so bad and I think it's such an important part of a woman's life. I feel for my mom because there was a struggle there when she got married. Obviously she told me this cause I wasn't there but your dad's there to walk you down the aisle. I want to be here to walk my daughters down the aisle. It's scary. It makes things real. I read an article that, I don't remember what it was, but like one in three people have a catastrophe in their life up or down a generation and this is our family's catastrophe. Something else that my mother told me when I was young, and I don't know if she ever remembers this, but you never know when goodbye is goodbye. So you don't leave in a bad situation because you don't want that to be your last memory, whether it's yours or someone else's that you were touching. But when it's you, you just don't let people walk in and out of your life without making sure that they leave knowing how you feel about them. I think that obviously came from that because when somebody's dying you prepare yourself, they prepare themselves, and you almost have this...

CLN: Opportunity.

Adam: ...opportunity to share. But when it's just taken from you you're like if I could have, or if I should have, or if I would have. It definitely makes me conscious of it when I say to my kids, or I'm going to work, that I want to make sure that I kiss and hug my kids and my wife. [emotional]

TM: That's a wonderful lesson.

AN: Sorry.

TM: No, don't apologize. That's good.

LLG: It's a realization more people need to know. We take too much for granted and there's a blink and it's gone. (pause)

TM: That's a pretty good realization that your grandfather would have taught you. And he did.

LLG: Yep. [pause]

TM: Would you like to add anything?

AN: It's my sister by another mother.

Yvonne: I think I would.

TM: Yes, please, thank you. Can you introduce yourself, please, cause we're gonna have to have you sign your name on the dotted line here.

YN: My name is Yvonne Newell and I am their sister by another mother [laughter]. I've been kind of adopted by the whole family. Lea is my best friend. I was thinking about this as we were driving up here today and going through the ceremony with the family. From my perspective, and I can only talk from my perspective, Lea and Cathy are two of the strongest women I've ever known in my entire life, and I'm 53 years old. I look at them and their strength and kind of want to be like them. Lea over the years has helped me with things that were not part of my upbringing, like sewing, changing a tire, things that because she didn't have a father. Her mother, her sister, her brother made sure she knew. I come from a family of all girls so I was never taught how to use power tools or how to cut grass cause my dad was there. Lea has used her knowledge and skills and abilities and passed those to me to help make me more independent. I'm independent in mind and thought, but it's helped me be more independent behaviorally in the things that I know how to do. Lea and I work together, which is how we met and became best friends. Today as I was driving up here I was thinking about Miguel Garcia, who was our boss at the time. When Lea and I first met and we were working for Miguel, I didn't know the story about their father. Lea was my peer and I was a staff manager but we both played different roles. I would sit and watch Lea interact with our boss. It was a different interaction and I couldn't put my finger on it. I would sit and watch them interact and I remember thinking they have a very different boss/employee relationship. The more I watched it, and I remember telling her this years ago, it was almost like a father/daughter relationship but it was a professional father/daughter relationship. Lea had put Miguel almost in the role of a father and he had put her almost in a role of a daughter.

Watching it I thought it was different and odd. Then when I learned the story of her father it made more sense.

TM: As if he was mentoring her would you think, or more than that?

YN: It wasn't a mentor relationship because I would have to say he mentored me. Their relationship was very different. It was very special to watch because it was almost father/daughter, daughter/father. Then when I met her husband it really solidified for me. Lea is so strong because one of the things she did for Miguel, we used to look at him and go "Seriously?" Before I became a staff manager she took care of everything for him. He had to do nothing. She took care of everything for him. Then when I became a staff manager we both started taking care of everything for him. He used to say all the time, "Have them do it, have them do it." One day we were in his office and she snapped [laughs]. She said, "There is no them. We are them. [laughter] There is no them. Yvonne and I are gonna have to do this." I was cracking up. From then on it became a joke between the three of us—we are them, there are no other people gonna make this happen. When I met Lea's husband, I realized that that relationship reminded me of her relationship with Miguel but it was a little different because Lea does everything in her marriage to Mike. It just made me wonder how much losing her father before she was born has played and influenced her relationships with different men in different roles in her life. I was thinking about that this morning as we were driving up here because to me, as her best friend and spending so much time around her, it shows itself in her relationship with men in different ways. Does that make sense?

TM: Yeah, absolutely. Lea, what do you think about that?

CLN: It was an absent spot in Lea's life, I don't think she had a clue. When you don't have that to look at you don't know what you're looking for and it's absent, you just know what your heart needs. So I don't think she knew what she was looking for. Mom didn't have brothers to come over and fulfill that role for our brother, for myself, or for my sister. There wasn't a man in our family that came forward. There were some that could have but none of them came forward to fill that spot. The male aspect in our life was basically nil.

YN: I think it was totally self-conscious on Lea's part, I really do, cause as I've said things to her over the years she'd be like, "Really? Nah." I'm like "Yeah." [laughter]

TM: That would make sense. [pause]

YN: That's about all I have to say.

TM: Thank you.

YN: Thank you. [pause]

TM: Anything else?

CLN: Not that I can think of.

LLG: No, me either.

TM: Well, this is, as we mentioned, an ongoing process and I really appreciate that you brought something that you've written. As time goes by and you write more... At one point if your brother would like to maybe do this similar event, maybe even over the phone or using Skype, if he's willing to talk about this that would be just wonderful to capture. Everyone who was so close as you were to this has to process this and you will be processing this till you die.

CLN: Yep.

TM: It's a lifetime journey. So if there is any way we can capture his story and his journey.

CLN: I think it'd be good for him.

LLG: Yeah. It would be difficult but it would be very good for him.

CLN: It would be very difficult, yep.

TM: He may just not want to go there. This is just gonna be too difficult.

CLN: But if we can even start with a written aspect maybe go from there maybe it would help him to release on some of this cause...

TM: That would be wonderful. Yeah. Anything we can do to help in that way. That would be great. I just wanted to thank you so much...

CLN: Thank you.

TM: ...for your time with this today. Thank you.

LLG: Thank you.

Male: You are an awesome family.

TM: I gotta say...

Female: Thank you.

TM: ...look what your dad's done.

CLN: Yes, oh, my dad would be thrilled. Yeah, my dad would be thrilled.

Male: Tom, if you guys are okay could we take a picture of all the Rays?

Female: Sure.

TM: Thank you very much.