

EI-1468

FULL NAME: RAYMUND DEVLIN

BIRTHDATE: OCTOBER 3RD, 1946

INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2007

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 61

RUNNING TIME: 74:45

INTERVIEWER: KEVIN DALEY

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME AS ABOVE

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: AMANDA CARELLA

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: NOT YET REVIEWED

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE:

SCOTLAND, 1949

AGE: 3

SHIP:

PORT: GREENOCK

RESIDENCES:

SCOTLAND, AIRDRIE

UNITED STATES, EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES, KENILWORTH, NEW JERSEY

DALEY: Good afternoon. This is Kevin Daley for the National Parks Service in the Ellis Island Recording Studio on Ellis Island, on September 18th, 2007, with a special interview with Raymund Devlin, who is an EMT ranger at Ellis Island and who is also an immigrant from Scotland, who came from Scotland when he was three years old. Uh, he's been with the National Parks Service for three years and he's on the verge of retirement – he'll be retiring at the end of the week – so we thought it would be important to have an interview with somebody who was both an employee and an immigrant, seeing as this is Ellis Island. So, thank you.

DEVLIN: You're, quite welcome

DALEY: Uh, can I just get, uh, you to – to – properly spell your name?

DEVLIN: It's R-A-Y-M-U-N-D.

DALEY: Okay. And it's D-E-V-L-I-N?

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: Okay. And, you came to the United States when you were three years old?

DEVLIN: Yes, co-correct.

DALEY: Do you remember anything about Scotland? Or wh – first of all, where in Scotland did you come from?

DEVLIN: Uh, a small town outside of Glasgow called Airdrie.

DALEY: Can you spell that?

DEVLIN: A-I-R-D-R-I-E. It's roughly halfway between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

DALEY: Okay, um, do you remember anything about the town?

DEVLIN: Not – not at that age, I didn't. I – I remember basically the boat, coming into New York.

DALEY: [interposed] Oh, you came by boat?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah

DALEY: Oh.

DEVLIN: Um, my grandmother, my father, my mother and myself, (clears throat), um, entered the United States in through New York, and settled in Newark, New Jersey.

DALEY: Okay, um – let me just move the microphone a little bit (moves microphone). Okay, um, but – from what you've learned afterwards, what kind of a place was your hometown?

DEVLIN: Lo– I – I had been back in 1958, and from what I remember of that, it was a quaint little town. Very much like you'd see in – in some of these Agatha Christie movies, of the thatched cottages, and – but the town has grown up since then, um, grandparents – um, my grandfather and grandmother – owned a pub, in the uh, the heart of the town itself.

DALEY: And how, about how many people lived there when you were living there? Do you, a – a rough number?

DEVLIN: Rough number? Probably about thirteen thousand, maybe (sighs)?

DALEY: And was it like a fis – like a fishing village?

DEVLIN: No, it – it – it's way far from the coast. It's – it's almost the center of the – of the – like, the country.

DALEY: Oh! So, what – what drove the town's economy?

DEVLIN: Well the mining industry, up the road.

DALEY: Oh.

DEVLIN: Um, White Rig [ph], um, Longriggend. Most of the – most of the people who, in – my father included – was a miner.

DALEY: And what, what were they mining?

DEVLIN: Coal. Um, I had spoken to cousins recently, and my grandfather and all of 'em, grew up in – in – uh – the plains, and worked the White Rig, uh, Coal Mines –

DALEY: [interposed] That's the name of the – the coal mines?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah. White rig.

DALEY: And was it – uh, which kind of coal was it, do you remember?

DEVLIN: Believe it was anthracite.

DALEY: So that was uh, historically also, uh, a long time coal-mining region?

DEVLIN: Oh yeah, definitely. Definitely.

DALEY: Well, let's get your birth date.

DEVLIN: October 3rd, 1946.

DALEY: And can you give me your mother's and father's name?

DEVLIN: My dad was James Devlin. My mother's maiden name was McAlin – it Veronica McAlindin. Um, they were married on my mother's sixteenth birthday. And I was a product, four years later, on her twentieth.

DALEY: Hmm. And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

DEVLIN: None.

DALEY: Ah. And were there a lo – uh, many generations going back? Did your grandparents or great-grandparents living with you?

DEVLIN: No. My – my grandmother was the only one, my grandfather was killed – My grandfather, um, before they had the pub, was a hansom cab driver – a carriage driver – and um, was out on a foggy night one night and went in the river and drowned (clears throat). My grandmother carried on the – th –the business, and uh, I guess she decided, uh, that my mom should have a man in the family, and they, you know, found my dad – he was sixteen years older than my mom. And I – (laughs) you got that look, Kev –

DALEY: [interposed] No

DEVLIN: --Um, but um, they seemed happy at first, and then they immigrated to the United States. My dad was one of eleven, um, I think he was the last – one of the last surviving, and he died at the age of fifty-seven.

DALEY: So did you have a large extended family? Cousins and aunts and uncles?

DEVLIN: Just recently, in 19–I believe in 1990, I found my dad's side of the family when we went back, and uh, very large family. Very large family.

DALEY: And can you give me your – your gra – what was your grandmother's name?

DEVLIN: McAlindin. M-C Capital A-L-I-N-D-I-N. Uh, first name was Elizabeth. My grandfather's name was also James McAlindin. That was on my mom's side. My dad's side was Edward Devlin and Bridget Dev – uh – Devlin , and I believe her last – her maiden name was Quinn.

DALEY: So you've done fairly extensive research into –

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah. I have

DALEY: --How far back you go?

DEVLIN: Yeah. Um, they s– my grandmother on my dad's side came over from Tyrone, Ireland to work the mines, but we can't find – any – any, uh records of that before then.

DALEY: And, were you brought up in a religious household?

DEVLIN: Yeah. We were brought up as Catholics –

DALEY: Oh, yeah?

DEVLIN: --Which is kind of funny for being from Scotland, 'cause most of them are –are, uh, high Episcopalians.

DALEY: Hmm. Did you notice any prejudice, or were you treated differently than the other folk?

DEVLIN: Um, not really. The way they get around it is by the colors that you wear, um, over there. If it – if it's blue, you're a Protestant, if it's green you're a Catholic. Celtic wears Green, Rangers – the football teams – wear blue – so you know the difference between – it doesn't make any difference nowadays, but back then it did.

DALEY: Oh. Okay. Did the – in general, did the Protestants and Catholics get along well?

DEVLIN: They kinda shunned each other – I mean, they were pleasant to each other but they – they didn't go out of their way for each other.

DALEY: Did that affect your – the uh, the business though – the pub, the inn?

DEVLIN: I so – no –

DALEY: [interposed] Oh.

DEVLIN: --No.

DALEY: It was sort of a common ground?

DEVLIN: Yeah, it was – it was common ground. It was neutral territory, I guess you'd want to call it. (Laughs)

DALEY: And, do you know why your parents decided to come over?

DEVLIN: Not really. And I – I -- never delved into it either, you know, I mean, I was brought up in the European fam – uh, way, you don't ask questions, you just do what you were told. You know. (Clears throat)

DALEY: But you –you say you remember, uh the trip into New York. Do you remember anything before?

DEVLIN: Vaguely, just vaguely, you know I – in – in –even the trip in New York I remember sitting on a dock, waiting to get on the boat in England. It was a foggy night and my grandmother's sitting there with me, that's – that's about all I can remember.

DALEY: Well it's interesting also, because that was almost the era of jet, or plane travel to the United States –

DEVLIN: [interposed] Right

DALEY: --And you still came over on a boat --

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: --The traditional method. Do you remember the name of the boat?

DEVLIN: (sighs) No.

DALEY: And wh -- again, who all came over?

DEVLIN: It was my grandmother, my dad, my mom and myself.

DALEY: And do you know, was it the tr -- the traditional steerage, or second class, or -- do you remember the accommodations you -- you came with?

DEVLIN: We came over as -- as second-class at that time. My grandparents had been over before, 'cause I had found their records here. My grandmother came over in 1916 as a young girl, and worked as a scullery maid in a hotel in Newark and then met my grandfather here, both from Scotland, married, um -- and it was funny, because the day they got married, instead of going on a traditional honeymoon, went right back to work, and that was it, you know? Um, then they both went back to Scotland and -- and uh, you know --

DALEY: [interposed] And which grandparents were these?

DEVLIN: --Lived there. This was on my mother's side.

DALEY: Okay. Oh, that's interesting. Do you know the boats -- the dates that they came, and the boats that they came in? And if they came onto Ellis Island -- through Ellis Island?

DEVLIN: Uh, my grandmother came through Ellis Island --I found her records -- I haven't found my grandfather's yet.

DALEY: And your grandmother's name again was --?

DEVLIN: McAlindin. Actually, back then it was Mullholland: M-U-H-O-L-L-A-N-D.

DALEY: And the first name was --?

DEVLIN: Elizabeth. Um (pause), my grandmother --from what my mother says -- she came over on the Mauritania.

DALEY: So, uh, in total, how long were they here?

DEVLIN: A matter of maybe five years before they went back.

DALEY: And did they have any children while they were here?

DEVLIN: My mom, uh, no, my mom is actually born over there, and um, I found my mother's – uh – birth certificate, and she was adopted by my grandmother and grandfather. (Pause) Her original name was Fulton. I don't know any other rest of the story, 'cause my mom is, you know, in a nursing home, and – and that's all I can get, and going through the papers I found this.

DALEY: So, what do you remember coming into New York Harbor?

DEVLIN: Just being greeted by – by, um – not relatives but friends we had known that had immigrated before us, and staying at their house in East Orange until the closing – or whatever you – you did when you bought a house back then – was done in Newark, and we moved into that house on – on Poe Avenue, in Vailsburg, section of Newark.

DALEY: Well what – uh – now this would have been in 1949?

DEVLIN: 1949, 1950, by the time we moved into the house, yeah.

DALEY: So, technically Ellis Island was open – did you have to come through Ellis Island?

DEVLIN: No, because all the paperwork then was done in the embassies, in the larger cities of the towns. So we had gone through, um, Glasgow, at the American Embassy there, and was processed there.

DALEY: So what was your route after you came into the harbor? Did you just dock and get off the boat?

DEVLIN: Right, and like I say, friends of – of, you know – former friends that – that my parents knew put us in cars and brought us over to, uh, to New Jersey.

DALEY: And how did you get from your town – the town where you were born – to the port? And what was the port?

DEVLIN: The port was Greenock [alternate: Greenwich]. In – in Scotland, so you had to take a train from Airdrie to Glasgow, switch trains, and go from Glasgow to Greenock.

DALEY: So, all the, paperwork that traditionally was done on Ellis Island, all the inspections and all of that was done –

DEVLIN: [interposed] Right

DALEY: -- Was done in Scotland?

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: So it was pretty simple once you got here?

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: And how did you get from, uh, well was it a dock, just, uh, one of the many docks in Mahattan

DEVLIN: I think it was pier eighty at that time, and they were still open, bringing in passenger ships.

DALEY: And, uh, who met you?

DEVLIN: Um. A family called the McDades [ph]. They lived in East Orange, I remember living in their house.

DALEY: Were they friends of your –

DEVLIN: They were fri– acquaintances and friends of – of – of – uh my grandmother, who had emigrated before.

DALEY: So, uh, you immediately went to New Jersey –

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: And what was the situation there? What did your parents do, you were living with another family at first –

DEVLIN: Right, mm-hmm –

DALEY: Did your father find work right away?

DEVLIN: Yeah, my father found work in – uh – in East Orange, it was called, uh, Lincoln Rug Company. And what they did was they'd come to the house and pick up your rugs, take 'em there, clean them, and rinse them, or whatever else they had to do –mend them, and sent them back, and – and laid them on the rugs – you know, rug – laid the rugs on the floors for the people after they were finished.

DALEY: And what was your father's specific job?

DEVLIN: Ah – he worked in the maintenance department, repairing the equipment.

DALEY: And wha – did your mother basically work in the house?

DEVLIN: Mom worked for Bamberger's, and my grandmother raised me. While they were working.

DALEY: What'd your mother do at Bamberger's?

DEVLIN: She was a sales girl.

DALEY: And Bamberger's is a – was a very large, uh

DEVLIN: Department store –

DALEY: --General department store. Was that in Newark?

DEVLIN: Yeah. Yes.

DALEY: You don't remember what street it was on, do you?

DEVLIN: Sure do. It was on Market Street, and Halsey.

DALEY: Oh. I'm sure it's quite different now.

DEVLIN: Yeah. I think it was bought out by the Macy company, and then it closed down.

DALEY: Oh yeah, at one point it was Macy's/Bamberger's.

DEVLIN: Right, right.

DALEY: And – so basically, what did you do all day when you first got here? Did you go into any sort of nursery school or --?

DEVLIN: No, my grandmother pretty much raised me, took care of me until it was time for me to go to school, I, you know, turned the age of five or six.

DALEY: And was this – uh – a one family neighborhood?

DEVLIN: [interposed] No, this is three-family houses.

DALEY: And was it an immigrant neighborhood?

DEVLIN: Yeah, I could say it was because we had Greeks, we had Jews, we had Italians, we had Polish all up and down the street, with kids, and we all got along

great. In fact, I still keep in touch with a couple of the guys, the Greek guys – uh the Giavanus' [ph].

DALEY: And what was the street name, again?

DEVLIN: Poe Avenue.

DALEY: In East Orange?

DEVLIN: No, that was in Vailsburg.

DALEY: Vailsburg?

DEVLIN: Yeah, it's on the border of South Orange Avenue – uh—South Orange?

DALEY: Okay. So, how long did you stay at home before you went to school? What age would you start?

DEVLIN: (sighs) Um, ah –my mom had me in kindergarten for a while, I didn't like that 'cause the rest of the kids were all out playing, and I'd rather be out with them instead of going to – to – kindergarten, so my grandmother said she would, you know, let me stay there, uh, with her. Oh, we lived with her anyway, but she would watch after me if I didn't want to go to the kindergarten, and then I went to first grade at Sacred Heart, Vailsburg.

DALEY: So, uh, just to get the picture correct, it was a three-family house--?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Right

DALEY: Did you live on the first, second, or third floor?

DEVLIN: We lived on the first floor.

DALEY: And when you went to school, how was that –what was your impression of it?

DEVLIN: (sighs) I – I don't remember. You know, school was school. I wasn't one of the brightest bulbs in the class, but, you know know. I got through.

DALEY: [interposed] But being a – well you had the advantage of knowing English

–

DEVLIN: Right

DALEY: Did you have a pronounced accent?

DEVLIN: Yes, I did.

DALEY: Did you set that off? Or, because it was a –an immigrant neighborhood, did it really not matter?

DEVLIN: It kinda set us off at first, and then I – I kinda lost the accent all together. Um, the only time it comes back with me is if I'm back with my cousins, or even with my mom for a few minutes, it'll come back. Or if I – uh – get angry enough. Then the wife and kids know to stay away from me. (Laughs)

DALEY: But in general, growing up in that neighborhood was – was it – did everybody get along with each other?

DEVLIN: Everybody got along with each other, everybody looked out for each other, um, it was one of those kinds of neighborhood where if you did something wrong, it got back to your parents before you even got home, you know? And the neighbors took care of it. (Laughs)

DALEY: And all during this time, uh, let's say in grammar school, did your father work for the carpet company and your mother work for Bamberger?

DEVLIN: No, um, dad and –mom and dad separated and divorced when I was about seven years old. Um, my dad went and worked for B. Altman & Co. another large department store in their maintenance division, and my mom went on to – into the banking industry and worked for, uh, Fidelity Union Trust Company and then went to Kislak and Realtor, working in their uh, computer department. When they used the old tabulation cards back then.

DALEY: And this is all in New Jersey?

DEVLIN: Yeah, Newark. My dad was – was – started out in East Orange at Altman's, and then they moved up to Short Hills. So he worked in the Short Hills store for the longest. He was with them for over seventeen years.

DALEY: Now, um, just getting back to family life, regular family life, did you bring – did your parents bring any – uh – physical – uh, other than clothing – did they bring any physical reminders of Scotland? Did they bring photographs, or religious objects?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Oh, yeah. Yeah, they brought their – the – the photo albums of – of – of Airdrie, and – and family that was left behind in Scotland. Yeah. They had that. And some of the furniture they had shipped also.

DALEY: So they came with more than the typical immigrant and --just a sack on their back --?

DEVLIN: Right. Right, right.

DALEY: -- They were able to bring a lot of --

DEVLIN: Right

DALEY: --A lot of pieces of furniture and things like that.

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: Did they bring their customs -- religious customs or --

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah.

DALEY: --social customs --?

DEVLIN: Yes, definitely.

DALEY: Did you -- did you notice that Christmas was different for you than for other people?

DEVLIN: Christmas was celebrated the same, but we also celebrated *Hogmanay*, which is New Year's.

DALEY: Oh, can you spell that, please? (Laughs)

DEVLIN: (Laughs) No. I can't --I have a rough enough time pronouncing it.

DALEY: *Hogmatay?*

DEVLIN: *Hogmanay.*

DALEY: *Hogmanay?*

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: And what was that?

DEVLIN: Um, the custom on that was -- was -- was you brought a coal, a piece of coal into the house when you visited somebody, and it was a symbol that the house would never go cold, you know, there was always a piece of coal to put on the fires.

DALEY: And --so that was the New Year's?

DEVLIN: That was the New Year's.

DALEY: And Christmas was – was Christmas pretty much the same?

DEVLIN: Um, in my house it was celebrated pretty much like the Americans did, but back home in Scotland it's not – it's more of a religious holiday than it is, um, the gift-giving that we do here.

DALEY: Oh, it would be like uh, mostly a church-service and eating.

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: Oh, okay. And in terms of eating, did your – did your mother bring over her style of cooking?

DEVLIN: Um, yeah, she did. And fortunately, um, not far from Newark is a town called Carnie, that was settled by the Scots and there was a lot of Scottish butchers there, so every Saturday we would go over and -- and get, uh the meats, and the black puddings, and the pork pies, you know and the scones and anything else we wanted. So we pretty much ate what we ate back home in Scotland.

DALEY: And, what is black pudding?

DEVLIN: It's – it's blood pudding.

DALEY: Oh.

DEVLIN: It's –it's blood mixed with a lot of spices and other meats. And put into, uh, sheep's intestine.

DALEY: Hmm.

DEVLIN: (Laughs)

DALEY: Sounds like, uh, *haggis*? Is – is?

DEVLIN: *Haggis* is pretty much like that, but *haggis* is made with, uh, an oatmeal, and put into a sheep's stomach. And that – we only eat that on – on Robert Burn's birthday, which is January the 20th.

DALEY: Oh, that was another –special?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah, that was another custom. You had, the piping in of the *haggis*, you know, and you toasted – you toasted the *haggis*.

DALEY: So this would be a fa – a big family affair, to have it--?

DEVLIN: Yeah, it would be a big family affair, yeah.

DALEY: And was there any – were there any special saints days that you observed?

DEVLIN: There was one saint, Saint Mungo, but we didn't observe it. Or Saint Columbine, either one, but we didn't – we – it wasn't – a – a church day that we went to church, and you know it's just like wake up in the morning, "Oh! Today's St. Mungo's Day," you know, "Oh, well." (Laughs)

DALEY: Was he the patron saint of something special?

DEVLIN: I believe he was, I don't know what though. I didn't – I didn't delve into it, you know?

DALEY: And was Easter -- pretty much the same?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Easter was celebrated. We celebrated Easter, yeah.

DALEY: Pretty uh– in a special Scottish way, or --?

DEVLIN: No, we – you know, the regular – lamb, with mashed potatoes and meat jellies.

DALEY: Hm. And Thanksgiving, was that any special --?

DEVLIN: That wasn't celebrated in Scotland, that was new to us when we came here.

DALEY: Did you – did you li– uh -- did you take it –take it on as soon as you got here?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. My mom was a great cook. But, unfortunately she would cook for an army, and I'd be eating turkey for two weeks later, and got tired of it, you know? (Laughs)

DALEY: So basically, you seemed to– did you – do you feel that you came into becoming American fairly easy?

DEVLIN: I thi – I guess I did, as growing up as a youngster. You know, coming in at an age where you could a person into what you wanted. So I kinda adapted the American Way real quick. Um, you know I uh – I still remember all my friends and having a great time with them. And my parents would you know, say "Well, we don't do that in Scotland," well, we do it here. (Laughs) So it's like, "Get with the program."

DALEY: Did you parents and your grandmother adapt, uh, a little bit harder? Was it harder for them?

DEVLIN: [interposed] I think my grandmother did. My mom kind of adapted quick, y'know? My dad it was kind of hard to – to find out, because I, we were seven when they divorced. And I only saw him you know, a few hours a week. So, it was kinda hard to – to judge how he adapted. But, you know, as I grew older, I think back now and –yeah he kinda adapted also. You know?

DALEY: And --?

DEVLIN: I think my dad missed the old country. Um, he never did become a citizen. I st – In fact I still have his green card when he passed. Um, he uh, was always kind of hoping of going back. But he never did. He never was able to.

DALEY: Did you mother become a citizen?

DEVLIN: Mom did, yeah. And I – she became a naturalized citizen, and, uh, I believe there I was about seven and a half, maybe eight, when she took me down to the naturalization offices and I became a naturalized citizen also.

DALEY: And did your grandmother, also?

DEVLIN: Uh, I believe she did. I think I remember seeing her naturalization papers.

DALEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So, after grammar school, where did you go next?

DEVLIN: I went to Oratory Prep in Summit. Um, I didn't –didn't care that much for it, you know, it was a lot of the religious life of the – of uh, brought up by – it was brothers that taught there.

DALEY: Which order? Do you remember?

DEVLIN: [interposed] It was just Christian brothers, that's all I remember. I think I lasted six months. And I said, you know "This isn't for me, I'd rather be in a public school, with the rest of" – you know, forget the social graces of being with – with girls –

DALEY: [interposed] Oh, so it was an all-boys

DEVLIN: Yeah, it was an all-boys school.

DALEY: Was the grammar school boys and girls?

DEVLIN: Yes.

DALEY: And it --Was it --uh

DEVLIN: It was a religious school --

DALEY: Nuns

DEVLIN: --Uh, nuns, yeah. Sisters of Charity.

DALEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And so did, after you -- went from high scho -- the religious high school, where did you go after that?

DEVLIN: Went to Valesburg high. Um, and I -- yeah. Graduated there. Um, was working for a while, met my wife on a blind date. Um, right away I knew she was the one, and we got married about -- when I was about nineteen. My wife was eighteen.

DALEY: What's her name?

DEVLIN: Joanne. [ph]

DALEY: And her maiden name?

DEVLIN: Her name -- her last name was Sturtevant: S-T-U-R-T-E-V-A-N-T.

DALEY: Is that German?

DEVLIN: It's Dutch.

DALEY: Dutch, huh.

DEVLIN: Her grandfather was Dutch, and her grandmother was right off the boat from Roscommon, Ireland.

DALEY: Oh. So she was the children of immigrants?

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: And what -- did she live in the same town that you did?

DEVLIN: No, she lived in Kenilworth, New Jersey, and we met through a -- a mutual -- met through a friend of mine. Um, her sister was in the hospital, and his mom was in the hospital bed next to her, and he started dating Susan and said to me, "C'mon, we're going over Sue's house and she has an older sister." (clears throat) And we --I walked in that night, made a complete idiot of myself figured, "I'm never gonna see these girls again," and he called me up about three nights later and said, "We're goin' over Sue's and Joanne's house," he said, "Joanne would like to know if you're comin' back, she'd

like to see you again.” And uh, that’s how it started. We were married about a year and a half later.

DALEY: And, uh, which town were you married in?

DEVLIN: Kenilworth, New Jersey. Um, St. Theresa’s [Church].

DALEY: And, uh, just going back to high school and grammar school, were you involved in sports – organized sports or after-school activities?

DEVLIN: [interposed] No, I – I was never a sports – um – enthusiast. I couldn’t see the thrill of getting – running down the – the – the football field and gettin’ tackled by twelve guys, you know? It – It just didn’t appeal to me. And, and even now, you know, I’ll sit down and watch a game but I can – I can let it go or not, you know it’s not –

DALEY: How would you occupy after school or summers?

DEVLIN: I worked a lot. I worked in a butcher’s shop after school, and durin’ the summers I would – I would work every day. You know, uh, eight in the morning ‘til seven or eight o’clock at night, and then, uh, I’d park cars after that. You know, I just – I been workin’ a lot, that’s all.

DALEY: So you basically just kept busy –

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: And did you contribute this money towards the – the running of the house?

DEVLIN: [interposed] The hou – Some I put in – into the running of the house, some I put aside for – for the insurance when I had a car; I’d pay for my own insurance and the registration of a car.

DALEY: So what happened after high school?

DEVLIN: Um, I worked for Worthington Pump, in Harrison. I worked the multi-press and, uh –

DALEY: [interposed] Is – is that a machine --?

DEVLIN: [interposed] It’s like a drill-press, with four heads on it, and four different attachments to it, so you just went right down the line and put a hole in here, shanford [ph] it out here, threaded it here, and – you know – so on. Um, got married and Uncle Sam came knocking on the door and I was drafted.

DALEY: Oh, which uh – which branch of the service?

DEVLIN: [interposed] This is 19 – Army.

DALEY: And which year?

DEVLIN: 1960 – December, uh – let's see, I remember leaving December the 7th, 1966.
The Day of Infamy. (Laughs)

DALEY: And do you uh – what was the induction?

DEVLIN: I was taken to Norkrose [ph], inducted into the military, and then taken down to Fort Dix. And did my uh, zero week, basic training, um, and my AIT, Advanced Individual Training on Fort Dix. And was shipped overseas from there.

DALEY: Which – whe – which country did you go to?

DEVLIN: Uh, I went to Germany, and uh, was stationed with the Fourteenth Armored Cavalry, and we uh, patrolled the border between the east and west at the Fulda Gap.

DALEY: Of the which gap?

DEVLIN: Fulda Gap

DALEY: Wow.

DEVLIN: Um, The Fulda Gap was – was the sof– was your – the uh place they would come through. The Russians would come through if they were ever gonna come through because it was built like that.

DALEY: In Germany?

DEVLIN: [interposed] In Germany. There was a – the vision of – of, uh, Russian tanks on the other side of the border.

DALEY: And which – which – uh, can you locate that for me? Is it near –

DEVLIN: [interposed] It's a hundred and eighteen kilometers northwest of Frankfurt. Um, we were considered a bastard outfit – excuse my French – but, we – after twenty minutes, the fourteenth cav no longer existed. Um, we were just there to hold them back until the Third Armored Division came up from behind us. And they were able to hold them off until they got the American civilians out of Frankfurt and any of the lar – other larger towns.

DALEY: So you – you mean you were expendable?

DEVLIN: We were expendable.

DALEY: Hm. That must have been uh – a heavy burden.

DEVLIN: Um –

DALEY: It must have – It must have sat on your mind a lot to, uh –

DEVLIN: Yeah, but I think we kinda pushed it to the back of our minds, so that we wouldn't go absolutely crazy thinking about it, you know. Um, we were allowed out – we were on twenty four hour alert, and once a year – er, once a month, excuse me – they would, uh, blow the alert whistle and we would have to go out to the – out to the border itself with the tanks, and the one one threes, one one fours, mortar crews, everybody just took off –

DALEY: And what was your job, specifically?

DEVLIN: I started out as a loader on the tank. Actually, I went overseas as a truck driver, combat truck driver. We were all trained for Vietnam. My orders were for the First Cavalry Division in Vietnam, and uh, they took us to the airbase and we were fogged in, so they drove us four hours down to Dover Airforce Base in Maryland and as we were getting on the plane, they pulled all our orders and gave us new orders. Everybody went to Germany except one guy, he went to South Korea. So we were all trained as – as – as transportation. Truck drivers. And then when I got overseas, the sergeant picks us up at the train station, and I says, "What kind of trucks we got?" He says, "This isn't trucks, this is tracks," he said, "you're in an armored cav unit." So, I learned to drive a tank.

DALEY: Oh, you were a driver?

DEVLIN: I was a driver. Started out as a loader, and then when our driver rotated back to the States, they said, "You wanna learn how to drive a ta – track?" and I said, "Sure, why not?" I drove everything else. I had a license everywhere from a Jeep all the way up to tractor trailer, I might as well learn how to drive a track.

DALEY: Well, I – I understand that uh, that the people – usually the people who are in the Armored Divisions or tanks, or uh, have to go through Fort Knox, you didn't --?

DEVLIN: [interposed] No, not if you're O.J.T.ing: On the Job Training.

DALEY: Oh.

DEVLIN: Um, in the military you have two M.O.S.s: a primary and a secondary –

DALEY: M.O.S.?

DEVLIN: Yeah, Military Occupational Schooling. My primary was truck driver-transportation, and the secondary came as O.J.T.ing, on tracks. Then what they did

was they had their own – um – uh, tank school there. So they – you we – for a month, you were sent to this school. And learn how to drive tracks.

DALEY: And which kind of tank did you --?

DEVLIN: I had the – the main battle tank, an M60-A1.

DALEY: And what – was that given a name?

DEVLIN: Um, yeah, it was a “Patton.”

DALEY: Patton? Okay. And how long were you with that?

DEVLIN: Eighteen months.

DALEY: And in all that time, did you ever feel that something bad was about to go down? Did it ever get --?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Um, we were allowed to have to have family there, and my wife came over. My wife was – is trained as a nurse, and she gave up her job to come over to be in – with me in Fulda – uh, my son was conceived there. And uh, the night he was born, in August, was when Russia invaded Czechoslovakia. And I was in Frankfurt, 118 kilometers away from my duty station, and uh, that’s when I really felt like something was going down. (Clears throat) Uh, fortunately, a buddy of mine came down, quick, in his – in his car – he had a license, uh, an international license – I gave him a shout, he came down, picked me up after my son was born, and we went back and they went right out to the field, and they had taken my tank out there and waited for me. So we just sat on the border, waiting to see what was going to happen from there.

DALEY: And how long were you on this stage of emergency?

DEVLIN: Two weeks.

DALEY: So, you were basically living on the border for those two weeks?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah, yep.

DALEY: And – to go back – back in Frankfurt is your wife?

DEVLIN: Um, well fortunately – I mean, we had ambulances going back and forth all the time and uh – uh – no, she didn’t come back by ambulance, that’s right – my buddy, Bud Fent, who had came down for me – his wife drove down, and picked her up and brought her back.

DALEY: To Frankfurt. But in Frankfurt –

DEVLIN: [interposed] No, from Frankfurt to Fulda, I'm sorry.

DALEY: Oh. And what was your – and your wife was employed as a nurse?

DEVLIN: Before she went overseas, yeah, over there they had the – they had to hire the German Nationals, that was an agreement between the *Bundes* [*Bundesregierung*], the German Government, and the American Government.

DALEY: So, did – was you wife working?

DEVLIN: No, she was a stay-at-home.

DALEY: Oh. And she lived on the base?

DEVLIN: No, we lived off on the German economy. If –um – if you had a dependent with you, you could live off base. But you couldn't live too far.

DALEY: What was the name of the town that you lived in?

DEVLIN: Fulda.

DALEY: Fulda?

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: And, uh, you said your son was conceived and born there?

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: Hmm, okay.

DEVLIN: He has dual citizenship –

DALEY: Oh, I was about to ask, is there something special because he was born there?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah. Yeah, in fact, his birth certificate is signed by Dean Rusk [ph].

DALEY: And what's his name?

DEVLIN: Michael Patrick.

DALEY: And what was the – uh –date of his birth?

DEVLIN: (sighs) Huh, you got me there. I know it's August uh, 1969.

DALEY: And how many other children do you have?

DEVLIN: I have another – I have a daughter, Heather. Heather and Mary. And she was born eighteen months later –

DALEY: And where was she born?

DEVLIN: In the United States. I had – I had gotten out of the service on Dec – November the seventeenth of '68.

DALEY: And did you end your service in Germany?

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: So this is, what year again that you ended this – your term of service?

DEVLIN: 1968.

DALEY: And what did you do after that?

DEVLIN: Um, worked in a pharmaceutical company, uh, one of my wife's relatives, uh, worked in there – she was able to get me into the processing plant area of it, they made, uh, ampicillins and man-made penicillins.

DALEY: And what – what was your job?

DEVLIN: I was – worked in the, uh, processing area. I was one of the processors, mixing the chemicals, in you know, the batches.

DALEY: And where were you living at this point?

DEVLIN: Paskateway [ph], New Jersey (clears throat)

DALEY: That's near Rutgers.

DEVLIN: Right, right, not far from Hoe's Lane, where you can – right into – into Rutgers.

DALEY: And how long did you stay –oh, what was the name of the company, again?

DEVLIN: Beecham Pharmaceutical.

DALEY: Okay.

DEVLIN: It's part of uh, Beecham – uh, Smith, Klein, Beecham now?

DALEY: Oh, okay.

DEVLIN: Yeah. But at that time it was just Beecham by itself.

DALEY: Yeah, there's a lot of pharmaceutical companies out there –

DEVLIN: Right.

DALEY: --In that area. Uh, so how long were you with Beecham?

DEVLIN: Oh, roughly about (sighs) – I'd say, eight months, almost a year? Um, in the mean time, my dad had passed away, and um, B. Altman contacted me and asked me if I wanted to work for them in my dad's slot. Uh – but I had to get my fireman's license to work on the boilers. And I said, "Sure, why not?" And I went and worked for them for five years.

DALEY: So that brings us to the mid-70's.

DEVLIN: Yeah. And, uh, from there I went on to be a service technician. For washers, dryers, dry cleaning equipment. Um, you know, presses in these – uh – dry cleaner's establishments. –

DALEY: Mm-hmm

DEVLIN: – Repairing those. I did that for twenty years.

DALEY: And all the time were you living in Peskataway?

DEVLIN: No, I had moved down, back down to Kenilworth. Um, we bought – we bought a house in South Plainfield after. And it was too far for my wife to bring the kids down to their doctor, and her family lived in Pes – in Kenilworth, and uh, so we moved back to Kenilworth, and we've been there since – oh, I guess, almost thirty something – thirty-two, thirty-three years?

DALEY: And you mentioned your father passed away?

DEVLIN: Yeah, my dad passed away, yeah.

DALEY: And he was – he was fairly young when he passed away?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Yeah, fifty-seven years old.

DALEY: And the cause was his former occupation, I believe?

DEVLIN: Yeah, my – from the mines, he had black lung. And, um, when he passed, that was when they had the, uh, Hong Kong Flu epidemic, and his one lung just couldn't take it. He was a heavy smoker also. But, uh, I think the black lung contributed to it,

and then, you know, I got a phone call from the hospital saying he was being transported, and when I got there, he had passed.

DALEY: And how – how – how long did your mother live?

DEVLIN: Mom's still alive,

DALEY: [interposed] Oh, she –

DEVLIN: --But she's in a nursing home, she just turned eighty-one on Friday, September the 14th.

DALEY: And how's she doing?

DEVLIN: Uh! She's – she has her faculties, she has, you know, her senses, she knows what's going on, she'll hold a great conversation with you. But, it's – I can – every time I go to see her every other, you know, once a week – you can see the downhill slope, slide on it.

DALEY: And how long did your grandmother live?

DEVLIN: My grandmother lived until she was seventy-seven. She passed away in 1965.

DALEY: So, what, uh, brought you to the National Parks Service?

DEVLIN: Um, after – after twenty years of working in the service field, I had to get out of it. It was just taken a toll on my body, a lot of driving. I went and worked for uh, an insurance company in their property services doing telephone repairs and moves, and computer – uh – lines. (Clears throat) And, after 9/11, they went under – they were going under – and they were downsizing, so they asked me if I would take a package, and uh, that's what I did, I – I took their package, and – being an EMT, I went online and – and saw that National Park was looking for an EMT on Ellis Island, I said, "I'll give it a shot."

DALEY: Well, where did you get your EMT training?

DEVLIN: Um, Union – Union EMS Academy. On Morris Avenue, at that time. It was – it was sponsored by St. Barnabas in Livingston. I thought I'd give it a shot, you know.

DALEY: What year did you start the training?

DEVLIN: Oh, 1992.

DALEY: Oh, so you've had extensive experience

DEVLIN: [Interposed] Yeah.

DALEY: And what made you want to go into uh, medical --?

DEVLIN: [interposed] I enjoyed the work, I enjoyed helping people, uh, you know, I had been in a few accidents myself, I'd even been shot, and -- and noticed, you know the care and -- and the concern that these people had for people who was injured, and I said, "You know what? I can do that." And that's what put me into it.

DALEY: Did you work for a volunteer ambulance?

DEVLIN: Worked for a volunteer ta -- er -- squad in town --

DALEY: In Kenilworth --?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Kenilworth, yeah. (Sniffs)

DALEY: Would you wanna talk to -- wanna talk about any of the experiences you had there?

DEVLIN: Um --

DALEY: Any -- well does anything stick out or, that gives you a good memory?

DEVLIN: (Laughs) Good memory, uh, usually they're not good memories in EMS. Um. I mean if you have -- if you have a birth, it's a good memory. I've -- unfortunately, I have not had to deliver any children yet. Um, I was hoping to before my career ended, but I guess not, but that's fine, you know, I mean, I've helped the elderly, I've done uh, you know, CPR on patients, um -- I've, uh, taken care of cut arms, you know, I've been to motor vehicle accidents, taken care of people that, you know --and I get a good feeling afterwards knowing that I've done what I could for these people and they're going to make it, or unfortunately some don't, but that's the way life is.

DALEY: And how far advanced in EMT are you? Is it -- are there different levels of --?

DEVLIN: No, there's just one, one level. But I had ta -- I had enjoyed it so much that going through the academy we had to do ten hours of -- of -- of emergency room, um, cer -- to be certified. I enjoyed that so much I actually volunteered to do another ten hours, so I did twenty hours in the ER, um, helping doctors stitch patients up and -- and you know, taking care of burn patients, people that swallowed golf balls, you know, that was -- that was the funniest one. The guy's sitting there rocking, and I said, "What's the matter?" He says, "I swallowed a golf ball." I looked at him, and I said, "You gotta be kidding." He said, "No." He said, "I was drunk, showing off to my buddies and I swallowed a golf ball." (Laughs) You know you get -- you get things like that.

DALEY: [interposed] (Laughs) H-h-how'd they get it out of him?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Well, it was an emergency operation, but he –

DALEY: [interposed] Oh. It didn't come out naturally?

DEVLIN: No, it was stuck in the duodenum, right between the – the stomach and the – the intestine

DALEY: Now did anything in particular about the Park Service, uh, attract you? Did you know anything about the National Park Service previously?

DEVLIN: Didn't know a thing about it, never even been on Ellis Island or the Statue of Liberty before. Um, so it was a whole new world to me.

DALEY: And what was your first day?

DEVLIN: My first day was just orientations. (Laughs)

DALEY: Mm-hmm. W- what was the date that you started, do you remember?

DEVLIN: Uh (sighs) –

DALEY: Or just the month and the year --?

DEVLIN: It was June of sss—2004, I believe. We had just come— my wife and I had just come back from a trip to Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland, and, uh, came right here.

DALEY: Mm. So, did you have to take on any additional training in – in any sort of medical field –

DEVLIN: [interposed] No, we were all – we were trained very much for what was needed here. Just a few extra things that were thrown at us since I've been here, you know, uh, doing albuterol inhalants, we weren't trained for that, but the doctors at Jersey City Medical Center showed us what to do and we're certified to do that under their direction.

DALEY: Can you explain that a little bit further? Albuterol?

DEVLIN: Albuterol is – is a – um, vasodiu, uh, vaso – it opens the airways for when you have an uh, an asthma attack. Vasodilator.

DALEY: Mm-hmm. Now, in your experience here, which was the hospital you would tend to send people to?

DEVLIN: Jersey City Medical Center. It's the closest, it's within five minutes.

DALEY: Is that still in operation?

DEVLIN: Yes

DALEY: Because I know there's a – a newer one closer.

DEVLIN: That's – that's still Jersey City Medical, they've moved out of the old medical building. Built a new building and – and moved down to it.

DALEY: Hmm. And do any medicals on Ellis or Liberty stick out in your mind – from your experience here?

DEVLIN: (sighs) Yeah, one morning, I had the early shift – about two and a half years ago – over on Liberty Island, one of the girls was cleaning the conveyor belt on the X-Ray machine, and the operator didn't see her and turned it on and her hand was caught in the – in the belt, and actually degloved her hand, taking the skin from the palm of her hand right down to the bone. Um (clears throat), I remember that one, 'cause I was the only EMT on the Island that day.

DALEY: And, in layman's terms, can you explain what you did, how you helped her?

DEVLIN: Yeah, I – I wouldn't let her see the – the extent of the damage to her hand, because I knew she would have gone into shock on me. So what I did was I – I, uh, bandaged it and dressed it, and just held her on the boat to New York – we took her to New York, 'cause that was – that was the best hospital for pla – for plastic surgery to the hand, and reconstruction. So, and – and just held her, and she, you know, kept saying, "Oh, it hurts," and I'm saying, "I know it hurts," and "Well, I'm gonna fall out," and I said, "You're not gonna fall out, you're gonna be fine." You know, just comforting her and – and getting her there and, um, she's back to work now.

DALEY: Hm. Is her hand, uh, pretty much okay?

DEVLIN: Um, she has use of her fingers and – and, you know, she can grip stuff, I mean – I mean there's – the scars are there, you can see them. But, uh –

DALEY: [interposed] But how does– how does it make you feel to know that she's, you know, that you were the one that helped her and she's back at work? How does that make you feel?

DEVLIN: Um, good. It makes me really feel good that I – I was, you know, able to help my fellow workers.

DALEY: Mm-hmm.

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: And were you ever involved in any helicopter evacuations?

DEVLIN: Mm – fortunately, not. (Laughs)

DALEY: Because I remember seeing you at that practice session –

DEVLIN: [interposed] Right, we—we had a practice session of what we would do if we needed to call in a – uh – a helicopter. Um, and the practice is good. You know, but um, fortunately we have not had to call on ‘em yet.

DALEY: Mm-hmm. And how would you say percentage-wise did you split your time between Ellis and Liberty?

DEVLIN: (sighs) It used to be two days betw -- on – on each island. We worked four ten-hour shifts. So I would work two days here, on Ellis, and two days at Liberty. But since the summer has been here, it’s more been on Liberty than on Ellis.

DALEY: And what would you say is the most prevalent medical call that you get?

DEVLIN: (sighs) Hm. (Pause) Little kids during the summer. Mostly, you know, th-they – they’re running around, they fall and scrape their knees, or their hands, or something like that. This time of year, um, it’s more like bee stings, yeah.

DALEY: Mm-hmm. And how have – what’s your impression of working here was it uh—when you look back on it, do you look back on it – well how do you look back on it?

DEVLIN: [interposed] If I – If I could have done this thirty years ago, I’d be right there. Um, I have enjoyed every single moment of it. Um, the people are the greatest people to ever work with, they’re – they’re -- they’re more than friends, they’re family. Being on an island, you depend on each other, and um, we laugh, we joke, and sure there’s – there’s a little bit of bickering, sure – but you have that in every family – but I wouldn’t trade the last three moments – uh, the last three years that I have worked here for the th-thirteen years I worked at the insurance company or the twenty years I worked for the – the service division, I-I -- it’s the greatest time in my life.

DALEY: Mm. It was glad to have you here too –

DEVLIN: Yeah.

DALEY: --I think can say that. Um, while you were here, did you make any specific improvements, uh, did you make any advice as to ways things could be made better, or get this piece of equipment, or --?

DEVLIN: I never – never tried to, because it ran swiftly – as smoothly as it did. Um, if we needed a boat, a boat was there, they’d haul the boats for if we – if we were gonna take them by – by Circle Line, or if we couldn’t and we needed somebody quick, Marine Division was there for us. Um, I – I wouldn’t ch – you know – change any of that, it’s – it’s --it works like a clock.

DALEY: So as soon as you came in, from that point, it was a good, smooth-running operation?

DEVLIN: Yes. Yeah.

DALEY: Mm. And, just out of c – uh, just to – to know a little bit more, uh, who was your supervisor?

DEVLIN: Right now – uh, well, when I first started here, it was Gene Kusy [ph]. Um, great person, great friend, and I – and – I can call him a friend, um, even though we just met here. Now I have Joe Phaney [ph], who just came from the coastguard after five years, who – I'll tell you what – um, he's more like a brother than a – than anything else to me. Um, we get along great, we think alike, which is scary.

DALEY: And who are the other EMT's that you've worked with at –

DEVLIN: I've worked with, uh, Allen Sheps um, Anthony Byrnes Alvarado, uh, Lance Williams, Aly Hawana, and my dearest and favorite is Stephanie Bick. Um, Stephanie's been a great partner to work with. We, work, uh, really well together, we – we know what the other one needs, and it's right there waiting for them. It's – it's almost like we're twins, you know.

DALEY: And you also are involved in training people to be first responders?

DEVLIN: Uh, that's Gene's and – and –um – and S-Allen's job. Um, I was an instructor at the EMS academy after I graduated from it –they asked me if I wanted to be an instructor, and uh, I went for it, for about five or six years. But I haven't taught in – in – in a while, so I kinda gave that up.

DALEY: But here at Ellis and Liberty, there are EMTs, plus there are f-first responders.

DEVLIN: [interposed] Right. First responders.

DALEY: Are there different levels than those two? Basically to service any injured person on the islands?

DEVLIN: Um, no if – if we have to, we call in a paramedic. That's usually if we have a, uh, problem with a, like a heart attack or something like that. They can stabilize them. They can give 'em injections, we can't, that's one of the – the things we can't do. We can make 'em comfortable, we can give 'em oxygen, we can give 'em aspirin to alleviate pain or if they're known to have um, to take nitroglycerin, we can assist in that, we can give it to them. Um, but you have your first responders, you have the EMTs, you have um, uh, BLS – um, I'm sorry, ALS: Advanced Life Support, which is your paramedics, and they'll usually come in from the hospital.

DALEY: Oh there's – are there any --?

DEVLIN: They're not stationed on the island, no.

DALEY: Can you do de-defibrillation?

DEVLIN: Yes we can. Yeah, we have AEDs throughout the building

DALEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So, uh, just to get back to your family--

DEVLIN: Okay.

DALEY: -- What does your son and daughter do?

DEVLIN: My son Michael's a police officer in Kenilworth, he's been an officer for seven years, and my daughter is a pharmacist.

DALEY: Hm. In a, uh, like a Rite Aid or something?

DEVLIN: No, she works for -- um -- um, one of these companies that makes the cassettes for the nursing homes, um that fills out the prescription for the patient living in a nursing home. And then it's transported there and given to the patient there. Um, she is a supervisor in -- in -- in one of the, uh, pharmaceutical houses for that.

DALEY: And what kind -- uh -- and what does your wife do?

DEVLIN: My wife was a high school teacher of the deaf and special ed, she's a sign-language interpreter, and went on to become, uh, a teacher for the deaf, and then started sign language as a second language for some of the other hearing students in the high school.

DALEY: Yes, 'cause I notice on your -- on your nameplate, you have a, --

DEVLIN: --Sign language interpreter?

DALEY: --Sign language interpreter.

DEVLIN: Yeah, I also went back to school for that. I thought all these deaf people coming over the house were talking about me, so I had to learn it. (Laughs) Self-defense.

DALEY: Is she retired also?

DEVLIN: Yeah, she just retired in June.

DALEY: Where was she teaching?

DEVLIN: Um, David Brearley High School in Kenilworth. There's – there's a theme running here about Kenilworth, you can see that. (Laughs)

DALEY: [interposed] So Kenil – Yeah, Kenilworth seems to be the uh, the center of the –

DEVLIN: It was – it was my wife's center, and – and you know, um, Newark the way it went, I said, "Yeah, fine, I'll live in Kenilworth," and it – it was great.

DALEY: [interposed] Is it – like a ba–basically like a suburban town?

DEVLIN: Yeah, it's a bedroom community. Um, it's a blue collar town, um – it's – it's probably about a mile square. But it's a great little town, you know.

DALEY: Mm-hmm. And you mentioned before that you took at least one trip back to Europe –

DEVLIN: Yeah

DALEY: -- Uh, have you been back to your town of birth?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Oh yeah, um. I went back in 1991. For the first time in over thirty years. And that's where I-I actually linked up with my dad's side of the family. I had known my mother's side of the family, yeah – but I never knew my dad's side and uh, called over there one day and I put an ad in the newspaper sayin' that I was comin' over, and who my dad was, and who my mom was – some of my aunts and uncles – and I got a letter back, about three months later, saying that this gentleman was my cousin, his sis – his mother and my father were brother and sister, and the minute uh, I got that letter I was overjoyed. Called him on the phone –he gave me the phone number – called him on the phone, and we talked like we were, you know, never been separated. (Clears throat) And uh, of course he wouldn't let us stay in a hotel. I got – we got to Glasgow and he picks us up, he walks through the door, and I said to my wife, "That's my cousin." And she says, "How do you know?" And I says, "I don't know," I says, "but I just know that's my cousin." And it was. And it was strange because Roy was six months younger than me – his name was Roy, mine is Ray -- married, boy and a girl, boy and a girl. Um, he worked for Beecham Pharmaceuticals, over there, the same time I worked for it over here. Um, he worked in a school system – now – with – my wife was the school system. And right down the line we were parallel. And he takes his jacket off, and he had a tattoo on his left arm, the exact same place that I had mine.

DALEY: Is that a thistle?

DEVLIN: Yeah, mine's a thistle. And he had his name. (Laughs).

DALEY: And were you able to go back to, uh, where you were born?

DEVLIN: Yeah, he –

DALEY: [interposed] Was it –was it a house that you were born in, or --?

DEVLIN: Um, no, I was born in – it – it was called, uh, Airdrie house – it was a maternity house, and that's strictly what it was. It's now Monkland Hospital.

DALEY: And the house that you lived in for three years, back then, was it a one-family house? I forgot to ask --

DEVLIN: Actually, actually it was a – it was a, um – right above the pub that my – my grandparents owned. Um, it was torn down. Um, there was a large city hall or – or municipal building there now.

DALEY: But you were able to identify the street and everything?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Oh yeah, I went to the library, and asked if they had pictures of the old town and if they could, could I – they possibly get me copies of it, and they were so – they were so grateful that I had, you know, had come back and – and asked for something, they ran off a – a bunch of copies of the – my grandmother's pub, The Victoria Pub, and the rest of the pictures from the old town, and the house my mother grew up in, on Graham Street, before they bought the pub. So it was – it was great.

DALEY: And how – were you there just the once?

DEVLIN: No, I've been back three or four times since then. Unfortunately, my cousin Roy and his brother passed away, um, a couple of years ago. But um, I still keep in touch with his wife, and – and his kids. Um, in fact they came over last September and stayed with us. Um, so – you know, they're still family.

DALEY: And, when you went on any of these trips, did you take your wife and children?

DEVLIN: My wife went with me the first two times, my son and I went by ourselves, one year. He had just gotten out of the military, and um, I said, "Come on, let's take a--" "Aww, Dad, you know, I gotta get on another plane?" I said, "Yeah, but this is a special one, you know?"

DALEY: What was his impression when he saw the place where his father was born?

DEVLIN: He loved it, he loved it. He loved going up to, um, to – Edinburgh to see the castle, and – and the town itself, he thought it was really nifty, you know.

DALEY: Mm-hmm.

DEVLIN: Unfortunately, I have not had a chance to take my daughter. But she's married and has kids of her own now –

DALEY: Oh!

DEVLIN -- So (laughs) she's going to have to do it on her own.

DALEY: How many children does she have?

DEVLIN: She has uh, two. Sarah Elaine – she's ten, and Devon [ph]– who is eight.

DALEY: And does – is –did your son get married?

DEVLIN: My son's married to Vicky, and they have two children: Grace, who is four, and Aidan, who is two.

DALEY: Oh, you're a – so you're a gr– I didn't realize you were a grandparent.

DEVLIN: Oh yeah, four of 'em.

DALEY: So (pause) just – off the top of your head, how do you feel about this stage – uh, the last week you have here on Ellis Island?

DEVLIN: It's a double-edged sword. I look forward to the adventures -- so much like Don Quixote – you know, adventure, um, a new life, a new beginning. And yet it's sad, because I've made so many friends. Um, it's funny because this morning I was listening to the car radio. And there was a song by The Seekers in 1965, called "I'll Never Find Another You." And some of the lyrics go --um: "If they gave me a fortune, my pleasures would be small/ if I lo – If I should lose it all tomorrow, it wouldn't matter at all." But if I should lose their friendship or their love, that would totally devastate me, 'cause these people here are the greatest people I have ever, ever worked with.

DALEY: (Pause) Well, where is – where is your new home?

DEVLIN: (sighs) Uh, place called the Villages down in Florida, in Lady Lake County.

DALEY: Is that – which town is that near?

DEVLIN: [interposed] It's – it's -- uh, it's right between Ocala and Orlando.

DALEY: Oh.

DEVLIN: Northwest of Orlando.

DALEY: S-so you might be going to the Parks a lot. (Laughs)

DEVLIN: (Laughs) Uh, yeah, I might be.

DALEY: Oh, when people come down to visit you.

DEVLIN: Yeah, and everybody here's invited, you know, it – I don't care who they are, they're all invited to my house. Um --

DALEY: [interposed] And – do – do you have like a house, or a condo?

DEVLIN: [interposed] Oh, I have a house –

DALEY: [interposed] A house –

DEVLIN: --It's a house. (Clears throat) Um, a supervisor I had at the insurance company, moved down there, and he kept bugging me, "Come down and see this place," and finally, I said, "Yeah, okay," and we liked it and other couples we knew – that my supervisor knew – he – he did the same thing to them, and they started buying down there, and finally my wife said, "Well, you know, let's do it." And we have, you know.

DALEY: [interposed] Mm-hmm.

DEVLIN: My kids are grown up, they've moved away, it's – it's not –

DALEY: [interposed] Are they bo-both still in New Jersey?

DEVLIN: Yeah, my daughter lives in Sterling, New Jersey, my son lives in Kenilworth, as I said before. But, it's time for us to enjoy our life too.

DALEY: Mm-hmm.

DEVLIN: You know.

DALEY: Well, you don't have to worry about winter again. (Laughs)

DEVLIN: No, I don't! I don't have to shovel snow, or rake leaves, or do any of that.

DALEY: Just watch out for the occasional hurricane, I guess, I don't know.

DEVLIN: Fortunately, there's none that's come through that area in the last forty years!
(Laughs)

DALEY: Oh, good, good. Now, do you – overall, looking back, even further – do you feel Scottish?

DEVLIN: Very much so.

DALEY: How do you – how do you feel Scottish?

DEVLIN: (sighs) I'm, what is known as a proud Scot. And, um, if I hear a Scottish voice in – in – in our visitors, I make sure I go over to find out where they're from. Um, in fact I was – I was chairperson of the Scottish Heritage Festival in the state of New Jersey for five years. Which, uh, was out of the Garden State Art Center.

DALEY: Is there a large Scottish community?

DEVLIN: Um (sighs) –

DALEY: In New Jersey?

DEVLIN: There was in –in Carnie. Um, Carnie was settled by Kimberley Coats [ph], the thread company, which was a Scottish company. They built factories here, and brought over Scottish laborers and built houses there for them. So there's – there's a large community of Scots there, which have slowly dwindled down now, and they're – they're moved down like Brick in Wall township, down that w-area. Th-there is a – a large community of – of Scots in the state of New Jersey, yeah.

DALEY: And, do you retain any of the, uh –

DEVLIN: Traditions?

DALEY: Traditions, yeah, I guess you could say – traditions, or observances?

DEVLIN: (Sighs) No, I've become too Americanized, I think. You know? But I'm still – still proud to be a Scot.

DALEY: [interposed] Mm-hmm.

DEVLIN: I mean – I mean other fool would have a tat – a thistle tattooed to his arm? C'mon, you know? (Laughs)

DALEY: Well, I'm – I'm very glad we were able to interview you, I think it's important that we – we have special interviews with people who are immigrants, and who work at Ellis Island. You know. Well that's a– that's another question I can ask you. What does it mean to you, as an immigrant, to work on Ellis Island, and the Statue of Liberty, knowing that the people would pass by, and -- ?

DEVLIN: (Pause) It's heart – it – it's – I don't want to say it's heartwarming, but I'm very proud to do that. I'm – I'm – I was – I was awestruck when I – the first day here, knowing that my grandparents came through here, to walk the – the – the s-you know, the areas that they may have walked, to see the sights that they saw. You know? To – to look out at the Statue, knowing that they looked out there at the Statue. And for the Statue itself? I guess being (pause) in the service, being in the military (pause) – and knowing what her symbol is? What she stands for? Um, I'm awestruck by that, I'm – I'm – you know? It – It's – It's hard to describe of how I feel about that statue. You

know? Knowing it's a symbol of freedom, knowing I – I – you know, served for that freedom, to preserve that freedom. It – It's inspiring. Yeah.

DALEY: Wow. I think – I think that's a good way to end the interview. Do you have anything else you'd like to say about life, the universe and (laughs) the Statue of Liberty?

DEVLIN: Um, no, but I'm proud to have worked here. Very proud. And, uh, I brag about it every way I can, because I think back and I say, "How many live in this United States, how many people live in this world, and only a handful of us are picked to work on these two great islands." You know? That's – that's chilling, that's – that sends chills up my spine knowing that I was one of the ones that worked here.

DALEY: Hmm. Well. Well, thank you very much for sitting down and talking –

DEVLIN: Oh, you're welcome, Kevin.

DALEY: And the memories, and your observations, and your feelings, and they'll be very valuable to us from two important aspects, both as an employee and as a – as an immigrant. So, this is Kevin Daley, I've been talking to Raymund Devlin, on September, 18th, 2007, and I'm signing off. Thank you.