

Odell England

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Transcript

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VOICE RECORDING

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JAMES ADY

Okay, this is James Ady interviewing Odell England for my gender studies class at Boise State University. Odell, how are you tonight?

ODELL ENGLAND

I'm great.

JAMES ADY

Good. First question: when and where were you born?

ODELL ENGLAND

Actually, I was born in Blackfoot, Idaho in 1950.

JAMES ADY

Oh, nice. And what do you say is your race or ethnicity?

ODELL ENGLAND

Plain white.

JAMES ADY

Plain white?

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

And looking back at, in Idaho, how would you describe your childhood?

ODELL ENGLAND

Fabulous. I was raised down in the country on a big ranch.

JAMES ADY

Nice. And so, when you think about your family, what's the first thing that comes to your mind?

ODELL ENGLAND

Happiness. Well-being. Closeness.

JAMES ADY

Good. Were you raised with a religious background?

ODELL ENGLAND

I was raised LDS.

JAMES ADY

Okay, nice. Are you still practicing?

ODELL ENGLAND

No. I got it down pat

JAMES ADY

Do you?

ODELL ENGLAND

But I do miss scouting. I never had so much sex in my life.

JAMES ADY

Oh, good. *(laughs)* How old were you when you first came out?

ODELL ENGLAND

First came out? That's a tough one. I don't know if I ever, really, just announced and came out. As my mother said, she always knew I was gay. I think most mothers know that. So, I would say young.

JAMES ADY

Do you remember what that process was like?

ODELL ENGLAND

It didn't seem like it was a process. It was just an actuality.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. Well, that's good.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. My parents were very open, generous people.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I like that. But did both parents know?

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. That's nice you didn't have to necessarily verbalize it.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. You can only be found wearing your mom's red high heels so many times before, "How come you don't put the cowboy boots on, Odell?"

(laughter)

It's like, "Because I like these patent leather high heels way better."

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

Exactly. They're much more fun. They make more noise.

ODELL ENGLAND

Exactly. Tap shoes, I used to call them.

JAMES ADY

Yeah.

(laughter)

Are there any relationships or communities with whom you wouldn't consider yourself out to?

ODELL ENGLAND

(negative) Mm-mm.

JAMES ADY

Okay.

ODELL ENGLAND

I'm not really sure what that means. Any relationships or communities...

JAMES ADY

I guess. Is there any time throughout your day or your life where you feel it may be safer to be in the closet, or you wouldn't necessarily put it out there?

ODELL ENGLAND

No. No, I don't think so.

JAMES ADY

Good, I think that's great. When you look back on your life, do you remember ever facing any negative repercussions from being gay?

ODELL ENGLAND

No, I don't really. It just never seemed like it was an issue.

JAMES ADY

No bullying or anything like that?

ODELL ENGLAND

No. I mean, I too would make fun of a guy in red patten leather high heels.

JAMES ADY

As would I.

(laughter)

ODELL ENGLAND

So, I just thought it was part of the process.

JAMES ADY

If they weren't the right color of red, right?

ODELL ENGLAND

Right! Exactly.

(laughter)

So no, I don't think so. It's weird.

JAMES ADY

Would you describe me the first time you fell in love?

ODELL ENGLAND

It's probably scouts.

JAMES ADY

Was it?

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah.

JAMES ADY

Do you know how old you were?

ODELL ENGLAND

In scouting? In the Mormon religion, you're between 10 and 15.

JAMES ADY

And it was one of the boys you were with?

ODELL ENGLAND

(affirmative) Uh-huh.

JAMES ADY

Could you elaborate at all?

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, we used to skip scouting and go out behind the church and “mack.”

JAMES ADY

I love it.

ODELL ENGLAND

(laughs) Out by the fireplace. Mormon churches always have a big fireplace out back.

JAMES ADY

Did you ever get further than that? Behind the church?

ODELL ENGLAND

Not behind the church.

JAMES ADY

Okay.

ODELL ENGLAND

I do have a little bit of a religious bone. At the time I had a religious boner, but.

JAMES ADY

How, if any, did being gay help shape your sense of identity?

ODELL ENGLAND

I don't really know. *(pauses)* Okay, hmm. I don't know, because, although I always liked music and dance and art and theater, and all that stuff, I never really equated it with gaydom – being gay, or that it was a gay thing. So, I don't know.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. Well, I think that's good. I mean, you're just being yourself.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right.

JAMES ADY

Yeah, that's interesting. Was there a moment where you remember thinking to yourself, “That's what this means, that I'm gay?”

ODELL ENGLAND

I don't know if I thought it meant I was gay. But I do remember once, because we always had farmhands work on the ranch – I was raised on a cattle ranch, and we'd have farmhands. And there was this one farmhand guy that looked like Elvis Presley. In his thin days, not his fat days. And I do remember thinking, "I don't think the other guys who are helping us load hay think about him like I do."

JAMES ADY

Do you know how old you were?

ODELL ENGLAND

Once again, I was probably 12 to 15. Somewhere in that.

JAMES ADY

I bet he looked good.

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, he looked really good.

JAMES ADY

Those Levi's.

ODELL ENGLAND

Levi's, black hair, and a big old greasy pompadour. I loved him.

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

What was his job on the farm, do you remember?

ODELL ENGLAND

He was just one of the farmhands. We always had farmhands that come in during harvest season. He came back two or three years in a row, and I always looked forward to it. But you know, there was never anything happening, or anything. But I just remember thinking, "I really like this guy."

JAMES ADY

"Oh nice, that's hot."

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm. Wow.

JAMES ADY

(laughs) When did you move to Boise?

ODELL ENGLAND

1969, when I came here to go to college.

JAMES ADY

Okay, and where did you go to college?

ODELL ENGLAND

BSU. Graduated from BSU.

JAMES ADY

Oh, nice. And so, where had you lived prior to moving here?

ODELL ENGLAND

40 miles away, in Emmet.

JAMES ADY

In Emmett. Okay.

ODELL ENGLAND

(affirmative) Uh-huh. Grew up on a ranch. 14 miles out of town.

JAMES ADY

Okay, nice. How has the LGBTQ community changed, from when you first moved here to the present?

ODELL ENGLAND

I remember that, when we heard that a gay bar was opening up – the first gay bar in Boise, called Shucky's – we'd go down every night and peer in the window. Roseanne and I – mother of my daughter – we'd go down and peer into the window, and just could hardly wait for it to open. Now it just seems like it's totally open. People ask me all the time when I travel, "You live in Boise, Idaho? How do you get along being gay in Boise, Idaho?" because – I don't know if you remember the northern Idaho thing. They weren't the Klu Klux Klan. What were they? The neo-Nazi, organization thing.

JAMES ADY

The aryan...

ODELL ENGLAND

Aryan nations. Thank you. And it's just like, when people would ask me that question, it's like, you know northern Idaho's— I don't even think of it as Idaho. Boise never seemed really anti-gay, ever, to me. But I was always involved with people, and teaching school. I was a school teacher for five years. So, to me, it just seems like now it's really open, and fully young people. But I remember when I first started, I was a young person. *(laughs)* So I don't think it's changed that much.

JAMES ADY

Right. And you said Roseanne, what was your relationship like with her?

ODELL ENGLAND

We were boyfriends and girlfriends, and fell in love, and moved in together, and then raised a child together.

JAMES ADY

Just one?

ODELL ENGLAND

(affirmative) Uh-huh, yeah.

JAMES ADY

Okay, and what's her name?

ODELL ENGLAND

Willa. We just had our baby.

JAMES ADY

Yes. I know, I love that.

ODELL ENGLAND

Uh-huh. On Thanksgiving. And the agreement was that we would live together until Willa graduated from high school. But then, the year that Willa was a junior, this house came available. So, we were able to announce to Willa, "You now have two bathrooms." Because we always just had one bathroom, next door. "So now you have two bathrooms, except one's next door."

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. So, I moved out her senior year of high school.

JAMES ADY

Was Shucky's, that was the main gay bar here?

ODELL ENGLAND

That was the only gay bar for a long time.

JAMES ADY

And then what followed?

ODELL ENGLAND

The San Francisco Bridge Works, which is where the Emerald Club was. And I was the bartender. I was a bartender at Shucky's, and a bartender at the San Francisco. I worked at Shucky's after they opened up, and then two of the people from Shucky's opened up the San Francisco Bridge Works, which is the Emerald Club. And they hired me to go and open up that bar, so I worked there. So, I was a bartender at both of the beginning gay bars in Boise.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it. Was that after the Boys of Boise?

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, yeah. The Boys of Boise thing. Have you ever read the book *The Boys of Boise*?

JAMES ADY

I haven't. We talked about that in class, though.

ODELL ENGLAND

No, it was after that by quite a bit, because I think the Boys of Boise thing must have been 50s.

JAMES ADY

Was that the 50s?

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. Yeah.

JAMES ADY

Okay, yeah. Oh, interesting. But it was pretty free you thought, with Shucky's and the San Francisco club?

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm. I was teaching school at the time that I was tending bar. And I do remember – this is the irony of life – the woman who was my head, she ran the program. I taught with the VISTA program, Enhanced Start. Early Childhood Development Degree. She, at one point, sort of insinuated to me – she had found out that I'd been hanging out at this gay bar – and she insinuated that she didn't care, but a lot of parents might care. So, she had put something – I don't even remember the whole story – but she had put some sort of information, somebody complained that they'd seen me going in and out of this gay bar. And so, that was probably going to ruin my teaching career. Which didn't bother me, because I wasn't going to teach forever, anyway. But oddly enough, Maryanne Kelly ended up – after she was a Head Start director – bought the Emerald Club.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my gosh.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. So, I always went and spoke to Maryanne Kelly every time I went to the Emerald Club, after she owned it. She didn't own it when it first opened up. She was like the second owner.

JAMES ADY

Oh, how interesting. It went full circle.

ODELL ENGLAND

I know. Mm-hmm. She ended up dying in that gay bar. It was the funniest thing.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my gosh. What was it like the first few years at Shucky's?

ODELL ENGLAND

It was so small. And it was, once again, just like things are, it was all of our straight friends. It was a big thing to go to tea dances. We'd go down at two on Sundays to get a table for tea dancing, and dance all night long.

JAMES ADY

I love it.

ODELL ENGLAND

And drive home drunk. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

Oh no. I think that still happens here.

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, yeah.

JAMES ADY

Do you remember any of the wildest things you've ever seen there?

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, I do remember I had an aunt and uncle. Shucky's used to have what was called "Bizarre Night." And you were supposed to come in in your buttless chaps, and all this stuff, which people did. And I had an aunt and uncle come into town, who knew that I worked at a gay bar. But they thought it was "bazaar," as in a church bazaar.

JAMES ADY

Oh, shit. On Sundays.

ODELL ENGLAND

Uh-huh. So, they came to Bizarre Night, and that was one of the funniest nights I've ever spent, because I loved watching their jaws dropping on the table. They were so...

JAMES ADY

Were they wearing their Sunday best?

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh yeah. They've gone to a Sunday bazaar. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

And what were you wearing, do you remember?

ODELL ENGLAND

I had pants under my chaps, I'm sure.

JAMES ADY

Oh, good.

ODELL ENGLAND

Remember I was raised LDS. I have a certain amount of modesty.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it.

ODELL ENGLAND

I don't own a short-sleeved shirt. So.

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

I love it. So, from the time that you first started at Shucky's until now, is there any sort of significant milestones that stand out to you, that progressed the gay movement in Boise?

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, there was the No On One initiative, which you probably know about, as well. John Hummel and his boyfriend, Brian Bergquist, who spearheaded the campaign to defeat the No On One campaign. They were my best friends. So, that was a big deal. It's the first time, really, that it occurred to me that somebody could legislate my life. Before, I figured it was first appearance. They could legislate your life. But didn't. Or maybe they tried. But that was the first time it ever occurred to me that politics could enter into something like this.

JAMES ADY

And it could be changed, for the better.

ODELL ENGLAND

Exactly, yeah.

JAMES ADY

Do you remember the first Gay Pride in town?

ODELL ENGLAND

I do.

JAMES ADY

Did you go?

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, yeah.

JAMES ADY

Nice. And the first Gay Pride Parade?

ODELL ENGLAND

Went to it, marched next to a drag queen who had the biggest shoes I've ever seen.

JAMES ADY

(laughs) I love it. Were you holding any signs, or just there to support?

ODELL ENGLAND

We just walked. I walked with John Hummel and Brian Bergquist. The irony of that was, Brian Bergquist, who, if he was alive today, would be governor and president. Smartest man I ever met. He organized the anti-gay campaign, and he organized the first Gay Pride. And then, two days after that, he died of a heart attack.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my goodness.

ODELL ENGLAND

34 years old.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my gosh. Just out of the blue?

ODELL ENGLAND

Out of the blue. Just dropped over dead.

JAMES ADY

Wasn't necessarily unhealthy.

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, no no. Went in the bathroom, dropped over.

JAMES ADY

Oh, goodness. How long ago was that?

ODELL ENGLAND

When would have been No On One campaign?... You know, the Jewish community really spoke up. And in the long run, it was the sort of the eastern Idaho LDS community that voted against it. Because John and Brian sort of put out the feelers, that if they can legislate discrimination against gays, it could legislate discrimination against Mormons, who had already had that. So, eastern Idaho, I think, really sort of swung the vote on that. People expected it to pass. It was Ron Maben, and I can't think the other guy. They were out-of-staters who chose Idaho to do this sort of trial legislation for anti-gay, because they figured in Idaho, we were too ignorant to know anything better. And they expected it to pass here, and it was a huge shock that it didn't.

JAMES ADY

Wow, that's incredible.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah, yeah.

JAMES ADY

How long have you owned Graeber & Company?

ODELL ENGLAND

I've been there 29 years, 26 years.

JAMES ADY

Okay. You had bought the place from the previous owner.

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm, yeah. Myself and four other partners.

JAMES ADY

Okay. Are they still your partners?

ODELL ENGLAND

Two of them are.

JAMES ADY

Okay, oh great. Yeah, I love that place.

ODELL ENGLAND

46 years it's been in business.

JAMES ADY

26?

ODELL ENGLAND

46.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my goodness. That's amazing. In the same location?

ODELL ENGLAND

No, originally we were down on Warm Springs, across from the assay office, in a huge old mansion. They were there— I can't remember. They were 12, 46 years... We've been at this space— We still call this the “new space.” We've been there 17 years.

JAMES ADY

The new space.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. The “new space” is 17 years old.

JAMES ADY

(laughs) So, what series of events led to you becoming a hairdresser, hair stylist?

ODELL ENGLAND

You know, I'd always done hair. Did my mom's hair, did my sister's hair. Thankfully, she still likes me despite all the awful things I did to her. She's 58 years old, and says she still has a fetish for Barbie dolls with ponytails, because as soon as she'd get it... I'd always make her ask for a Barbie doll. And then, like two days afterwards, I'd make her take it in the bathroom with me, with some food coloring, and I'd cut off her ponytail and change her hair.

JAMES ADY

Would you? *(laughs)* Dye it colors, and change the hair.

ODELL ENGLAND

All bright colors, right? Yeah. And so, my sister never had a ponytail on her Barbie doll.

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

I love it. At least you kept the head on.

ODELL ENGLAND

Uh-huh. Right. Yeah, I wasn't going to grow up and be Jeffrey Dahmer.

JAMES ADY

Those always seem to be the first thing to go when kids are playing with them. And you had spoken a little bit before about being a teacher. Had you pursued other careers?

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. When I went to college, I went to get an education degree. I have a degree in art education. But then, I did my student teaching in junior high, and I realized that I didn't want to teach junior high school kids.

JAMES ADY

That's tough.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. Not only did I not want to, I didn't want to improve their lives, because I couldn't even stand the way they smelled. So, then I stayed and got a degree, and at the time, it's called an "early childhood developmental associate." And then I went to work for VISTA, which is "Volunteers in Service to America." Which is, the Head Start program worked under that.

JAMES ADY

Oh, very good.

ODELL ENGLAND

And I, of course, thought that they would send me to Manhattan or L.A., and they sent me right back to Emmet, from whence I just left five years ago.

JAMES ADY

So funny.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. Well, because I had community involvement. And Head Start is an amazing program.

JAMES ADY

Oh, yeah. Did you train as an Aveda stylist before going to Graeber?

ODELL ENGLAND

Actually, I was teaching school, and I started making wigs for Shakespeare. And the people who own Graeber & Company called me up one day and said that, "We'd like you to come to work for us." And I said, "I'd love to, but I'm not a hairdresser." So, they hung up, and two days later they called back and said, "We have a deal for you. We'll pay for your education if you'll come to work for us afterwards."

JAMES ADY

That's incredible. Oh, nice. And do you do seminars all around the world now, for Aveda?

ODELL ENGLAND

I just travel around and educate.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. What's one of your favorite places to go?

ODELL ENGLAND

London.

JAMES ADY

Yeah? I've never been.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah.

JAMES ADY

What's your favorite part about London?

ODELL ENGLAND

The fact that it gives you all the things you want about a foreign experience. It's different. You don't really understand the language, but yet, when you order a beer, you get a beer and not a fish, like you do in Italy.

(laughter)

We ordered a beer once, and got a fish. It was like, "Hmm, there is a language barrier." But yeah.

(laughter)

But, yeah. England is great.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it. Oh, Gabe had told me that you encourage your employees to go out and do outreach in the community. And what–

ODELL ENGLAND

They're supposed to do three community services a year.

JAMES ADY

What brought that on?

ODELL ENGLAND

Because, after working in Head Start, and seeing how community involvement can really uplift families... One of the things about Head Start is, a classroom has to be a microcosm of the community. So, if there's so many non-English speaking, so many ambulatory impaired, so many hearing impaired, you figure out what that is in the community. And then you have to get that same composite in your classroom, which also means you have to have so many above income people. They can't all be poor income people. So, you have to go out and try to sell to – maybe out of a classroom of 14 kids – you have to have at least three above income families. It's really hard to convince high income families to let their kids go to school with poor people. But my experience was, those people changed everything, because they had money, they had time, they had two-parent families. And they got really involved, and they upgraded everybody.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it. What are some of the outreach programs that your employees have done?

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, we cook a dinner every year for Snake River Alliance. We work with the Look Good, Feel Better program, which is the National Cancer Society program. We prepare women to lose their hair, and I fix their wigs, thin their wigs out for them, and make them look like real hair. We work with the Humane Society, all kinds of things.

JAMES ADY

I love it. I think that's incredible.

ODELL ENGLAND

Everybody is required to do that.

JAMES ADY

Yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

And to me, one of the most shocking things about the really young people who work at Graeber is they don't know how to get involved with something, because it comes around to January, and it's like, "Have you done three community outreach programs yet?" And they're like "Well, I don't know how to get involved." It's like, do you have any interests? If you have an interest in something, go and volunteer, and I promise you, after three meetings, you'll be in charge of a committee. And it works every time, for me. People are amazed.

JAMES ADY

It's incredible.

ODELL ENGLAND

I come from the era of the 60s, where community involvement and reactionary stuff, it was just second-nature to get involved in things. I think it's re-happening. I mean, Occupy Wall Street is a prime example.

JAMES ADY

Right. Did you volunteer over the years for gay organizations in town?

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, I've always donated things for them. But I've always been involved more with childhood development and—

JAMES ADY

Education.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yes, education. Graeber's has had, our mission statement is, we only advertise in arts and education, because we figure if we have any money extra to advertise, they need it more than other organizations that have foundations and fundraising. So, aside from volunteering, and things like during the No On One and stuff, I really have spent most of mine in the arts. That's my clientele base.

JAMES ADY

Right.

ODELL ENGLAND

Not that the gays don't make a good clientele base, either. But it just always seems like the arts and education need money as badly as anybody.

JAMES ADY

Absolutely, yeah. And it always seems to be lacking—

ODELL ENGLAND

Graeber & Company is the longest running advertiser for the Boise Philharmonic.

JAMES ADY

Really? Oh, that's so cool. I love them. I think they're great.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah.

JAMES ADY

As a member of the LGBTQ community, is there a certain place that you feel most comfortable in Boise?

ODELL ENGLAND

Home.

JAMES ADY

Yep.

(laughter)

That's a good answer, yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah, once again, I just never really see discrimination. Or, I'm comfortable pretty any place I want to go, otherwise wouldn't be there.

JAMES ADY

Is there a place in Boise that you wouldn't necessarily feel as comfortable?

ODELL ENGLAND

We were just down at the Suds the other night.

JAMES ADY

Okay, I love it, yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

(laughs) And if you can get out of there without being beat up – even a straight guy gets beat up there. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

Yeah. *(laughs)* It's true, yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

So, no. I never really think about that.

JAMES ADY

You said it's the Bistro and the Cactus?

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. *(laughs)*

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah, I mean, straight boys should be fearful to go in those places. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

Right, yeah. That's great. How would you describe your role within the Boise's LGBTQ community?

ODELL ENGLAND

Just one of them, I'd think. Nothing stellar, nothing different. I'm just a gay person in a real world.

JAMES ADY

I love it. That's great.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. I really attribute all that to my parents, that they never made any demarcations about, you know, I never heard my dad say a negative thing about anybody. My parents were so open-minded. But, they were hard-working farmers. They believe anybody who works hard and takes care of the family is as equal as anybody.

JAMES ADY

Oh, I love it. I think that's great. And it's true.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. It is true. Yeah.

JAMES ADY

(stammers) Ah, I can't even talk. Healthy and happy.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. No matter what.

JAMES ADY

Exactly. What would you like to see happen within Boise's LGBTQ community, if anything?

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. I think, just, keep yourself involved in the community. And if you're a good person and a productive person, and a member of the community, there really shouldn't be a difference.

JAMES ADY

Yeah. Hopefully some more legislative things that will keep passing.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. But you know, they're not happening in the rest of the... I mean, I'm all about gay marriage, if that's what you want to do. But, marriage to me is like a commitment between two people, privately. But as Dolly Parton says, "Of course gay people should be allowed to marry, because straight people shouldn't suffer alone."

JAMES ADY

Yeah. *(laughs)* I love that. It's true.

ODELL ENGLAND

Yeah. I feel the same way. I mean, would gay people handle marriage any better than straight people? It's just a legal contract.

JAMES ADY

Exactly. We're all animals.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. Exactly, right?

JAMES ADY

What advice would you give a young person struggling to come out in Boise?

ODELL ENGLAND

Advice? Boy, it's like, people ask me all the time if I give people relationship advice, and I always say, "You know, I never do. But I love to have them give me their relationship advice, because three months later, we can both laugh hysterically."

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

That's good.

ODELL ENGLAND

(laughs) Yeah. So, advice. I think, just, really be involved in your family, be involved in your community, and it should all work out. I know that ugly things happen, but I really don't have advice.

JAMES ADY

You don't have any advice for me, someone who's single in Boise, who's looking for a potential mate?

ODELL ENGLAND

Just keep smiling.

JAMES ADY

Good.

ODELL ENGLAND

Be a great person.

JAMES ADY

Nice. So, when you look back on your life, is there one moment that you're most proud, when you think back? You said, "Gosh, I've really made it," or you've felt so content—

ODELL ENGLAND

Well raising a daughter, raising a child, is like, to me, just the greatest thing of life. And then, just like in this week, to see that my baby is having her baby.

JAMES ADY

Yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

Whoa.

JAMES ADY

Yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

Powerful. I went to pick Willa for lunch about two weeks before she had her baby, and when she was walking out of her house, it occurred to me, "My baby's having her baby." So, big tears come to my eyes, and by the time she sits in the car, a couple tears are running down my cheeks. And she gets in, she's like, "Oh, my god, Dad. What's wrong?" And I said, "Well, it just occurred to me that my baby's having her baby." And she said, "Oh Dad, you've not been pregnant for nine months now." I said, "Yeah, but it's – my baby is having her baby." And she goes, "Oh, that's right. This pregnancy is all about you, isn't it?"

(laughter)

JAMES ADY

Yes.

ODELL ENGLAND

It was. I said the word "my" twice. *(laughs)*

JAMES ADY

And, it's a daughter?

ODELL ENGLAND

Mm-hmm.

JAMES ADY

What's your granddaughter's name?

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, no, she had a boy.

JAMES ADY

She had a boy. Okay.

ODELL ENGLAND

His name is Preston Odell Kingston.

JAMES ADY

Oh, my gosh. I love it. Oh, that's great.

ODELL ENGLAND

I know. We're going to call him Poppy.

JAMES ADY

Poppy? That's so cool. I love the name. Preston's great, and I love they have you for the middle name.

ODELL ENGLAND

I know. Who suspected?

JAMES ADY

I just have one last question. Do you have anything else that you'd like to add to your story? I know this is sort of a quick overview. Is there anything in your life that you'd like to add?

ODELL ENGLAND

More time, more friends. You know, in life— (*pauses*) what's been obvious to me— My dad just died in April, 95 years old. And seven months later, my grandson was born. And to me, it was just a really obvious thing of the circle of life. I keep seeing the Lion King going around and around in my head.

JAMES ADY

Sure, yeah.

ODELL ENGLAND

One grandpa goes out, another grandpa comes in. I never thought it'd be me. That life is a continuum. And I'm sure, even though my dad lived to be 95 years old, I'm sure he thought it was too short. Just to keep life going, as long as possible.

JAMES ADY

Yeah, you're living an amazing life.

ODELL ENGLAND

I've been around through the beginning of AIDS, and it's a mystery to me why I don't have HIV. And when it first started out, it was such a horrifying thing. A good friend of mine, he had 56 friends die of AIDS. It was so shocking. And now it doesn't seem like such a big deal. You can live with it, where 20 years ago, there was a death sentence, instantly. And things like that. It's like, if there's anything I would like to see happen, it's that that kind of thing disappears. But hell, in the early 70s, I had clapped so many times I thought it was a standing ovation.

JAMES ADY

(laughs)

ODELL ENGLAND

And you think, that now, you can't be cured of your social disease with a double shot of penicillin in your ass. So, it'd be great to alleviate fear and loathing.

JAMES ADY

Right. It seems to be coming back, too, which is sad, that it hit a wall, and it's on the rise again. We almost felt too safe.

ODELL ENGLAND

Right. Exactly. I know, exactly. And it's among straight people and young, young, young kids. But, I'm sure there's always a blight on every generation. But to me, at my age bracket of people who are like 60, the AIDS epidemic was a huge, horrible... I can remember the first times I went to San Francisco, and seen men with Kaposi's on their faces. And all of us went through a number of years of assuming we had it, but didn't want to deal with it. So, when you finally get the balls to go have the test, and you don't have it, it's like, "Oh, my god," you know? What wand tapped me on the head?

JAMES ADY

Yeah. I'm sure you don't take anything for granted.

ODELL ENGLAND

Well, yeah. It's just like, how do some people not make it, and some people do?

JAMES ADY

Well, I'm glad you made it.

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, me too.

JAMES ADY

Odell, thank you so much.

ODELL ENGLAND

Oh, you're so welcome.

JAMES ADY

I think that's it.

ODELL ENGLAND

Okay.

JAMES ADY

That was pretty painless, hopefully for you too.

END OF TRANSCRIPT.