

Mac Klein Interview

Kathy Hersh: We're interviewing Mac Klein on June 13th, 2013 with the Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project. Let's start by talking about - I know you've got lots of stories. Let's hear the story about this building and how you came to buy this building - where The Club Deuce is.

Mac Klein: Let me tell you how I came to buy The Club Deuce. I used to drink here. It was my favorite bar. My - I got married. My wife gave birth to a girl, my daughter. From outside the hospital, I came down to have a drink to celebrate the fact that I had a daughter. When I got here, there was a woman sitting in front of the place and the place was closed. I said, "What's wrong?" She says, "Mr. Harold died." The owner of the place, who was a friend of mine, died the same hour my daughter was born. Well, a year later - I bought the place.

I bought the bar. This was in 1964, these were the days that we had a lot of hurricanes and whatnot. One night, I get a call that there's a fire on the corner and The Club Deuce is involved. It just - it happened that there was a restaurant on the corner - which is about 50 feet towards Washington Avenue and that was on fire. The firemen were there using their hoses and everything else and using it on The Club Deuce, too. Well, my wife at that time - my first wife - said to me, "We're ruined." I says, "No," I says, "I believe we're made."

I told the fireman, "Just keep on pouring the water onto the place because I intended to redo it anyhow." After everything was over a couple of days later, an elderly man comes here and says to me - he works for the insurance company, he's the adjuster. He would like to see the damages that the fire created. I bring him in, I show him everything and whatnot and tell him what I thought it was all worth.

He listens to me and he left. He came back about ten minutes later, and he was - looked like he was going to have a heart attack. I says, "What's the matter." He says, "I've been working for this company for 50 years, and I've never ever had anything against me. Look what happened." He shows me a parking ticket that cost a dollar and he thought that that would be a great thing against his reputation. I says, "I have important friends in this town." I says, "I'm quite sure I can take care of it for you." He gave me the ticket. I send the dollar in, and that was the end of the ticket. He came -

[Telephone ring]

He came back a week later and I says -

[Telephone ring]

I spoke to my friend, I says, "You have no problem. It's completely gone." He says, "Do you need the money right away?" I says, "I could use it. I got \$14,000."

[Laughter]

That's the story about The Club Deuce, you hear me? I just bought it just only a little while before that. So, actually by the time I was through - I not only owned The Club Deuce but I made money buying it.

[Laughter]

That's one story on the club. I thought you'd like that story.

Kathy: So, what other stories do you have up your sleeve?

Mac Klein: Of what?

Kathy: Oh, anything that happened here.

Mac Klein: Remember one thing that I'm going forward. I'll be going forward and backward North to tell you stories.

Kathy: That's fine.

Mac Klein: Huh?

Kathy: We don't have to go in chronological order.

Mac Klein: Oh, good. Well as long as you don't have to do that - I'd have to think.

Kathy: So, you took the \$14,000 and you remodeled - refurbished the whole -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Wait, that's not - I'm not through with the story. Now, there was a great big piano in the place. After the - the fire and everything else, I was trying to get rid of it but nobody wanted it. One day, a man comes in and sits down to have a drink. He says to me, "That's a beautiful piano you have." He says, "It's an antique isn't it?" Well it wasn't an antique, because it was warped from the water that the firemen used. I say's, "Yes, it is an antique." I said. He says, "Would you like to sell it?" I says, "I think we can arrange something."

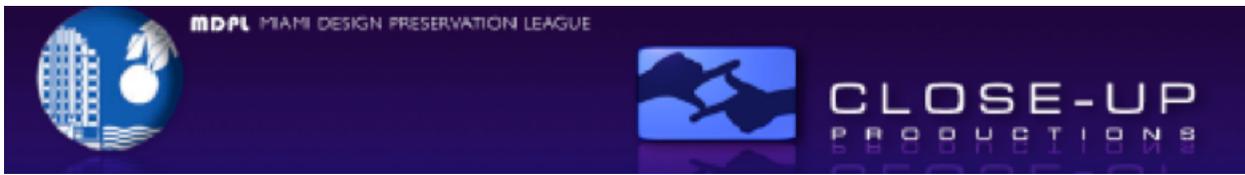
Well the thing is he gave me \$500 for it and he took it out. Here I was trying to get somebody to take it out for nothing.

[Laughter]

Kathy: So that was another lucky thing that happened from the fire.

Mac Klein: From the same fire, yeah. I was going to redo things anyhow, so there's one.

Kathy: So... You're still here, obviously it's been a successful business.



Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: The Club Deuce.

Mac Klein: The Club Deuce is the best thing that has ever happened to me. I enjoyed every moment of it. I love my help, I love coming here in the morning. I haven't been here after 4:30 in the last 25 years. I love coming to work, I love going home to my wife and dogs. So, that's a happy way to live.

Kathy: Speaking of dogs...

Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: There was a famous dog track down here - was it still around when -
[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Yes, yes.

Kathy: Did you get a lot of clientele from the dog track?

Mac Klein: We used to get them at night. The ones that were broke would come in with their watch and look the [inaudible] [08:15].

[Laughter]

Be the gamblers will sell their souls in order to get enough for the next race, and that's what happened here. Yeah, we had the dog track and we had one of the big tracks - you know. Hialeah was one of the biggest, most beautiful tracks in the country.

Kathy: A lot of people came down for that, didn't they?

Mac Klein: Originally. That is part of the story of Miami Beach. You see, Miami Beach actually started - like I said - with the war. In the 20's and 30's you had - it was done by people who lived in their own world where everybody else was - they're just here. That's about it. You hear me? What happened, came the war and young people who had never left the street that they were born on - found out there was another world. They went to different towns and everything else through the army.

So, I can honestly say, from tea and crumpets - it became powdered eggs and whatever you get for breakfast. That's how the change happened. The wealthy people, by I say the wealthy - I mean, the so-called blue bloods - had to make way. You had to make way for hundreds of thousands of people. After the war, these people went back to their hometowns, weren't satisfied and went to live in the places that they enjoyed the most while they were in the service. That's what - the Ridgely made this town.

Kathy: Is that one of the things that attracted you here?

Mac Klein: No, no, no. Mine is a completely different story. I was wounded in France, in 19 - the beginning of 1944. That's right after the invasion. I spent a year in the hospital. When I got out -

[Telephone ring]

The smart thing for me to do was to go to a place with warm weather, because cold weather was bad for the wounds that I had suffered. Then some friends of mine had moved to Miami Beach and told me about it. So, I came down here. Like I said, with my 27 [inaudible] [11:21].

I came down here, love the weather, and said to myself, "This is where I'm going to stay." Well sometime -

Kathy: What year was that?

Mac Klein: That was 1945 - the end of 45. A friend of mine called me one day and said to me that he had put a deposit on a bar, opposite The White House Hotel, on 16th Street and Ocean Drive - would I like to go in with him? I jumped at the chance and that was my beginning of the nightclub business.

We were there for a few years and we were getting - things were getting better and better and that was our undoing. As things got better, the noise got louder. The hotel said that there were guests were being annoyed by the traffic and the noise and everything and it was... So, we felt it was time to leave. So, we sold that and I found a place on Alton Road - 1610 Alton Road. We went in there.

We were there for a while - things weren't so great. When one day, a female impersonator came to see me and said to me, "I'd like to go to work for you, I think we can do well here." I had nothing to lose, I hired him. It became an instant success.

Kathy: What was the name of the club then?

Mac Klein: I called it, Club Benni. B-E-N-N-I. Now, just at that time, Barbara Walters - I'm sure you've heard of Barbara Walters - her father -

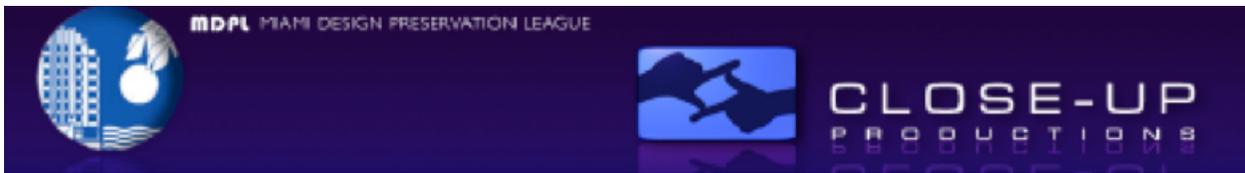
[Background noise]

Background Male: I don't know how we're going to do that.

Mac Klein: You take care of them.

Background Male: Okay. Come on, Sylvie.

[Background chatter]



Mac Klein: Barbara Walters' father, a man named Lou Walters owned the club on one of the islands here called The Latin Quarter. He had a chorus line. Some of the girls thought of coming to the bar, and men will follow girls and the place got busier and busier. At a given night, you would see Tennessee Williams, John Jacob Astor - all your biggest -

Kathy: Tennessee Williams in your place?

Mac Klein: Coming - Tennessee Williams loved to sit there and watch the female impersonators. John Jacob Astor came - you can guess for yourself why they came. This was the clientele that we had. After a while, important people of Miami Beach thought that it wasn't the type of clientele that they would like to see in the clubs of Miami Beach. It was turning into a - you know - a gay club, so to speak.

I thought it was time to leave there, too.

Kathy: Could I ask you a question? Did J. Edgar Hoover ever come?

Mac Klein: No, no. No, but some of the biggest luminaries - some of the biggest acts had come there.

Background Male: This is the club on Alton Road, right?

Mac Klein: Yeah, 1610 Alton Road - I went from 16th and Ocean Drive to 16th and Alton Road. Uh huh. Alright. Now, from there - after I left there, I went to South Miami. I went to South Miami because somebody that I knew had a club there called The Lower Lounge and he wasn't well and I bought the place from him. I stayed there for a couple of years. After four years I got lonely again for Miami Beach and I sold and I came here - came back here.

That starts this business of getting The Club Deuce. I don't know how - remember it's a roundabout thing that I've been telling you, but -

[Cross talk]

Kathy: You mentioned -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: It all comes to the fact at Club Deuce.

Kathy: You mentioned that one of your partners is [inaudible] [16:50].

Mac Klein: [Inaudible] [16:52] is a 25% owner, or I think about 25%. It's owned - because, he had worked for Mr. Burbridge. When Burbridge died, he left him this in his will. See, this was left in a will to Arie, but let Arie tell you that. Not me. Have you got Arie's - if you can call Arie, you tell Arie you know me and...

[Laughter]

Kathy: We're interviewed him.

Mac Klein: Huh?

Kathy: We didn't know about a connection here.

Mac Klein: What'd he say to you?

Kathy: Oh, lots of stuff about growing up on the beach and working for the city of Miami Beach and so forth, yeah.

Mac Klein: Did he - you didn't know that he knew me.

Kathy: No, I just found that out just now. This morning, okay. So, you said you were friends with Jesse Weiss. Whoops.

Mac Klein: I wasn't friends with Jesse - Jesse would -

[Cross talk]

Background Male: The light?

Kathy: The light just went out.

Mac Klein: The light went out.

Background Male: Is that - oh, okay. Now we can continue.

Kathy: Okay.

Background Male: It just changes too much - you'd have to - okay.

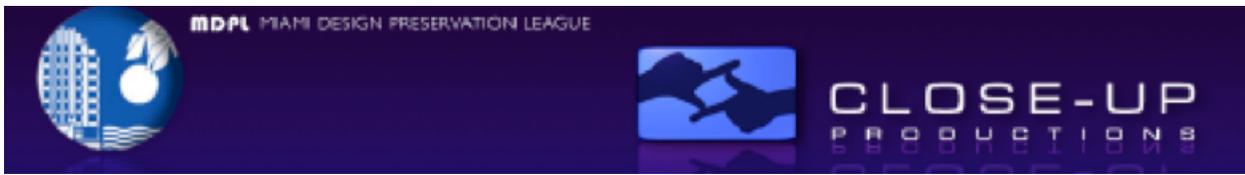
Mac Klein: Jesse Weiss used to come in through - Jesse Weiss was friendly with all these famous actors. Milton Berle, Robert Hugh Lewis - people like that. He would come in with them to watch the female impersonators, and that - but I knew Jesse Weiss through my partner who was Jesse Weiss' cousin. Am I making it clear for you?

Kathy: Yeah, you said you knew something about how stone crabs came to be.

Mac Klein: Oh, the story that was told to me how stone crabs came about was the men brought a stone crab into Joe's restaurant. It wasn't a stone crab, it was just a little restaurant that his father owned and asked him if he would cook it for him. Now, Jesse Weiss' father never saw a stone crab in his life, most likely. You hear me?

He cooked these stone crabs and the man sat down and ate it and gave him one. He liked it so much and that became stone crabs.

[Laughter]



Kathy: Wow, that's famous -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: I'm pretty sure that's the story because it was told to me time and time again.

Kathy: I'm sure you've hear a lot of stories, being the owner of a club and a popular bar -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Well, so - yeah, but the story, you see - the stories I heard - now let's talk about Meyer Lansky for a second. Meyer Lansky's step son used to come in here and drink. This was his favorite bar. He happened to go to a place - a club on 41st street - shot and killed somebody that was connected to the mafia. One day while he was washing his car in front of his house, they killed him.

Kathy: Did a lot of that kind of stuff go on?

Mac Klein: Mm?

Kathy: Did a lot of that stuff go on here in Miami Beach?

Mac Klein: Did it go on?

Kathy: Mm.

Mac Klein: Let me tell you - Miami Beach started with, let's say, the war. From the war, how am I going to say it so that... You see, I'm trying to make it so that it flows. When everybody went back home, some of the people that the young people that came here during the war went back home, took over their father's business and the parents started vacationing down here. For many years, this was a haven for elderly people.

[Pause]

Kathy: So, going back to the murder of Meyer Lansky's stepson, and I ask you if that was - and I don't mean common place, but things like that happened?

Mac Klein: Well things like that had to happen where you had - when the Cuban boat lift came here, and they're after the Cuban boat lift - you had the cocaine cowboy's and after that came the Miami Vice thing. I'm trying to tell you what made Miami Beach. What made Miami Beach is - again, I say the war. People coming here and when people came here they had night clubs. They didn't have anything to really sustain the town.

A man named Ben [inaudible] [22:44] built The Fontainebleau Hotel. He built the Fontainebleau and then after building the Fontainebleau, they – the Eden Roc was built and other hotels were built and they brought in all these entertainers and that's how Miami Beach actually got to be popular around the country. The Sinatra's, Milton Berle, and -

[Cross talk]

Kathy: Jackie Gleason.

Mac Klein: Jackie Gleason, yes. In fact, Jackie Gleason came in a few times and shot pool here. He was a good pool player.

Kathy: You saw it?

Mac Klein: Oh, yes. In here, yeah. Jackie Gleason had his show right here at the auditorium.

Kathy: He had a reputation for not being very friendly.

Mac Klein: Well I - he came in and shot a game of pool with his friends, I mean - not to see me.

[Laugh]

Kathy: Yeah. So, did he have a bunch of people with him or he just came by himself or...?

Mac Klein: No, Jackie Gleason would come - I imagine he might have come in here two or three times.

Kathy: What about Sinatra?

Mac Klein: Sinatra was never here.

Kathy: Some people say that the big hotels -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Travolta was here.

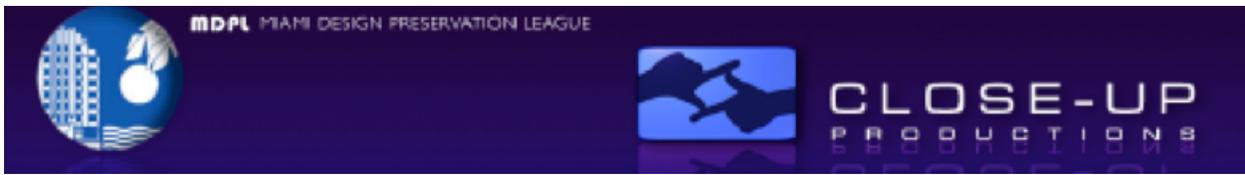
Kathy: Oh, yeah?

Mac Klein: Yeah, Travolta didn't - we did a lot of the Miami Vice segments here. You can tell that by the fact that we made the party for them. We were -

[Cross talk]

Kathy: Oh yeah, you had the party.

Mac Klein: We were that close.



Kathy: Tell us about that time.

Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: Did they come scouting the bar and say, "We want to shoot some scenes here."

Mac Klein: Did they come -
[Cross talk]

Kathy: Did they send their scouts or did they just start coming here to drink? Some of the Miami Vice people.

Mac Klein: No, no, no, no. What they did - they had people going around when they have to do a segment to find out what would fit into that particular show at that particular time. They did a show of me. They did one show of Mac, the owner of The Club Deuce. The story was that my son, was a quarterback on a college football team and I owed them money. Now, in order for me to pay off that debt, they wanted me to have my son throw the game. You know what that means? Mhmm?

The man the... He didn't throw the game. I didn't let my son throw it. Well, the story, you don't need, but the fact that they did it of Mac and the son.

Kathy: They made it up?

Mac Klein: These are stories that they make up, yeah.

Kathy: So, you had to act in it?

Mac Klein: No, the one who played me was - he was one of these... He was one of these daytime show actors. I've even forget his name. You know, I've got to think in terms of how I can fit things in for you.

Kathy: You gave the - you hosted the wrap up party -
[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Yes.

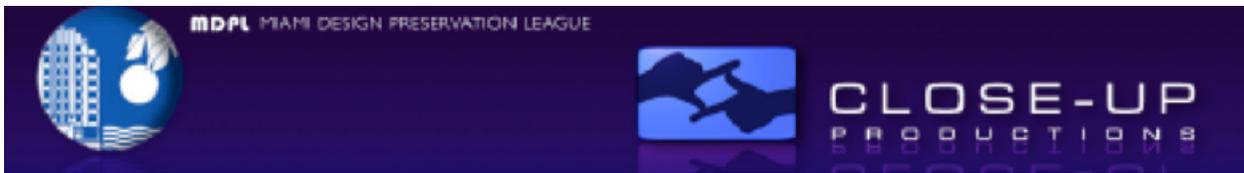
Kathy: When Miami Vice finished.

Mac Klein: Well in fact, they got the John Van Johnson, they got behind the bar and they served - I let them serve themselves and everything. It was a party for them, but I paid for it.

Kathy: We'll look at the flyer. So Don Johnson, was there.

Mac Klein: Don Johnson was there and the rest of the cast.

- Kathy:** The director, Michael Mann?
- Mac Klein:** Michael Mann wasn't here. Not for the - not for the party.
- Kathy:** Did they ever come in here off -
- [Cross talk]
- Mac Klein:** This was their drinking place. When they were free and they had the time, they would come here.
- Kathy:** So, I imagine that increased our business a little bit?
- Mac Klein:** t made it popular - it made the place... You see, I believe that Miami Vice, the series, was what made Miami Beach. It was the biggest factor. It was the biggest factor in the sense that all these shows went all over Europe. People saw it and they wanted to see the places where these things would happen. There was many times Europeans would come in here, on the tour - the city had a tour and we were on the tour. They wanted to see the bar that they saw on a picture while they were watching it in Europe. It's not easy - they try to bring these things out.
- Kathy:** That was another stroke of good luck for you then.
- Mac Klein:** Oh, yes. It was the best thing that ever happened here.
- Kathy:** So, what was Don Johnson like? Did you get to know him?
- Mac Klein:** Don Johnson - a man that's sort of kept to himself.
- Kathy:** What was the sergeant? Edward James Olmos?
- Mac Klein:** He didn't - he didn't - he really didn't have anything to do with the rest - for some reason.
- Kathy:** Philip Michael Thomas? They - that played Crockett's sidekick.
- Mac Klein:** Yeah, I'm talking to Philip Michael Johnson, had really - he didn't come around.
- Kathy:** Okay, but the hispanic who played the sergeant - Eddie James Olmos.
- Mac Klein:** Oh, Eddie James?
- Kathy:** Mm.
- Mac Klein:** I saw him once or twice, he came at the party.
- Kathy:** Okay, but Don Johnson was a regular here.



Mac Klein: No, Don Johnson wasn't. He did a show here, but he did come for the wrap. For the wrap party.

Kathy: Okay, so it was mainly the crew from Miami Vice.

Mac Klein: Right.

Kathy: I get it, okay.

Mac Klein: You can see what it says on the -
[Cross talk]

Kathy: Wow, so you hosted the party?

Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: That was nice.

Mac Klein: No, it was well deserved by them.

Kathy: They brought you a lot of business.

Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: Do you still get Europeans coming, wanting to see the bar that was in the Miami Vice?

Mac Klein: Yeah, yeah.

Kathy: So, it's had a long term effect.

Mac Klein: It became a very long term effect because that is what they saw. They saw this beautiful town, they saw the Art Deco, they saw the beautiful colors and everything else of the buildings.

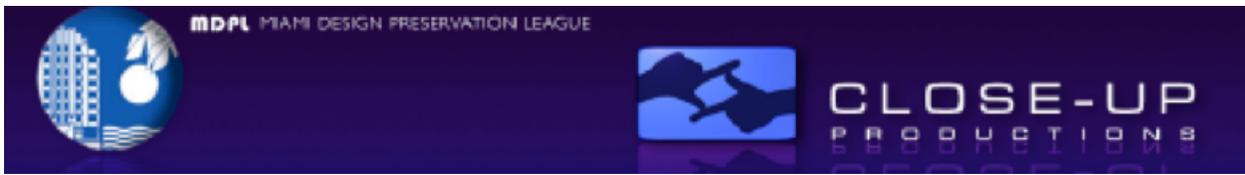
Kathy: Now, this is totally off the subject of the bar but I notice on the wall that you are a founder of Mount Sinai. Tell us about some of your involvement in civic things here in Miami Beach.

Mac Klein: Not much. I've felt - my wife before we were married was getting treatment at Mount Sinai and she couldn't afford to pay for it and I wanted to pay them back for that particular thing. That's the reason that I did what I did. To thank them and in a specific way for what they did for my wife. They treated her, and allowed her to pay \$10 here, \$20 here, things like that.

When I, myself, can't afford it - I gave them whatever money I gave them.

Kathy: So, what do you think of Miami Beach now a days?

- Mac Klein:** It's a completely different world. Miami Beach had more lives than a cat. Absolutely. Remember, it went from the war, to the hotels that were built, the older people that retired here for many, many years, the Cuban boat lift, the cocaine cowboys, Miami Vice, and now it's - the people from the third world are here.
- It's no longer the same. It's not a glamorous place, it's a living place where before, when you said, "I went to Miami Beach." Oh, you must have money or something. Today, if you said you went to Miami Beach - so what? I've been there too. Think of other stories I can tell you.
- [Chuckling]
- Kathy:** South Beach, Ocean Drive is pretty popular.
- Mac Klein:** When you have the sun 12 months out of the year, you're going to be popular. I mean, after all - the slogan is "fun in the sun" so to speak. It'll always be popular.
- Kathy:** What about the Mariel Period? The crime shot up and - you lived through that.
- Mac Klein:** Crime - crime - we used to lock the doors when the cocaine cowboys were down here because of the shooting that went on. Actually, they used to say that if you had a clothesline in your backyard, you used to put your underwear there - now, a body hangs. That's how bad it was. People were getting killed it was... like no tomorrow. These were rough times.
- Kathy:** You're talking about the cocaine cowboy times or the Mariel times?
- Mac Klein:** Well the Mariel that did the cocaine cowboys, because the - because the Mariel's became the cocaine cowboys.
- Kathy:** That was pretty rough.
- Mac Klein:** It was pretty rough. It completely changed the whole thing.
- Kathy:** So, but - that's in the past now, right? What do you think?
- Mac Klein:** Well, the - the American's - so when I speak of America I speak of you or me, we're the minority of Miami Beach now. So, actually they - they run everything. They run the police department and everything else only because of the fact that there are more of them and... And that's it.
- Kathy:** So, who's your clientele now?
- Mac Klein:** My clientele is a mixture of everybody. The complete mixture of everybody.
- Kathy:** What kinds of mixture - from all over the world or from all walks of life - or how would you describe it?



Mac Klein: Well, you can say all over the world as the people that come here from England, France, Germany - come here to visit, come to the mall. You see, we're so well known because the church that we - people went - we have people... I just heard that in Singapore, a man was wearing one of my - one of my shirts and another man walked and sat beside him - he was wearing one of my shirts too. So, you see?

Kathy: Tell the - tell us the story about your daughter in the hospital. You were telling - I don't think that was on camera.

Mac Klein: Well...

Kathy: Your daughter...

Background Male: I can't - we can't get in there now.

Mac Klein: You can't get in?

Background Male: Yeah.

Mac Klein: My daughter - my daughter works for FEMA, plus her job at the hospital - she has a crew that at any given time, the government will call her and she and her crew, are sent to different places that have floods and things like that. Well, she went with a crew to New Orleans, that was some years back when they had that big - big thing there. Her crew was sort of responsible for saving a lot of lives. The New York Times wrote about her, wrote a big article about her. So, that speaks for itself.

Kathy: You said that she was cutting off - taking the clothes off of a man one day, in an emergency room?

Mac Klein: Yeah.

Kathy: Can you tell that story?

Mac Klein: Well, I told the story just the way it is.

Kathy: What about that he had on -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: He had on a Club Deuce t-shirt.

Kathy: And she said?

Mac Klein: She said, "You're wearing my father's shirt."

[Laughter]

He looked at her and says, "I'm sorry lady, you're crazy. I didn't steal this shirt, I bought it at my favorite bar in Miami Beach."

[Laughter]

Kathy: That's quite a coincidence.

Mac Klein: Oh my God, that is a coincidence.

Kathy: So, where did that happen? Where did that -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Westchester General Hospital.

Kathy: Okay.

Mac Klein: In Westchester New York.

Kathy: Wow.

[Laugh]

Mac Klein: Amazing, isn't it?

Kathy: So, your t-shirts get around.

Mac Klein: Mm.

Kathy: Carl, what else? What were we going to ask?

Background Male: Well, I was just thinking when you mentioned Meyer Lansky earlier, we didn't talk about him and his poodle.

Mac Klein: Meyer Lansky - I met Meyer Lansky - there was an appetizing store down the street, on the other side of the street, where on Sunday mornings, Meyer Lansky used to go there with his poodle and he used to stand at the counter and taste the locks and the corn beef and everything else. Twice, I had gone there on a Sunday, and standing next to him and while he was tasting - I was tasting too. I would say hello to him, but that's it. I mean, no conversation. He had this little white, poodle. See, they lived further up on Collins Avenue.

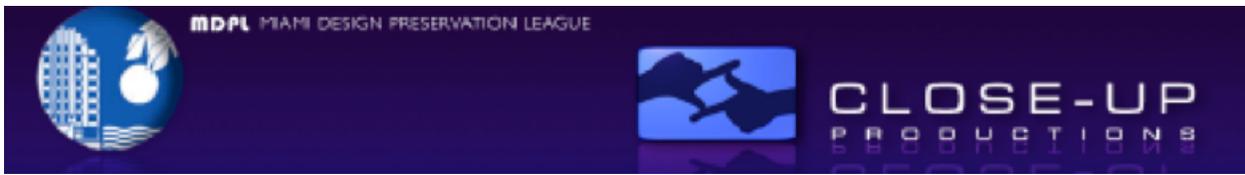
Kathy: He loved dogs.

Mac Klein: Mm.

Background Male: He had that poodle.

Mac Klein: He had that poodle.

Kathy: He had a dachshund, too, didn't he? I've seen pictures of him walking a dachshund.



Mac Klein: See, his stepson is the one that came in here and he killed somebody in a bar on 41st Street and one day - sooner or later they had to get him. He was washing his car, and they killed him.

Background Male: Were you - you talked about your parents being religious - I take it you were not. Did you have a sense of the Jewish community here? Were you part of that in any way? Was that just sort of, another world for you?

Mac Klein: No, they weren't another world. I was a part of that community, I wasn't a religious person but I was part of that community. No matter what, I'm Jewish. Happy to have been more Jewish, happy to have lived Jewish.

Background Male: When you came down here after the war, was there - that changing from - as you talked about, the blue bloods and the changing over to the other people who would come in here after the war - what kind of mix was Miami Beach then? It must have been sort it, incredible.

Mac Klein: No mix.

Background Male: No mix?

Mac Klein: There was no mix between - there was absolutely no mix. Think, the same - the same homes that they owned are owned by basketball players now. They were the ones who lived on Bay Road and they moved - they didn't really move. They were sort of pushed out. Pushed out by hundreds of thousands of people.

Background Male: What about your dogs?

Mac Klein: Hmm?

Background Male: What about your dogs?

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Have you seen -

[Cross talk]

Background Male: I saw them go by, is that - are your dogs -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: My wife shows the dogs.

Background Male: Uh-huh. Do you take part in that at all?

Mac Klein: No. Oh, I love them but - you see, we live our own lives in that sense. We see each other on an average of maybe two to three hours a day.

Background Male: Is this the basis for the longevity of your marriage?

Mac Klein: I imagine it would be.

[Laughter]

You know something? Laugh if you want, but it - it is. The real reason we have our own interests, we have our own friends - I don't know her friends, she doesn't know mine. A completely different world.

Background Male: Is there an area of your life here on Miami Beach, you know, because you've been part of this business community for 60 plus years.

Mac Klein: Only in the club business.

Background Male: Well that was the only...

Mac Klein: See, the only thing I have is street sense and I'll explain why. I didn't go to school, so to speak. I spent three months in high school, and that was it. My - the family, the Jewish family is usually the elderlies that go to school and the younger ones don't. I got a job in East Haven, Connecticut, through the Jewish Agricultural Society, and worked on a farm in East Haven, Connecticut for \$15 a month. I worked for one year. My mother got the check. For one solid year, that farmer worked 18 hours a day.

I learned my education through... It was a great education.

Background Male: You talked about your street sense, what about it? What does that mean?

Mac Klein: Street sense is - you can adapt. You'll never go hungry. I was a soloist in a place called Sea Gate, that's in Coney Island. I used to sing as a kid. When I came back from working on a farm, I was around 16 years of age. In the summer time, I used to go to the [inaudible] [43:33] Mountains with a friend of mine. I used to sing Jewish songs for the people that couldn't afford to have their own entertainment, and he'd go around with a hat and that's how we made along.

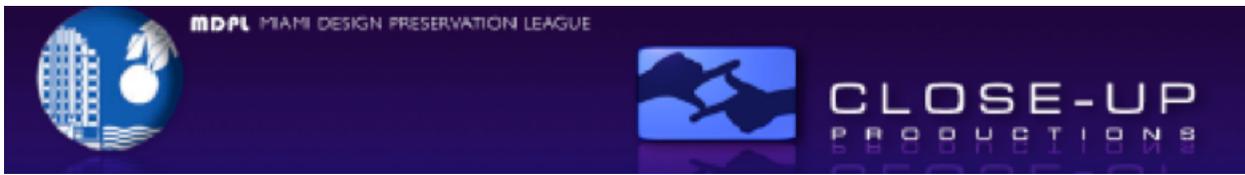
A kid without street sense couldn't do that.

Background Male: What about in Miami? Did the street sense serve you well in the club business?

Mac Klein: Yes. Oh, you need it. How to talk to a wise guy. How to be smarter than him, how not to get out smarted. How'd he get the best for the dollar?

Background Male: How to get your place refurbished.

Mac Klein: You'd be surprised...



Background Male: Okay, so is there anything else you'd like to tell us or talk to us about? If we might have...

Mac Klein: What would you like to?

Background Male: Well, I don't know. Is there something that you think we should have been talking about that we haven't? I'm delighted with our conversation.

Kathy: Yeah, this has been really -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: I hope I've told you something.

Kathy: Oh, yeah.

[Cross talk]

Background Male: Absolutely.

Kathy: Yeah.

Background Male: Absolutely.

Kathy: Any other famous people that you came across or stories or people that came into the bar... Club?

Mac Klein: You know - I'll tell you a story about Tennessee Williams. Tennessee Williams - I used to sit and talk to him at my bar on Alton Road. He was one of the nicest -

[Telephone rings]

And saddest men, I ever met in my life. I had taken this place in South Miami and I was about two blocks away from Miami University. Carl Gable was where the university was - Carl Gable didn't allow liquor. I was just on the border line on South Miami. One day, in walks Tennessee Williams, into my club.

He sits down, and he orders a martini. We started talking and we knew each other from - from the bar on 14th Street. He had three martinis, I says, "What are you drinking these martinis for?" He says, "You know something Mac?" He says, "Every time I have to talk to professors at a university..." He says, "I have to get drunk before I can say the first word."

[Laugh]

Those were his exact words to me, that he had to get drunk in order to talk to them. He was funny.

Kathy: That's very interesting. So, he was on his way to the university to meet -

[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Well he was going to - he was going to speak there. He did a lot of speaking. Such a nice man.

Background Male: What was the address of your place? Do you remember the address?

Mac Klein: 1610 Alton Road.

Kathy: No, on South Miami.

[Cross talk]

Background Male: On South Miami.

Kathy: We live near there.

Mac Klein: The Lower Lounge, on Red Road and South Dixie Highway - it was opposite - there used to be a [inaudible] [47:12] bakery there.

Kathy: Yeah.

Mac Klein: I shared the parking lot with Wholesome. Now that's Red Road and South Dixie Highway.

Background Male: So, was it on the - on the same side as the Wholesome or across the street from the Wholesome?

Mac Klein: I was across the street.

Background Male: Okay, so where the Burger King is now?

Mac Klein: I haven't got the least idea of what there is now.

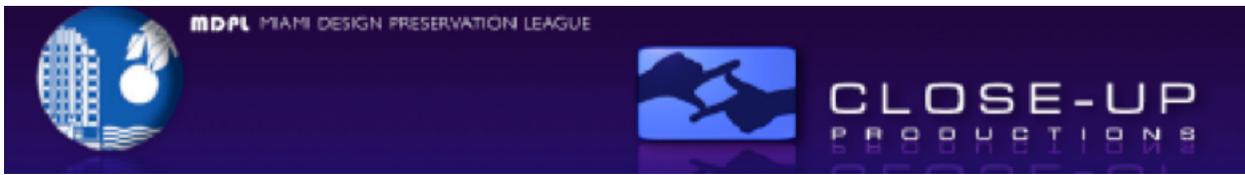
[Laughter]

There is nothing there now. You see, because that was the line separating Carl Gables from South Miami and Carl Gables did not have liquor then. So, it was the place where everybody met, was in my place.

Background Male: Location, location, location.

Mac Klein: Location - you're absolutely right. Location is - location, location. See, that's the story of Tennessee Williams. Oh, there were other stars that - like I told you - the big thing was that movies going there at five o'clock in the morning.

Kathy: Oh, yeah.



Mac Klein: To listen to these people. It was just amazing to listen to these comedians making so much money but here they are trying to beat each other when it comes to a joke, or this, or that. Trying out the next month's routine.

Kathy: Did they steal -
[Cross talk]

Mac Klein: Steal from each other? Certainly.
[Laugh]

Kathy: So this was at Wolfie's? Can you describe the scene there?

Mac Klein: Yes, you see what happened - we would all close at five o'clock in the morning - that was the law. Now, what entertainer was working at the Fountain, or Eden Rock or [inaudible] [49:02] - or the club owner, would all close their places and go to Wolfies. There was a certain section, practically roped off that was for us. If you were part of that - I was part of it because I owned that club on Alton Road, therefore made me a club owner.

I used to sit there and it was a world that you could - you'll never see again.

Kathy: So, who were some of the comedians?

Mac Klein: You name them, and they were there.

Kathy: Milton Berle?

Mac Klein: Milton Berle, Bishop, so many there.

Kathy: Do you remember any?

Mac Klein: So many of them.

Kathy: Buddy Hackett?

Mac Klein: Buddy Hackett was there, yeah.

Background Male: What about Jerry Lewis? He show up there?

Mac Klein: Hmm?

Background Male: Jerry Lewis?

Mac Klein: No, Jerry Lewis - I remember that he was - he was just 21 years of age when he played down here.

Kathy: Dean Martin.

Mac Klein: Dean Martin.

[Pause]

He was married to another - she was the [inaudible] [50:27] Ball Queen.

Kathy: I didn't know that.

Mac Klein: That was Dean Martin, that was his wife. The one he had the children with and he lost his child in an airplane crash, accident. His son.

Kathy: So, did you book any acts in your club?

Mac Klein: No, what we had was - like I said - female impersonators. Yeah, we booked them. They were the greatest entertainers in the world.

Background Male: They do song routines and...

Mac Klein: What they did is they, they mouth - they lip synced, but they were so good. That's the reason that all these actors used to come to see them. They were talented, they were pure talent that wasn't going to get them anywhere in the world but it was the talent that another talented man would appreciate. That's how you had these people sitting at Wolfies. Each one of those people - you tried to beat them, but each one admired the other for what the other was. They were talented people.

Kathy: Fantastic.

Background Male: Thank you so much.

[Laughter]

Okay, let me find the buttons here.

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