



Oral History of Roy Clay

Interviewed by:
Gardner Hendrie
Chuck House

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This interview was done in Roy Clay's home in Piedmont, CA. Several people attended, including two of his sons, Roy Jr. and Rodney. Also, two women who are working with Clay at the RoyClayGroup.com—Barbara Becnel, and Deborah Tinsley. Gardner Hendrie and Chuck House were the CHM interviewers

Hendrie: Well, I would like to welcome you, and thank you for agreeing to do an oral history for the Computer History Museum. We have Roy Clay with us here today. I think maybe we should get started. If you don't mind, if you told me a little bit about your family, your parents, your brothers and sisters, where you grew up, so we have an idea about your very early life, what it was like.

Clay: Very early life was in Saint Louis, Missouri. In fact, a little town called Kinloch, Missouri. And I was - there were maybe five families of blacks in San Francisco, well, in Palo Alto. But I was close enough to San Francisco that I could ride there for entertainment.

Hendrie: Okay.

Clay: And when I was born there in Saint Louis, and moved to California when I was hired by Control Data Corporation to build computers in California. In fact, they still build computers in California in the Livermore area, Livermore.

Hendrie: All right. Can I go back and ask you another question about when you were growing up? What did your father and mother do?

Clay: My father and mother. My father was a janitor. And he died when he was like 80-years-old. Yeah, I don't know, maybe 70, maybe even younger. So I was with my mother. She was born in Alabama. Moved to Saint Louis, but she began teaching school in Alabama. And so when I was born, I was born with a school teacher head, my mother. And she was interested in my getting the best education I could get. All my life was with education, not with a job. But education, because to know something well was important to do. And so I spent my time learning about everything.

Hendrie: Okay, so-- yeah? Go ahead.

Clay: And my mother made me aware of everything around me, and I had eight sisters and brothers. And I was in the middle of them. I'm the middle of nine. And my mother thought there was something about me. She wanted me to stay with her, what she wanted to do. So my mother took my life from the

time I was in kindergarten, until I reached college age, she had taught school, and she was wanting to make sure that I was as well-educated as I could be. No jobs. Just know how to do something well.

Hendrie: Okay, good. Now did she teach school at all when you were growing up in the Saint Louis area?

Clay: No, she did not.

Hendrie: Yeah, okay.

Clay: She was just a mother.

Hendrie: Okay.

House: Good seeing you again. And you know, we've got a little story about you could have been the kid in Ferguson that was in *The Mercury*.

Clay: That's right!

House: And also in a couple of magazines.

Clay: Yeah.

House: But let's go back before that and talk about grade school and what you really liked at that point.

Clay: Yeah, no, you want me to start about that?

House: Yeah!

Clay: Well, I was born in a place called Kinloch, Missouri. And the population of black folks when I was there was like 100, 100 black folks in this town where I had to go to school. But adjacent to another town that wasn't much bigger. And it was segregated. But the schools were separate. And my mother just wanted me to be educated. Just learn how to do something well. And she was-- I told you, she taught school before she married. And she stayed with me for as long as she could, just making me learn how to do something. Not for money, but I didn't think about making money, because there weren't many jobs for

African-Americans when I was there. Teaching school or the post office. So I was just learn as much as you can as fast as you can about everything that you can. And that's what caused me to do where-- in places-- get me to computers. Right?

House: Well, now, that's a big leap from elementary school, learn what you can to computers.

Clay: Yes.

House: There's got to be a story in there. <laughs>

Clay: Well, I was looking for a job moving out of Saint Louis. And found California. And California launched a Radiation Laboratory.

House: Well, let's back up. Did you do college at Saint Louis University?

Clay: College, Saint Louis University.

House: How did you pick that university?

Clay: I was one of the first blacks to graduate Danner and graduate from Saint Louis University.

House: Okay, in?

Clay: In, let's see. Well, <inaudible>, hey, Ronnie. The year that I entered--

House: What field were you in?

Clay: There was no field. I just wanted to learn how to do something well.

House: Okay.

Clay: But I entered in computers.

House: Really?

Clay: In computers. I was there when computers were about the size of this room.

House: I was going to say, "That was pretty early!"

Clay: Right. And I worked with-- was hired by a company that competed with another company in Livermore to build smaller computers. Now the smaller computers were still not digital computers, but just smaller computers. And I was close enough to Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, and people who entered in computers. So when the company moved here, they want-- for some reason they said they wanted to meet me. And I had a meeting with them (McDonnell Aircraft, pre-McDonnell-Douglas), and I became one of their first people to be hired. And--

House: All right, Lawrence Radiation Labs where? Out here in Berkeley?

Clay: Yeah, Livermore.

House: Livermore? Oh, okay.

Clay: Yeah, yeah. Livermore.

House: So you'd found your way to California by then.

Clay: I drove from Saint Louis to Livermore.

House: Here, okay.

Clay: I had never been as far as 500 miles out of Saint Louis, when my wife and I decided to drive--

House: So you were married by then?

Clay: I got marr-- I'd been married, yeah, right. I was young. I was married when I was 21-years-old, 21.

House: Not bad.

Clay: And my wife never likes me to say this, but she was older than I. <laughter>

House: Yeah, they don't like that.

Clay: No, but she, for whatever reason knew of me long before we met. And she wanted to meet me. And when we met, we were both engaged, already engaged.

House: To someone else?

Clay: To someone else. But I knew I wanted to marry her, and she wanted to marry me, right? And I was younger than anybody she'd ever dated. But she wanted to get married, and we both tried to find a way to get-- meet each other, get to know each other. And when we married in Saint Louis, on-- yeah, in Saint Louis, we immediately got a car and drove to San Francisco. I was-- I applied for-- I was contacted by Lawrence Radiation Laboratory in Livermore, California. They invited me-- sent me an offer letter, I signed it, and we drove from Saint Louis to Livermore, California. And I-- but there were no homes in Livermore for black people to live. I could not find a place.

House: Was that right?

Clay: So I lived-- I worked-- I lived in San Francisco and drove to Livermore.

House: Did you really? Wow.

Clay: And then I moved from Saint Louis, from Livermore to Saint Louis. Not Livermore. To-- yeah, Livermore to Saint Louis.

House: You moved back?

Clay: No, not <inaudible>. To-- Ronnie, what town did I live in?

<sidebar conversation with Clay's son, Ronnie, off-mike, which revealed that Clay had recently suffered a stroke, so his memory wasn't so sharp>

House: I had one myself three years ago, so I can relate.

Clay: Oh, really? Yeah, yeah, oh, god, yeah.

House: Well, I was fortunate.

Clay: I was lucky, too, I didn't think I'd make it.

House: But here's a couple of old codgers who are doing fine. And there's another one sitting there (pointing to Hendrie).

Clay: Yeah, yeah.

Clay, R.: So the answer to that. You want me to give him the answer to that question?

Clay: Yeaha.

Clay, R.: So you moved from San Francisco to Palo Alto. You didn't move back to Saint Louis.

Clay: No, yeah.

House: Well, now you worked for Control Data, I read somewhere. Is that right?

Clay: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

House: Where were they?

Clay: Control Data was in California. That was in Palo Alto, California.

House: Oh, they were? Okay.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: I didn't know they had a place in Palo Alto.

Clay: Uh.. yeah.

House: Were you programming for them?

Clay: Programming, right?

House: Fortran?

Clay: Fortran, correct. Right, right. I was there, I was with Control Data, I <inaudible>, when Control Data was conceived to find an easier way for people to program than by the code that I used. So I didn't use Fortran, but I developed a Fortran compiler.

House: Oh, you did? Okay.

Clay: Yeah.

House: For them.

Clay: For them, correct.

House: So this would be in the early '60s?

Clay: In the '60s. Yeah, that's correct, yeah.

House: And did you have your family started by then?

Clay: My oldest son, my oldest son was born in Saint Louis.

House: Okay.

Clay: But when he was born, he was-- when we moved to California, he was not a year old. Because I was looking for a job and the closest one I could find was when I was contacted by-- what was it Control Data? Yeah. (this was actually McDonnell Aircraft)

House: By Lawrence Livermore.

Clay: Lawrence in Livermore, Lawrence in Livermore, yeah.

House: And then this boy was born out here?

Clay: He was born out here, correct.

House: Are those your only two sons?

Clay: I have three sons.

House: Oh, you got a third son?

Clay: He's the middle one.

House: He's the middle one, okay.

Clay: Yeah, yeah. And--

House: You didn't have nine. You only had three.

Clay: I had three sons. <laughter>

House: There ya go, right?

Clay: Yeah, no, I had eight brothers and sisters, though. There were nine of us. Yeah.

House: Okay, how many are living?

Clay: I think five. I think now-- no. Two, five. Yeah.

House: Okay, so you've got good genes.

Clay: Yeah, really, yeah. A long time.

House: Hanging on pretty good.

Clay: Yes.

House: Okay, so we're almost up to Hewlett Packard.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Do you want to say a little more about Control Data? What machine you worked on, or--

Clay: It was the 650.

House: 650, okay!

Clay: Yeah, yeah. I don't know why I remember that, but--

House: No, I think that's right. I think that's right.

Clay: Right, right.

House: Boy, I didn't-- did you know they had a facility in Palo Alto? I did not. Was it software only? Or was it a--

Clay: No, I was hired-- I came to Livermore to work for them. But I was exposed to computers by the other company in Saint Louis.

House: Oh, McDonnell?

Clay: McDonnell. McDonnell, right, right.

House: Okay, so you'd worked for them a little bit.

Clay: Well, funny, I applied at McDonnell's, they off-- they wanted me to come for an interview, and I did. But when I arrived, they didn't know I was black.

House: <laughs> Oh, and they didn't like that.

Clay: They said, "Very sorry, Mr. Clay, but we don't have any jobs for you."

House: Is that right?

Clay: That's what I was told. "Very sorry, Mr. Clay, but we don't have any jobs for ya." So anyway, and I found another job. And again, oh, my god, they called me back a few years later-- five/six years later they called me to interview for them, and I was hired there in black <inaudible>.

House: And this was the same company that wouldn't take you said, "Okay, we're ready now."

Clay: Right.

House: Correct. Well, that had to feel pretty good.

Clay: Yeah, yeah.

House: So you've been a pioneer everywhere. First black at Saint Louis University. The first one at McDonnell.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Were you the first one at Lawrence Livermore?

Clay: No. I wasn't. There were maybe three others along with me.

House: Well, that's quite a story to get to roughly the mid-'60s.

Clay: Yeah.

House: And then one day you're at Control Data, and somebody from Hewlett Packard called you? Or did you call Hewlett Packard?

Clay: No. I was looking for-- I ~~listed~~ listened to the radio. And I heard about this place in Livermore, and they were looking for people who knew something about computers. And I'm going, "Who the hell is Livermore looking for?" So I called, they invited me to come for an interview. And I said to my wife, "Why'd I do it? I know I don't want to go there." 'Cause I wasn't unhappy with my job, but I went for an interview, 'cause I said-- and then when I arrived, I was interviewed by a young man-- if I called his name, you'd know it, 'cause he's-- I was called for an interview in Livermore. And I interviewed. They offered me a job, and I refused. And then the head guy called me, asked me to come, that he wanted to talk to me. And he wanted-- he talked to me but he wanted to start a computer assembly in California. And I interviewed. I ~~as~~ was the first (African-American) employee of the company, I was gonna say Control Data-- not Control Data-- but this was in Palo Alto.

House: And you were the first employee of Control Data? Did I hear you right on that?

Clay: No.

House: In Palo Alto?

Hendrie: I think he said it wasn't Control Data.

Clay: Control Data, yeah. In Palo Alto, yeah.

House: It wasn't Control Data, or it was?

Clay: It-- well-- I started at Control Data. I wasn't the first-- I was the first at Hewlett Packard Company. First African-American.

House: Oh! Oh, oh, okay.

Clay: African-American at Hewlett Packard, yeah.

House: Okay, so that's the twist.

Clay: And I was hired at Hewlett Packard Company to start a computer. They was interested in starting computers. Didn't know anything about it. And I went to interview and I said-- and I refused the job. <laughter> And he called me back, and said, "Come!"

House: Do you know who it was?

Clay: Yeah, I'll think of it in a minute.

House: Was it Kay Magleby?

Clay: Huh?

House: Kay Magleby?

Clay: I know Kay Magleby, yeah. No.

House: But it wasn't Kay.

Clay: It wasn't be like Kay-- yeah, Kay Magleby, no, Kay Magleby was at the company before I started at Hewlett Packard. Kay Magleby was never at-- never in Palo Alto anyway (actually, Magleby was at HP Palo Alto, overlapping Clay's entire time). But the person who brought me to California, Kay Magleby-- you know where he is now? Kay Magleby?

House: Kay passed away about four years ago.

Clay: Oh, is that right? Yeah.

House: He's gone.

Clay: Kay hired-- I was hired to work with Kay. Yeah.

House: Okay, so you were doing software and he was doing hardware?

Clay: No, we were both doing software.

House: You were both doing software.

Clay: He had the hardware and software. He had both. I was hired to do software.

House: Okay, so when you were hired to do software, was that like the operating system?

Clay: Yes, operating system, correct.

House: Did it have a name?

Clay: No, but now then I was hired to develop an operating system.

House: I was going to say, we didn't have anything.

Clay: No, you didn't have <laughter>-- no. And no, I was hired to develop an operating system. That was before I was hired called Systems Programming. Systems Programming. I was hired to start.

House: And that was in Palo Alto?

Clay: That was in Palo Alto.

House: Was it the Dymec Division, or was it the Laboratories?

Clay: No, it was in-- no, I was hired in Livermore Laboratory in Livermore.

House: No, but when you joined HP, did you join a Division, or did you join the Central Lab that we had?

Clay: No, I joined HP. When David Packard decided that he wanted to develop computers. And he heard my name and invited me to come for an interview. And I came and then he-- when I refused the job, he called me back.

House: So Dave Packard called you back!

Clay: David Packard called me back, right. And told me what he wanted to do and why he wanted to do it. And he wanted me to start the activity. I was hired to start the computer activity and under David Packard. Right.

House: I love it, that's great.

Clay: And now, David Packard had one part, and Bill Hewlett had the other.

House: Right.

Clay: Now when I reported, I did, I had asked Dave-- Dave had asked me to set it up. Right? Well, then Dave left for the Pentagon.

House: Right.

Clay: Bill Hewlett took over. When Bill Hewlett called me, he called to tell me that he-- they were going to-- they were not going to do computers. So I would not have a job. And he invited me to-- there was, what, something we call-- Hewlett Packard never fired anybody. They never. And when they hired me, he just had to find another job. He would not-- he didn't want me to do the job, but we had a name for it that I forgot, where we were hired to do nothing! <laughter>

House: Hired to do nothing.

Clay: Got hired to do no-- I reported to nobody and nobody reported to me. And when I told my wife, she said, "What happened?" She said-- I told her, she says, "Well, what do you want to do?" I said, "I don't know, they didn't tell me." She said, "Well, don't work there." <laughter> And I called them back that day, and told them, "No longer. I'm not interested." So I left them with no job. Well, then David Packard came back from the Pentagon, and he called me again. He said, "We want you to come back to HP." And I went back to meet him, and he told me what he wanted to do, and what he wanted me to start. He said, "You got us in the computer business. And I want you to get us out of it." And I said, I talked to him, I said, "No, I can't get you out."

House: And I'd like to explore that a little bit with you if that's all right?

Clay: Okay, all right.

House: So we hired-- we bought a company called DSI out of Wisconsin or Illinois. I've forgotten where. And brought several of those people into Kay's group.

Clay: Okay, yeah.

House: John Koudela was one.

Clay: Yeah, John Koudela

House: I don't remember--

Clay: And then John Koudela came-- then John Koudela came to HP when I was down there.

House: Right. Were you already there when he came?

Clay: Yes, oh, no, no.

House: He was there when you got there.

Clay: Yeah, about the same time, yeah, correct.

House: Okay, and Ed Holland?

Clay: Ed Holland.

House: Was part of that.

Clay: Yeah!

House: And then they brought-- I think they brought Tor Larsen in?

Clay: Tor Larsen.

House: To do mechanical.

Clay: Yes.

House: Did you know Tor?

Clay: I met them all.

House: Yeah, okay. And then you must have hired a team.

Clay: Yes.

House: And I believe, let me just check this. I think you hired one of Bill Hewlett's sons.

Clay: Yes, I did!

House: Which one?

Clay: Was it Jim Hewlett?

House: Probably was Jim, wasn't it?

Clay: I think it was Jim, yeah.

House: And isn't there a little story about there wasn't enough room, and then you guys didn't come to work on time. And--

Clay: Yeah. <laughter>

House: Help me with that story.

Clay: No, that story was Bill Hewlett, I hired Bill Hewlett's son. And he really liked the job I gave him! And we started work enough time-- between nine and noon. But you'd work 40 hours, but you'd come when it was convenient. And then do what you had to do, and work for 40 hours, and nobody ever worked less than 40 hours. When Bill Hewlett heard that I had hired Bill Hewlett's son, and he told his daddy what I'd done. And Bill Hewlett called me and says, "You can work here, but when you work at HP, I want you here at eight, and leave at five. And you work 40 hours a week. Right?" I said, "Yes, sir." And when Bill Hewlett, I told his son that. But I said, told him, said, "But that's not what I'm going to do." <laughter>

House: "That's not what I'm going to do," huh?

Clay: That's right, right. But David came in after the Pentagon, and when I ha-- after I left HP, and he wanted me to come back. But Bill had still did not want computers. Computers were Dave's project. And

that was how-- that's what Dave hired me. And he said, I told him that, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you, I'm kind of-- I still want to get computers out of HP, and you're the only one that can do it," to me, that's what he said.

House: So this would have been the spring of '72? Something like that when he came back from the Pentagon.

Clay: That's about right, from the Pentagon, that's correct.

House: And the 3000 was about to launch.

Clay: Right, correct.

House: And he wanted out of computing?

Clay: Yeah, I had done-- okay, I started the 2000. And I had it developed, but I left just after that. And they developed some problem with it. And he wanted me to come back to get them back-- get out of it. But before the was coming back-- he wanted to get the computer, sell it off, so he could get rid of it. Right? And I told him I'd come back to finish the computer work. But when he said--

House: You're not going to get him out of computers.

Clay: No.

House: He didn't like that.

Clay: Yeah, no. So I said, "I was fired by **David Six-Fire** (listen to the tape. My hunch is that this is "Six-Five" which was a nickname for Packard because he was 6 foot, 5 inches tall)." We stood up and shook hands. <laughter> And I said, "Good-bye," and I didn't talk to him for maybe five years. Yeah. But he--

House: So let's go back to Hewlett's son working for you. There's a story about golf matches?

Clay: Well, yeah. We played golf. To start in the morning at six o'clock, whatever time. As long as they get finished by nine, to get to work by noon, right? And Bill Hewlett's son, also fascinated by playing golf. See?

House: So you and he were out playing golf?

Clay: Yeah.

House: And his dad wants you at work.

Clay: Yeah. <laughter>

House: That's a great story.

Clay: Right, correct, yes.

House: I don't think I'd put that in the book, but that's a great story!

Clay: Yeah.

House: There's another story about Holiday Inn, that HP had the-- that Tom Perkins got us into the Holiday Inn timesharing?

Clay: Yes.

House: And you were running the lab for Tom, weren't ya?

Clay: Yes, yeah.

House: What's that story?

Clay: Well, Tom and I-- I started about the same time. Tom might have started HP shortly before I did. And Tom, when we met, he wanted me to work with him. So where we went, wherever he went, he wanted me with him. And Dave came back and they brought Tom from where he was, and in fact, Tom-- like somebody in this room like <inaudible>. So he said, "I want to get out of computers." Tom called me and said, "Dave wants to get out of computers." He said, "But I told him, I wanted you to impress me." To follow me. He said he would stay at HP, but he wanted me to take computers. And Dave said, "No," that was to Bill. And but Dave-- Bill had convinced Dave that, "No, let's get out of computer again ~~all together~~

altogether." So he had to find a way to get out of it. And Dave said, "I want you to help us get out of the computer business." And I said, "No."

House: So have you thought about that since? I mean, it became the largest computer company on the globe.

Clay: Yes. <laughter>

House: And he wanted you out of it.

Clay: He wanted me out, right, right.

House: That's so ironic!

Clay: Yeah, yeah.

House: Huh?

Clay: He didn't-- now, I started computer at HP, and I left and I had the <inaudible>, but I left at the time that Hewlett Packard had acquired another company up in Boston, from Boston.

House: Which company is that?

Clay: You call the name of it, I'd see it, right. David Packard had acquired a company from Boston, and--

House: Boy, I don't know what one that would be.

Clay: You would know.

House: Around the time of the-- of Dave coming back from the Pentagon?

Clay: Yes.

House: Or earlier?

Clay: Correct.

House: We bought Apollo the next decade. But Dave didn't do that.

Clay: Apollo, yeah, huh? Apollo?

House: Okay, are you thinking of Apollo?

Clay: No. I know Apollo by name, but there's another company that Hewlett-- David Packard bought and Apollo was bought at that time, but it wasn't Apollo. Anyway.

House: Boy, you're tapping something I don't know about actually.

Clay: Yeah, you would know the company.

House: Yeah, I'm sure I would, yeah.

Clay: The company started in the Boston area.

House: And they were doing computers.

Clay: In computers. Before, in fact, before HP got in computers. Right?

Hendrie: Well, he wanted to buy DEC, but he decided not to.

Clay: That's correct.

House: Oh, he didn't decide not to. Ken decided he wouldn't--

Hendrie: He wouldn't sell, yeah.

Clay: He didn't want it by Dave.

House: They had a handshake on that is my understanding. And Ken got cold feet overnight.

Hendrie: Well, Magleby says--

Clay: Kay Magleby.

Hendrie: Kay Magleby said that, "Flip chips will never work. Don't do that."

House: Well, yeah.

Clay: Right, no.

House: Yeah, that was the technology. But they shook hands on 25 million over dinner. And Ken decided that he couldn't work for-- that he'd wind up working for Dave, and he couldn't do it.

Clay: Right.

House: And so we didn't buy DEC.

Clay: So when that didn't work, Dave hired me to start a computer program.

House: So that computer, that was the 2116.

Clay: 2116. I did the 2116.

House: And the 2116, and the 16 was named because it was 16 bits.

Clay: Sixteen bits. Yeah, that's how that--

House: And this (pointing to Gardner Hendrie) is the inventor of the first 16 bit minicomputer.

Clay: Well, the first 8 bit-- no, but I started at 16.

House: Okay, so I want to go back to this 2116.

Clay: Yeah.

House: So it's a 16-bit machine.

Clay: Sixteen bit.

House: Did you guys discuss whether to make it 12 or 8 or 16?

Clay: No. We started out at 8. When I looked at it, it, I said, "I know 8 bit does not give me," the 8 bit word didn't give me enough. Because I had started 16. And Kay Magleby--

House: Okay, so the idea was it was an instrumentation computer.

Clay: Correct.

House: And was that because you needed that much--

Clay: Well, that's when I started software on the computer.

House: Okay.

Clay: Fortran software, but I needed to develop the software, I needed 16 bits. The 8 bit wouldn't work. Okay? Now, however, Kay Magleby and this group that he bought, had worked with 8 bit. Yeah, yeah, right. And I said, "No, six bit."

House: But that's not the group from Boston?

Clay: The group from Boston came in there. They wanted to start the 8 bit.

House: Oh, so that's the-- is that Data Systems? DSI?

Clay: Data, yeah.

House: Is that who you were trying to think of?

Clay: That's correct.

House: Okay. Okay, that makes sense.

Clay: That's correct.

House: Yeah, okay, you said I'd know. Okay. And that's in, I think John Koudela came from Data--

Clay: John Koudela

House: Yeah.

Clay: Right? It was John.

House: Okay, now Bob Grimm was part of some group.

Clay: Bob Grimm was our big boss.

House: He was your big boss.

Clay: But then--

House: He's a pretty good-sized guy, I agree.

Clay: But then Bob Grimm, the way HP did, they didn't fire anybody. But they would hire, and then act like you're dead. They would cause you to disappear. So Bob Grimm came in. I worked for Bob Grimm. And then they just moved-- one day Bob Grimm just wasn't there. He was no longer the boss. But they didn't fire Bob. They just moved (him) out of there.

House: Who'd they put in?

Clay: Uh huh?

House: Who took his place?

Clay: Was that--

House: It wouldn't have been Jack Melchor?

Clay: Jack Melchor.

House: Okay.

Clay: Right. And but then Jack Melchor also had a problem, though.

House: Well, he had a heart attack, didn't he?

Clay: Correct. I remember, he had a heart attack. Right. He had an attack.

House: And then did-- and wasn't-- didn't Perkins take over then?

Clay: Perkins took over then, correct.

House: Okay.

Clay: And Perkins and I met. Right?

House: Oh, so that's when you met.

Clay: Yes.

House: Because Perkins came in. He hadn't been part of the group.

Clay: Correct. He came in, right? But we became-- Perkins and I became great friends.

House: Well, you wound up working with him through his-- through Kleiner-Perkins, didn't you?

Clay: Yes.

House: Quite a while.

Clay: Right. And--

House: I want to ask you about that a little later.

Clay: Yes, right.

House: 'Cause--

Clay: And he wanted me wherever he went.

House: Okay. He was a firebrand.

Clay: Yeah. Jack Kleiner. Now, be like, Ronnie? I gotta a letter from him, Kay Magleby-- not Kay Magleby. Kleiner-Per--

House: Gene Kleiner, or Tom? Tom Perkins?

Clay: Tom Perkins, yeah.

House: Oh, my!

Clay: Yeah.

House: Wow! This is pretty neat!

Clay: Yeah!

House: (reading a framed letter): Kleiner-Perkins letterhead, May 10th, 1973. "Dear Roy, Congratulations on the City Council election. A well-deserved victory. All the best. Sincerely, Tom, Thomas J. Perkins." I love it! I love it!

Clay: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

House: Well, but you consulted for him when he set up Tandem.

Clay: Yes.

House: And when he set up Intel. This is the interviewer's error. Perkins did not set up Intel

Clay: Yes.

House: And when he set up Compaq. Again, interviewer error. Tandem, yes; Compaq, no.

Clay: Yes.

House: Is that right?

Clay: Yes.

House: Did I get that story right?

Clay: All of those, yeah.

House: So tell me the Tandem story, because those were old HP guys.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: Correct. Wasn't that Jimmy Treybig and Mike Green, and--

Clay: Mike Green.

House: Did you hire them?

Clay: I hired them. I hired them. Mike Green I hired from Stanford, he'd just-- Mike Green had been-- he was-- Stanford got into computer development at Stanford. And they hired Mike Green. That's the group they hired from Boston. And I hired that group to come work--

House: Oh, you hired the whole group?

Clay: I hired the whole group. <laughs> Right.

House: So that became your HP software team.

Clay: That's correct. Yeah.

House: So do you remember any of the other people?

Clay: Yeah, no they were there. When I left, they left. I can remember the name maybe, maybe.

Hendrie: Okay. Was-- Jim Gray wasn't part of that. Jim Gray?

Clay: Gray, yes.

Hendrie: Was Jim part of that?

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: No kidding. I didn't know he worked for HP. **House off-line:** We cannot find any record that Gray ever worked for HP. *It wasn't Jim Gray, the well-known database expert. It was Robert (Bob) Gray, who was one of the four folk who joined from DSI, c.f. Kay Magleby CHM interview by Hendrie.*

Clay: Yeah.

Hendrie: I can believe it. He might have done HP Image.

Clay: No.

Hendrie: So, HP Image came out for the 2100 timeshare, right?

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: Did that come out of your group?

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: Who designed that? Do you remember?

Clay: Who?

Hendrie: Or, did you design that?

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: You designed HP Image?

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: That was a relational database pretty much. (Actually, it was a powerful network database, which was vital to help the performance of the 3000. CHH)

Clay: It was under my--

Hendrie: Yeah.

Clay: Well, I ran the group that started it. (Some credit Mike Green as the key designer)

Hendrie: Right, right. So, that was-- I think that was the first relational database on a mini. (No, see above)

Clay: Say it again.

Hendrie: I think that was the first relational database running on a mini computer.

Clay: Yes.

Hendrie: I don't think DEC had one yet.

Clay: But that was before-- The whole thing changed when they came-- I started out a thirty-two-bit computer, went to 16-bit computer, then I got-- when Intel-- that Intel?

Hendrie: Yeah.

Clay: And who is the guy who started Intel?

Hendrie: Gordon Moore and Bob Noyce.

Clay: Bob Noyce.

Hendrie: Bob Noyce? Yeah.

Clay: Tom Perkins had them call me.

Hendrie: Okay.

Clay: And they said, "Here's what we got. What do you think?" I looked at it and said, "My god, just sell it." It was-- in fact, we had to find a computer screen big enough because we was building it-- well, obviously, the mini computer.

Hendrie: Right.

Clay: And they called me to find out what they would do with it. And I said, "No, no. Sell it." And that was-- it was Intel. Intel. Intel. Intel. Intel. I want to make sure I don't get the names mixed up.

House (from here on): Well, let's go back and pick up the thread when you-- so, Perkins was running Dymec. Perkins was your general manager after Grimm, and then Melchor, and then Perkins.

Clay: Came, then Perkins, yeah.

House: And then Perkins disappeared.

Clay: Well-- okay. Perkins hired me. Not Bob-- I worked for Perkins.

House: Right.

Clay: He was head guy. I reported to him.

House: Right.

Clay: And then when Perkins was transferred, still in HP, to another place in HP--

House: He did just like the others. He took a job that had no job.

Clay: Correct. Right.

House: We did that a lot.

Clay: But when he-- when Perkins was transferred, he called me to take his job. I took the job that Perkins had. It was a small transfer because I worked for Perkins all the time. And then Dave went to the Pentagon. Dave Packard went to the Pentagon. Bill Hewlett took over. It was Bill Hewlett who did not want computers.

House: Well, didn't he put George Newman or somebody like that in?

Clay: Yeah, they did nothing. He wanted to get rid of it.

House: Yeah, okay.

Clay: In fact, they told me what-- no, it was _____. Perkins did not understand-- not Tom, yeah-- he did not understand computers. See, Perkins, two of them worked at it, Tom Perkins and Bill.

House: Tom didn't understand computers either? I know Bill Hewlett you said didn't understand computers.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: But did I hear you say Tom didn't understand them also?

Clay: I'm trying to figure out where Tom fit, how Tom and I worked together. No, Tom Perkins-- no, they had accessed computers. Pardon, they used computers. But I started what I call systems programming.

House: Okay.

Clay: Systems, where we build systems to work with IDAT(???) sixteen-bit computer.

House: So, one famous machine that came out of that that Tom takes credit for in his memoirs is a sixteen teletypes tied to one computer, kind of a timeshare. Did you do that program?

Clay: I had to do it. Any computer--

House: Because I think that's the one that Hewlett didn't like being at Holiday Inn.

Clay: Yeah, correct. I did that.

House: And you told me a story once before. You said he called you at ten in the morning and said, "I want to take that away from Holiday Inn."

Clay: Correct. Correct.

House: Is that right?

Clay: That's correct. Right.

House: What do you mean take it away from Holiday Inn?

Clay: Well--

House: He didn't want to be in that business, did he?

Clay: No, I had committed to the sale to Holiday Inn and committed to deliver it because we had some that were working. And Bill Hewlett said he didn't want it, said, "What have you done? What have you done? Cancel it. I'm not going to have part of it." So--

House: And thus began the illustrious Hewlett-Packard computer company.

Clay: Yes.

House: Quite a story, yeah. These are our heroes. These heroes have feet of clay. I'm sorry. Your name is Clay. That's quite a story. Okay, so--

Clay: And now, mind you--

House: So, let me focus on a moment then. So, you quit.

Clay: Yeah.

House: And you set your own company up?

Clay: Yes.

House: Or did you consult for a while?

Clay: No, I set my own company up. My wife, my late wife, wanted to do it. I said no. I have to have a way to make money. She said, "No, you don't have to work for anybody." And that's what-- she said do what you want to do. She had me start something in my house. She put a room in my house to do whatever I wanted to. But when I started, I said, "No, I need some-- I want something different," because when I did it at my house, or home, I had a room. But she could call me and said, "Do you have time to stop by the store and get--"

<laughter>

House: Good home business.

Clay: Right.

House: So--

Clay: She told me, "Do whatever you want to do. And I'm with you."

House: So, what did you do? What were the first jobs you did?

Clay: I worked for nobody after that. I just started my own thing. And every--

House: Well, let me ask you-- What was the name of the company?

Clay, Jr.: Roy Clay-- Roy L. Clay and Associates.

Clay: Roy L. Clay and Associates.

House: That's the address that's on this letter down on University Avenue.

Clay: Yes, correct.

House: Okay, but Tom, then, left HP and went and started his thing with Gene Kleiner.

Clay: Yes, correct.

House: And the first thing they funded was Tandem.

Clay: Yes.

House: And my understanding, and help me with this, is that you consulted then with all the team that he took. Treybig and Green and all those guys came from your group.

Clay: Yes. They came from my group. Yeah.

House: And some people at HP thought they stole HP's secrets.

Clay: Well, they developed HP. And we developed HP.

House: Okay.

Clay: My god, four of those guys--

House: But HP didn't want it.

Clay: HP didn't want it. So, when I left, they all went where-- they followed me. That was when-- the name you just mentioned. When I left, HP started something else that didn't-- they had a problem with it.

House: The alpha.

Clay: Alpha, the alpha, yeah.

House: That's right. So, Bert Forbes was part of that and Jake Jacobs and Mike Green.

Clay: Mike Green was-- I hired Mike Green from Stanford when he graduated in computer science.

House: Jim Kasson?

Clay: Huh?

House: Was Jim Kasson part of that group?

Clay: Yeah, yes he was. Right.

House: So, here's a question that I just can't help but ask. These two guys (Hewlett and Packard) were pretty clear they didn't want to be in this business after being in it for five or six years.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Certainly, Hewlett didn't want to be in it, and Packard agreed. Let's get out of it.

Clay: Well, here's what-- no, Packard worked for the Pentagon. While he was gone, Bill Hewlett did something, said-- they called Packard and said, "I don't want to be in the business any longer." So, when Hewlett called me after he came back from HP, he said, "I want you to get us out of the computer business." This is mixed-up. Probably when Packard came back to HP from the Defense dept.

House: Really?

Clay: Yeah, and I said, "No, I will not."

House: But my point is this. HP became big in computing shortly thereafter.

Clay: That's how it happened.

House: Now, did they ever honor the 2116 team?

Clay: Well--

House: Was there a ten-year anniversary? Was there a--? Did they give you guys a celebration? Was there a plaque to say thanks for starting this?

Clay: No, not that I recall. No.

House: We just had the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction.

Clay: You did?

House: It was two weeks ago Monday for the 2116 at the fall Joint Computer Conference in what year? 1966, right?

Clay: Yeah.

House: So, 2016 was the fiftieth anniversary. I went to both-- to every HP-- you know they're now four companies. I went to every-- went to the leadership of every piece of it, and nobody cared.

Clay: Yeah.

House: You say this is your history. This is your legacy that you started.

Clay: I started it, right.

House: And you're-- are you the only living person of that original team, do you think?

Clay: Well--

House: Is Ed Holland still around?

Clay: Do you remember, Gene? No, you remember--

House: Gene Mylesko, was he part of it?

Clay: Who?

House: Gene Mylesko? He was a sales guy.

Clay: Yeah, I think he was.

House: And Bill Davidow is still around. I know Bill.

Clay: Davidow was, Bill Davidow was somebody--

House: Yeah, he's on our Computer Museum board.

Clay: Is that right? Yeah.

Clay, Jr.: Was he a marketing guy?

House: Yeah, he was the first marketing guy.

Clay: But he had a PhD in -- physics?

House: Well, he's a Caltech physics guy, yeah.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: Well, we wouldn't hire just a marketing guy. We had to have scientists and engineers.

Clay: Yeah. Bill Davidow worked in my group.

House: And Bob Grimm passed away this spring.

Clay: Oh, he did?

House: Yeah. He had an accident. And he was on a trip in Africa. And the tent blew over and killed him.

Clay: Oh, really?

House: Yeah.

Clay: Bob Grimm.

House: It was very sad, yeah.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Okay, let me-- I've got a couple of other names. Dick Reyna

Clay: Yes, Dick Reyna. But no, Dick Reyna, didn't he die?

House: Yeah, he passed away.

Clay: He passed away while I was at HP.

House: Yeah, quite a while ago. He got cancer early.

Clay: Right.

House: Bill Gross, I didn't know Bill Gross.

Clay: In marketing, yeah.

House: Frank Wheeler was your manufacturing guy?

Clay: Who?

House: Frank Wheeler? Did you know Frank?

Clay: Frank Wheeler, yes.

House: He was the first-- he built my first product.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Yeah.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Let's see. Bill Abbott?

Clay: Bill Abbott, yes.

House: He and George Newman were buddies. They didn't know anything about computers.

Clay: Do you know where he is now, Bill Abbott?

House: Bill's still in Palo Alto.

Clay: Is that right?

House: Yeah.

Clay: Bill Abbott, that's right.

House: Bert Forbes is down in Santa Barbara.

Clay: Bert Forbes, yeah.

House: I lost track of Jake Jacobs. Okay, let's-- Carl Cottrell, did you ever work for Carl?

Clay: Carl Cottrell, Carl Cottrell, somehow he took over the big group, Carl Cottrell.

House: He was a disaster. He didn't manage it at all.

Clay: Yeah, no.

House: So, when this came out, HP didn't know what they had, did they? They didn't know how to sell it?

Clay: No.

House: Did you go out and try and sell it?

Clay: No, when I left HP, I left HP.

House: Okay.

Clay: That was my last computer development.

House: So, you just--

Clay: Yeah.

House: Sayonara.

Clay: Dave wanted me back to get rid of it. Bill had convinced me to get out of the business. And Dave-- I was amazed when he called me back. And I said--

House: Well, you know what Bill likes. Bill likes the calculators.

Clay: Yes, correct.

House: They weren't computers. Those were calculators.

Clay: Correct.

House: Because he liked that. And Dave didn't like that because they took a lot of-- you had to build them ahead of time. And so, you had to spend the money to build them before you got the order. And everything we took was orders. We'll ship it to you after we build it. Send us the money. And we'll go build some. Very interesting.

Clay: So, yeah you know.

House: So, when you left, it sounds like you didn't stay in touch very much because it was kind of an unhappy time.

Clay: No. It was a very unhappy time. And I left, and I had no reason to do anything else with them. And--

House: Well, but you're not alone. All the team that went to Tandem left.

Clay: Yes.

House: And they had nothing good to say. Most of the people that went into those jobs that didn't have a job, they didn't have anything good to say. It's a curious story.

Clay: Yeah, curious story.

House: And what's really curious is how well they did later with the same two guys (Hewlett and Packard). Don't you find that odd?

Clay: Yeah, well.

House: Now, let's fast-forward. You were inducted into the Silicon Valley Hall of Fame.

Clay: Yes.

House: Is that right?

Clay: Yes.

House: Did I get the name right?

Clay: Yes.

House: In 2003?

Clay: That may be right.

House: Something like that.

Clay: Right, right.

House: And I was reading an interview. And you said proudly, I think it was proudly, that I'm in with Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett and Bob Noyce and Gordon Moore.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Were you proud that night?

Clay: Yeah.

House: I mean that's an amazing accomplishment.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: But you went unrecognized for, what, thirty years. No one knew.

Clay: I don't know.

House: How did the word get out?

Clay: Well, mind you, I was the first African American in that industry.

House: Okay.

Clay: And there's a group that I dealt with, Bob (who?)__ _____ and me work with now. We're a bunch of African Americans who had nowhere to go after we left where we started. But they did well. And we still keep in contact with each other.

House: Do you? Okay.

Clay: But I left. And when my wife, late wife, said I could do whatever I wanted to do and she would support it, I did not get into that business, computer business any longer.

House: So, who would I know from that group? I know Ken Coleman. And Ken Coleman was somebody you nurtured, right?

Clay: Yeah.

House: Do you remember Ken?

Clay: Yes, I do know him.

House: Do you see him still?

Clay: No. No.

House: So, here's another connection. Ken Coleman went from HP computer group to Silicon Graphics to run their HR and built Silicon Graphics, from eighteen people to five hundred people. And then he went to a little company called Apple. And he became the vice president of human development for Apple for a decade. (this is interviewer error. See the Ken Coleman interview done subsequently, in 2017, for CHM)

Clay: Is that right? Yeah.

House: Yeah. So, right there, you've got HP, Tandem, Intel, Silicon Graphics, and Apple all wrapped under two guys.

Clay: Yeah, and they--

House: That's not in the books anywhere. That's not in the computer history-- well, it'll be in the Computer History Museum now. And that's why we wanted to do this interview with you was you know stuff that never got recorded.

Clay: Well, think about it, what did African Americans do in, let's say, in Silicon Valley? I started out. I was the first African American to start in Silicon Valley. And I think we talked about Dave. And Dave left. Ten years later, I was talking with him. He found out where I was. But nobody cared. Nobody cared about what I did or what African Americans did.

House: Do you think they didn't care about African Americans, or they didn't care about the 2100, or both?

Clay: No, African Americans.

House: African Americans, okay.

Clay: Right.

House: That could well be.

Clay: Yeah.

House: Did you know Art Fong?

Clay: Yes.

House: So, he was the first Asian American hired in the industry.

Clay: Correct.

House: And he carried to his grave a feeling that Asian Americans were discriminated against also.

Clay: Is that correct? Yes, right.

House: And Buck Gee was one of his-- so, just like you nurtured Ken Coleman, he nurtured Buck Gee who just wrote a book three years ago about the soft underbelly of Asian Americans in Silicon Valley.

Clay: Yeah.

House: He was on Cisco's staff. And they didn't care. They just didn't care. It's amazing. We're set up to interview him for the museum.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: And you know-- so, these stories, Roy, and what you did to promote that is legendary. But it's hardly known. So, I was thrilled when I went to the-- first of all, the Internet is terrific because I can find article after article about Roy Clay. You have been discovered. And it's wonderful. And it's quite a life. I want to move some other things. So, this letter is the city council. Tell me about deciding to run for city council.

Clay: Well, one day, I was sitting in my office. And I read something that a group wanted to start. And I called a guy. I don't think he's alive now. He's older than I was. And but they were from the Mormon

Church. And they interviewed me and wanted to hire me, wanted me to work with them. Now, the funny thing was I was very well liked and followed by the Mormon Church.

House: Okay.

Clay: But the Mormon Church did not hire-- but we could not join the Mormon Church, you know.

House: Because you were Black.

Clay: Yeah because Black. Yeah. And when they found-- discovered what I did, the Mormon Church now brings Black folks in. And they guy who started me became-- well, Ronny-- there's a comment right over here.

Clay, Jr.: Oh, wait. Now, you're confusing two stories. The-- Jack Wheatley built the Mormon Church right down the road.

Clay: Yes, Jack Wheatley, yeah.

Clay, Jr.: He's the one who encouraged my father to run for the Palo Alto city council.

Clay: Correct, Jack Wheatley.

Clay, Jr.: That's how that story goes.

Clay: And he did not know. And when I began to get technology, the Mormon Church, they began to take African Americans as members, full members.

House: Okay.

Clay: And yeah.

House: And you became-- wasn't-- so, there was-- one of the mayors was from HP, Gary-- what was his last name? This was Gary Fazzino, HP Government Affairs for years.

Clay: He--

House: Little short guy, almost your height.

Clay: Yes.

House: Were you vice-mayor with him as mayor?

Clay: I was-- do you recall the name? I couldn't remember. I don't remember the name?

House: I don't remember the last name either. He had a furrowed brow. I remember that.

Clay: Ah. The fellow I'm thinking is no longer alive.

House: Right. He passed away six, seven years ago maybe, something like that.

Clay: Yeah, right.

House: But he was in city council for a long time.

Clay: That's correct. I was--

House: And he was part of HP public relations.

Clay: In fact, one story, there were eleven of us were from HP, eleven of us that started the computer activity. And I got two votes, but I couldn't get the third. So, I needed three votes to get to become mayor.

House: Oh, is that right?

Clay: Yeah.

House: And you couldn't get a third vote?

Clay: I couldn't get a third vote.

House: Oh darn.

Clay: So, that's when they decided to make me the vice-mayor.

House: Okay.

Clay: Yeah.

Becnel: So, pull out the story, because it's pretty interesting, about how the Jack Wheatley and the story about the Mormons versus the Jewish community and the Black community was non-existent and how you prevailed. Tell a little more about how you became a city councilperson.

Clay: Well, I was-- see, Jack Wheatley-- right, is that the name?

Clay, Jr.: Yes.

Clay: Jack Wheatley became mayor. And I talked to Jack Wheatley. He encouraged me to run for city council. And now, there were no African Americans anywhere in government. And the Mormon Church, Jack Wheatley got the Mormon Church to support me. I was made city councilman by the Mormon Church.

House: That's incredible.

Clay: Yeah. At a time when the Mormon Church did not accept Blacks, we could not.

House: I was married to a Mormon girl at that time. And I can tell you, they were negative on Blacks.

Clay: Right, but then when Jack Wheatley-- I told Jack Wheatley this story, the Mormon Church changed. Blacks can now belong, full members of the Mormon Church.

House: So, what was the Jewish side. What's that story?

Clay: Palo Alto is Jewish.

House: Right.

Clay: I lived in the Jewish community.

House: Okay. So, you had no trouble having a home in Palo Alto. There wasn't an issue that way?

Clay: No, not-- correct. And where I did was Jewish. However, they did not support me as city councilman. They would not, at that time. They encouraged African Americans not to vote for me.

House: Really?

Clay: Yeah. But that group got to-- African Americans in Palo Alto to not vote for me.

House: Incredible. Is that the story that you thought we should hear? Or is there more to it?

W1: Well, just that there was hardly any Blacks, not just in government, but in the community, and that he won on the Mormon vote, not the Black vote and not the Jewish vote.

House: But there weren't many Blacks in Palo Alto at that time.

Clay: No.

House: There were in East Palo Alto, but not in Palo Alto.

Clay: Correct.

House: Okay. Well, that's quite a story that you prevailed there. How long were you on the council?

Clay: I think six years, I believe I count six years there.

House: So, you had to rerun for reelection.

Clay: I ran for reelection. Yeah, I won-- _____ in one, when the Mormon Church brought me in. And I won once-- that was for a two-year term. Then I ran again for a three-year term. And that was fully supported by the Mormon Church. I ran again for the five-year term, and I did not win that.

House: Okay. Now, there's another one, if I have this story right. And that is that the Olympic Club up in San Francisco, one of the world famous athletic clubs, wouldn't let women in and wouldn't let African Americans in.

Clay: Correct.

House: And you tagged on with the women to challenge that, right?

Clay: Well--

House: Or how did that work?

Clay: The person who was president of the Olympic Club worked with me at HP.

House: Oh, really? Okay.

Clay: And encouraged me to join the Olympic Club. He called my wife at first. I didn't know that. They called my wife. But then they called me. And I said, "I'll look at it." But I talked to my wife who did not play golf at all, never played a round of golf, and would not pay the dues that--

House: Yeah, right.

Clay: So, I asked her. And before I could finish what I said, she said, "No, join it. Join the Olympic Club." So, my wife was the one who made me join the Olympic Club.

House: Well, good.

Clay: Yeah.

House: So, that was land breaking.

Clay: Yeah. Now, I was born-- I was told never to show up. And I didn't ever come.

House: You were told never to show up?

Clay: Never to show up. Again, that-- in fact, when I--

House: So, this sounds like your Ferguson story.

Clay: Yeah. Well, yeah, I got a number of places like that. But then, when I showed up, remember the Olympic Club had trees along the fairways. You could not see it from the street when I looked up. I had protection when I played my first round at the Olympic Club who carried a 38 Magnum with one club--

House: Real protection.

Clay: On club grounds. And they said, "Don't hit the ball in the woods because we're not going to help you find it."

House: We don't have anybody on tape with this story. That is phenomenal. You had to be giggling the whole round.

Clay: I carried a 38 Magnum pistol in my golf club when I joined the Olympic Club, when I played my first round at the Olympic Club. And they told me, "Don't go in the woods."

<laughter>

House: Oh, that's a great story, Roy. I live down by Sequoia National Park now, town of a hundred and fifty-eight people. And we had a party Saturday night for the town and all of the-- so, we run a horse stables there. Every woman came with a gun in her purse. They're all packing. My wife and her sister said they think they're the only women in the county that don't have a gun.

<laughter>

House: So, it's a pretty different world. But I have not heard of carrying a 38 onto the Olympic golf course. Now, help me. You became president of that club, didn't you?

Clay: What's that?

House: Didn't you become president or some office?

Clay: No. Yeah, when I joined the club, somehow they-- well-- the Olympic club was made in two parts. There was the part where all people belong, all members belong, and the part where only golfers belong.

House: Oh, okay.

Clay: The golfing part was where I was made president of.

House: Oh, okay. Well, that's the big part. That's where they played the U.S. Open.

Clay: U.S. Open, yes.

House: Seven times they've played the Open there. (actually just five)

Clay: Correct.

House: And you were president of that golf club?

Clay: Yes, I was.

House: Oh, well, it was just president of the golf club.

Clay: Yeah, well.

House: Do you realize how famous this man should be?

Clay, Jr.: He also started that-- there's a picture of him right there. He also started the tournament for that foundation. See it says Roy Clay, founder of the Wingdo Founadatn (is this spelled correctly?)

House: Tell me about that. That's named for your wife, right?

Clay, Jr.: No, that's actually-- the Wingdo Foundation-- the Wingdo Golf Tournament was part of the Wingdo Foundation where the proceeds was intended to go to youth athletics in underserved communities. So, my father started that tournament twenty-five years ago.

Clay: Yeah.

House: How's your golf game? Not so good anymore?

Clay: The golf-- well, I thought a few years ago, they decided not to do it anymore. I don't know

_____.

House: I gave it up, too, for a good reason. What have we not-- so, we've covered pieces. What should we be asking?

Becnel: There's a big significant story around him starting that golf tournament. Roy, tell him-- well, the opposition he ran into and what they-- what you found out later they were calling the Black kids and Black people-- Black people on the golf course.

Clay: Yeah, I remember that. What they call everybody? I remember.

Becnel: They called it the carwash.

Clay, Jr.: So, when my father started that tournament-- do you want to tell the story?

Clay: No, you tell it.

Clay, Jr.: It's actually pretty significant.

Clay: I started the tournament.

Clay, Jr.: He started the tournament. There was nothing in existence that was bringing funds into youth athletics in underserved communities. So, when he first started the tournament, he was pretty much a one-man board, right?

Clay: Yeah.

House: Okay.

Clay, Jr.: So, he brought all his African American friends in from around the country. And so, he started-- he fill-- the one course-- you know they have two courses out there.

Hendrie: Right.

Clay, Jr.: And it grew from filling one course once a year to filling both courses twice a year. So, it was bringing in a few million dollars a year, that tournament. But he found out, after the then president of the club passed away, his wife told him-- told my father at his funeral service that the Caucasian members of the club referred to the course as-- the tournament as the carwash.

Clay: Yeah, that carwash.

Clay, Jr.: Movie-- the carwash that was all Black people.

Clay: Old carwashes.

House: Really?

Clay: Yeah.

Becnel: Didn't he have to go get all of his people because it was their foundation, but he had to go-- they wouldn't help him. He had--

Clay, Jr.: He had to get on the phone--

Clay: I started to come-- but no, all the members who didn't think I should be a member of the club anyway, they went to the president of the club asking him to cancel the tournament. And I said-- I told them-- they were on the phone. I said, "You can get out. I'm not leaving. You can go." And they didn't think I'd get enough players. I had a hundred twenty-five members, Blacks, on the golf course, more than had ever been on the golf course before.

<laughter>

Clay: Yeah.

House: You have been a fighter your whole life.

Clay: Yeah. And they were made-- that's when it became a full-fledged golf tournament, but they called it. Before they admitted me to play-- what was it called?

Clay, Jr.: Before-- the carwash.

Clay: The carwash. Yeah, it was called the carwash. That was a movie, wasn't it, call the Carwash?

Clay, Jr.: It was.

Clay: That's what they called my tournament, the carwash. Yeah.

Hendrie asked Clay and House: Where did Bill Foster fit in at HP?

Clay: So, when Mike Green left, Bill Foster took the labs over.

House: Ah, okay.

Hendrie: So, this whole team left.

House: Yes.

Hendrie: And Bill Foster got the job.

Clay: And then he left.

House: Well, yeah but it was two more years.

Clay: I started--

Hendrie: He (Foster) actually led the three thousand series project.

Clay: Three thousand, right. The three thousand was my project to begin with. But I left when Bill (Hewlett) wanted to put me somewhere. He wouldn't tell me where. And that was the history of HP. If they didn't like-- they'd never fire anybody. They'd transfer you. You have no responsibility, no authority.

Hendrie: That's a pretty good job.

Clay: I know, right.

END OF THE INTERVIEW