

StoryCorps Atlanta: Frank and Claudia Ford

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Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=3473>

Claudia: Okay, Frank, what do you want to talk about?

Frank: My golf game.

Claudia: Okay.

Frank: Why don't you ever take me to hit golf balls anymore?

Claudia: We were just there Tuesday of this week. How many tournaments have you played in?

Frank: One.

Claudia: No, I think three.

Frank: Three.

Claudia: Uh-huh. And this is a funny story. What did you say the very first tournament and you were registering and they said, what is your handicap?

Frank: I told them traumatic head injury.

Claudia: And they wanted to know your--

Frank: Golf handicap.

Claudia: Right. And the lady looked at you like you were crazy. What were you talking about? Remember the other night when we couldn't remember who that baseball player was that had just come up from the minors? Dad and I were talking about it. And he had a grand slam home run for the Braves?

Frank: Yeah.

Claudia: And you just blurted out his name like he was your next door neighbor or something. Conrad or--

Frank: Brooks.

Claudia: Brooks what?

Frank: Brooks Conrad.

Claudia: Yeah, I mean, the only reason I remember it now is because you did that, and I thought, geez, Louise, how does he remember that? But sometimes, memory-wise, if we ask you point blank--

Frank: I can't recall.

Claudia: You can't grab it.

Frank: To save my life.

Claudia: But if we're just talking around you or near you--

Frank: It jumps in my brain.

Claudia: And I can't think of something, you fill it in for me. And I always say, isn't it great to have a brain-injured son that fills in the blanks for you?

Frank: I'm sorry, mom.

Claudia: You make me look bad, don't you?

Frank: Yeah.

Claudia: What caused our accident?

Frank: Some poor lady hit us. How fast was she going?

Claudia: 75.

Frank: Some of you say she didn't fair any better than I did.

Claudia: She got killed. But we were almost home, weren't we?

Frank: Yeah.

Claudia: Well, what else would you like to talk about?

Frank: How much I love you and dad.

Claudia: Okay.

Frank: I don't know where I'd be without you guys. Thanks for all you've done for me over these last 10 years.

Claudia: 21 years.

Frank: 21 years.

Claudia: I love you too. That's why I do it. There was a long time ago when you were in your coma, well, you had just started coming out of your coma, and dad and I said that if you never got any better than you were right then, we'd still be happy to have you. And you've come a very long way.

Frank: I know.

Claudia: Considering they told me you'd probably never walk again. You showed them, didn't you?

Frank: Certainly.

Claudia: Well, we're so glad to have you.

[Music]

Claudia: What happened to you?

Frank: Traumatic head injury. Subdural hematoma.

Claudia: Right. Your head didn't hit anything, did it?

Frank: Shredded in my--my brain god shredded in my noggin.

Claudia: It twisted in there.

Frank: Yeah.

Claudia: And they operated on you that night.

Frank: To relieve the pressure.

Claudia: We're a pair. What do we always say we're doing? We always say it was 50/50. You

and I, we're--

Frank: Peanut butter and jelly.

Claudia: And here you are. What are we doing, mom?

Claudia: Coming back.