**I LUV LA. I LUV NY. I LUV…**

*An Angelino and New Yorker debate which town is tops—from tasting a meal to falling in love. However, the conversation lands at a location far different than either Gotham or Tinseltown.*

**A POLAND:** Most conversations start at one point and end up in an unexpected surprising place. Take today's interchange between two OLLI instructors, one a New Yorker and the other an Angelino, who intended to discuss Gotham v. Tinseltown. Here is the surprising way Sue Cameron a born and bred child of Los Angeles began the comparison.

**S CAMERON:** When I am in a plane getting ready to land in New York, I hear the heartbeat before the plane even touches the ground. As soon as my feet are on the ground in New York I hear my heart going

(MOCK SOUND OF HEARTBEAT)

**A POLAND:** When Barry Schoenfeld was reluctantly transferred from his beloved Manhattan to LA listen to what his boss told him.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Look what you are getting into. In an hour or less you can be surfing. In two hours or less you can be skiing. In two hours or less you can be in a desert. In two hours or less you can be in a foreign country.

**S CAMERON:** Mhm. It’s perfect.

**A POLAND:** Stay tuned to a conversation that begins in LA and New York but eventually lands a far cry away.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

**A POLAND:** Welcome to *In Conversation: The Voices of OLLI*. OLLI, O-L-L-I is an acronym for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute located and networked with the Palm Desert Campus of California State University San Bernardino.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC ENDS)

**A POLAND:** OLLI instructor and former advertising executive Barry Schoenfeld has lived in both LA and New York and knows both cities intimately. From Madison Square Avenue to Rodeo Drive. OLLI instructor author and entertainment journalist for the Hollywood reporter Sue Cameron has covered thousands of stories from the shine of sunsets strip to the lights of Broadway. Let’s listen to their take.

**S CAMERON:** New York is alive, it is shocking, it is really gritty, and it can be the most formal and most beautiful. What I love about New York is that you can walk anywhere in the city and you are bound to meet up with someone you didn't know was there. You can go to a museum any time you want. The arts are everywhere in New York.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And when I decided to transfer from New York to Los Angeles, friends in the biz said “You’re crazy, they’re all fruits and nuts out there in Los Angeles.” Day one after landing my god they were hard-driving people.

**S CAMERON:** Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And they were living out on the beach. In Redondo and

**S CAMERON:** Yes.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Manhattan beach. While I was living in Hermosa beach which was tiger parties when I got home. Come on it's a life there and New York as great as it is, every day it’s a struggle.

**S CAMERON:** In Los Angeles that is, a lighter city and the cliché is that it is light, it’s healthy, it’s relaxed. It is a different lifestyle, you are outside barbecuing on the lawn, I’d rather be in Sag Harbor on a boat but that’s ok. That is kind of the difference between the two. There are people if they are very career orientated no matter what it is they will kill and no matter what city it is. They never slow down. They are out and they are going for the throat and they won’t rest until they get what they want. That is a little more disguised in Los Angeles and more obvious in New York. it is so hard when I go to New York from the first time I ever went there I knew that when I left the hotel I had to wear a full suit of armor because I didn't know what was coming. Whether it was a wind storm, a snowstorm, a cab trying to kill me, people mowing me down on the sidewalk but I loved it!

**B SCHOENFELD:** Yeah.

**S CAMERON:** I loved that game and I loved that dance. It was magnificent.

**B SCHOENFELD:**  And the translation is that you have to have everything in your car in Los Angeles just like you had everything in your backpack in New York and that makes no difference.

**S CAMERON:** No absolutely, I went to New York under ridiculous circumstances. I would be flown by the head of the network and taken to La Caravelle for lunch or flown there by a star who would put me at The Carlyle and have her limo at my disposal. So, I had a very rarified special not only introduction but a continuing lifestyle with New York. I never lived the way a real New Yorker would live.

**B SCHOENFELD:** just as the people in Los Angeles, who stay at The Ace or The Rowan or whatever think they’re in Los Angeles and just like The Carlyle, they’re not.

**S CAMERON:** No.

(LAUGHS)

**B SCHOENFELD:** If that happens in both cities for a certain stratum of ten million or more or less, same ten million in both cities.

**S CAMERON:** I remember once an actress flew me in and she said, “You want to go shopping with me?” and I said “Sure.” There I am in New York walking down Madison and my friend is going in and out of stores buying fifteen hundred dollar suits in the 70s and the driver would just put them in the car. I had never seen that before. That just looked like so much fun.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And the opposite in Los Angeles was that I discovered not in New York, I discovered Costco.

(CONTENT SOUND)

**B SCHOENFELD:** Heaven. Go there once and then report back to me that you can’t find better bell peppers than in Gelson’s Market.

**S CAMERON:** Oh yeah, I was terrified to go to a market in New York. How do you do it? I still don’t know where a gas station is or a dry cleaner. I understand Grastedes and Zabar’s but I wouldn't know where to get a head of lettuce. I don’t know. I don’t know how you do that.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I used to go to Zabar’s and I would say, “I tried again and this isn’t going to work.”

(LAUGHTER)

**B SCHOENFELD:** I would go for bagels but they weren’t the best bagels in New York. Oh, we’re getting to food.

**S CAMERON:** Oh, here we go. Here we go.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I took my friend out for salami in Los Angeles

**S ANDERSON:** Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And he asked for with mayonnaise.

(LAUGHTER)

**S CAMERON:** Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And I said, “Oh god, you are so far from Jewish. I can’t believe it.” But New York can’t come close to Los Angeles Thai or Los Angeles sushi.

**S CAMERON:** Correct.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Or Vietnamese.

**S CAMERON:** I do like baloney, I’m sorry with mayonnaise on white bread because my mother made a lot of that. And I loved that.

**B SCHOENFELD:** That is called Goyish[a].

**S CAMERON:** That was my mother. Every time I arrive from New York I either directly from the airport to Papaya King or Gray’s Papaya. I won't even check into the hotel first. I have to have that hot dog with the onion relish.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And I have to have a salted pretzel.

**S CAMERON:** Okay.

**B SCHOENFELD:** The saltier the better. It may kill me. The salt may kill me but I will die happy.

**S CAMERON:** Then there is the pizza search too.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Oh!

**S CAMERON:** I don’t want any of that gourmet pizza

**B SCHOENFELD:** No.

**S CAMERON:** I want thin crust, Joe’s or Ray’s… the right one’s not the copycat ones.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I used to go over to New York in the East Village and a slice, a slice which is all you called it.

**S CAMERON:** Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** A slice was enormous first of all. So enormous and so flexible you had to fold it in half to eat it and you had to let the oil drip on the sidewalk first

**S CAMERON:**  Oh, yum. Yes.

**B SCHOENFELD:**  And then you started eating it with another friend because it was way too big for one. And when I started doing that, it was fifty cents.

**S CAMERON:**  Oh my God. Oh my God.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Try and even find a place that sells a slice that size on the West Coast. I would suggest to you that food is the major thing that divides the two cities.

**A POLAND:** Barry and Sue next considered which town is the best place to fall in love.

(LIGHT CHUCKLE)

**S CAMERON:** Paris.

(LAUGHS)

**B SCHOENFELD:** I would still say, New York.

**S CAMERON:** Oh absolutely New York. No question about it.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And I think one of the many reasons, there are many is coincidences. You can be on the street.

**S CAMERON:** Yes.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Hard to in Los Angeles. You can be on mass transportation, which is a joke in Los Angeles.

**S CAMERON:** Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And people you would want to marry are unlikely to be on mass transportation.

**S CAMERON:** Exactly.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I’m sorry to disappoint. You know—

**S CAMERON:** I’m right with you.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Generalize.

**S CAMERON:** I’m right with you.

**B SCHOENFELD:** But it is usually those stereotypes that start from the truth.

**S CAMERON:** Well yeah there’s a reason. There’s always a reason.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And you know with so many great people let’s say at museums, galleries, and shows in New York that you just don’t go to in Los Angeles

**S CAMERON:** Yeah, that’s right. They don’t.

**B SCHOENFELD:** You can run into your next partner there.

**S CAMERON:** Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** There are naturally easy-going places, many more in New York.

**S CAMERON:**  Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Just on the street.

**S CAMERON:** Right. Absolutely.

**B SCHOENFELD:**

**S CAMERON:**  Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Just on the street.

**S CAMERON:** Right. Absolutely.

**B SCHOENFELD:** You wouldn’t think in the city of ten million people that you can run into friends.

**S CAMERON:** Right.

**B SCHOENFELD:** in New York. I always go, how did this happen?

**S CAMERON:** In Los Angeles, you have to pay people to introduce you to someone if you are looking for some romance.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Oh my god, use Tinder.

**S CAMERON:** Well, but I would rather meet a New Yorker than an LA person.

(LAUGHTER)

**S CAMERON:** New Yorkers read, they read. They do go into museums on a whim.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And they are quick on uptake.

**S CAMERON:** Oh totally, totally.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Not necessarily because they are better educated or smarter I suppose.

**S CAMERON:** No, it’s timing.

**B SCHOENFELD:** When someone says to me “I don’t like you.” They’re so rude. I said, “I think you have it wrong.” They’re just in a rush to where they are going.

**S CAMERON:** Right.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And if they bang you on the shoulder on the fifth avenue, it is not an act of aggression.

(SOUND OF AGREEMENT)

**B SCHOENFELD:** You are just walking too slow for New York.

**S CAMERON:** That’s right. New Yorkers are so kind to strangers, to tourists, and people in Los Angeles wear blinders. I’m doing terrible generalizations but

**B SCHOENFELD:** Right.

**S CAMERON:** If they are still in the striving category, they have on-blinders and they have no use for you unless you have something to do for their career. As a columnist it's so clear when I walk into a party, I can just tell who is going to overwhelm me and what they want. They don't get it and it's so obvious. That is one of the reasons I left LA. I don’t want to go to a party and be pitched to speck scripts anymore. I don’t want to talk about it anymore.

**A POLAND:** And that comment took the conversation to a new location which they both agreed topped New York or LA. you know where don’t you? Right! Palm Springs and our magical desert communities.

**S CAMERON:** Here, people do talk about food, they talk about books, they are reading and they recommend books. Sure, I watch The Real House Wives of New York last night. I was absolutely thrilled.

**B SCHOENFELD:** People in LA hardly admit.

**S CAMERON:** Right.

**B SCHOENFELD:** That they’re watching it but millions are.

**S CAMERON:** Oh absolutely.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And of course, Palm Springs being a way smaller pond.

**S CAMERON:** Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Only like 45,000 people here, look what they’re missing.

**S CAMERON:** I moved here so I didn’t have to talk to any of those people anymore. It’s a pleasure, absolutely a pleasure. Without the end of my time living in LA, I would not make a dinner reservation unless it was someplace 10 minutes from my house. I would not drive.

**B SCHOENFELD:** It has a lot of the characteristics of a small town, which New York and LA can’t touch. So that sometimes for me, having lived in both of those other cities, it has plentiful free parking. They can’t touch that in either city. It has way more and I think New Yorkers and Angelinos are friendly. Palm Springs people are more friendly by buckets and I can tell that because many of the waiters and waitresses act like they know you. There are some that will sit down in booth and act as if they’re about to say, “Hey hon, you’re regular?”  Also, the prices are generally cheaper for food and for gas at least. For housing forget it. What do you think?

**S CAMERON:** Everything is cheaper. The water bill, the electricity…everything is stunning. In some cases, it is fifty percent less than in Los Angeles. Fifty percent. When I moved there, somebody invited me to a restaurant and I pull up to the restaurant and there was no valet. There was—

(LAUGHTER)

**S CAMERON:** You just park on the curb right in front of the restaurant. There was no meter and I went “Oh my God.”—

**B SCHOENFELD:** Exactly!

**S CAMERON:** “I have gone to heaven.” Everything that I hated about LA does not exist here. They know your name at the market. I have a waitress that I so love much at Billy Reids just to have lunch with her. Anyways the people I just adore here. Many, many people come here after being extremely successful but they don’t have work if they don’t feel like it. So, there is none of that rush or ego. No one cares. Everybody just wants to sit down and talk about wine and have an horderve. It is wonderful. I can have a day of pudding, and then I will go to the club and have lunch. Then I will go play mahjong in the afternoon. There are other days when I am running around and I have been trying to save the purple room now so I am doing a lot of podcasts and zooms.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Good for you.

**S CAMERON:**  I can define my life here and arrange it because I was working so hard in LA and I couldn’t but here you can design anything you want a brand new from start to finish whatever you want. Palm Springs is a clean slate. When I say Palm Springs of course I am talking about the whole valley. I like where I live because it is quiet and I deliberately chose it for that.

**B SCHOENFELD:** You know what is also interesting Sue? In New York or some part of Los Angeles and certainly downtown, you turn your car left or right and what do you see? More of the same.

**S CAMERON:** Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** You turn your care left, what do you usually see? Mountains

**S CAMERON:** That’s right, it is genius.

**B SCHOENFELD:** And after a couple—

**S CAMERON:** It is like a circular bowl. Yeah, it’s a bowl here. Yeah.

**B SCHOENFELD:** So, when I went back to New York the first time, it was the first time I experienced claustrophobia.

**S CAMERON:** Oh.

**B SHCOENFELD:** Because you are sucked into this canyon of mostly tall buildings.

**S CAMERON:** Right.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Because it is a small space. I get it, it is an island and everyone is squeezed into it but not Palm Springs. And it probably will never change that entirely.

**S CAMERON:** Oh no.

**B SCHOENFELD:** They can’t partially because of the native band of Indians. Partially because of the development costs and no need for it.

**S CAMERON:** Right. This is not the place we are looking for job growth.

**B SCHOENFELD:** Yeah, and what I think is great. I am semi-retired. I am somehow busy every day. So, you, *you* can have that lifestyle every day even while you are still working.

**S CAMERON:** Oh yes.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I had the luxury to take an hour off anytime I want and do something that is not work.

**S CAMERON:**  It is fantastic. Some people though need to understand that they are free. Some have been in the rat race for so long their body doesn’t understand that they don’t have to do anything today, you can do anything you want, and sometimes that freaks people out. I had no problem with that at all but it freaks people out. They don’t know how to enjoy themselves when there isn't a goal or a money goal that needs to be met or anything. More people know how to do that, exercise, and just slow down.

**B SCHOENFELD:** I think for most people Palm Springs teaches you that one way or the other.

**A POLAND:** Speaking of teaching, Sue and Barry brought up one of the desert’s most beloved assets.

**S CAMERON:** I love that OLLI is here because it provides a grad school for anyone of any age. If you never had time in college to take art appreciation, learning how to write a story, or you wanted to study ancient history, you can go to OLLI and get anything you want right now. It is one of my very favorite organizations in the desert. I think it is so important what they provide. It is just amazing.

**B SCHOENFELD:** It is remarkable.

**S CAMERON:** Mhm.

**B SCHOENFELD:** The break and length of courses. There is something for everybody and i wish everybody knew. As a teacher, I love it. I love OLLI.

**A POLAND:** Sue Cameron. Barry Schoenfeld. Two of the lively voices of OLLI. Hey, want to join the course? To become a member or sign up for courses go online to csusb.edu/olli for OLLI. Once again csusb.edu/olli, OLLI.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

**A POLAND:** This has been *In Conversation: The Voices of OLLI*. Our thanks to Cal State San Bernardino in Palm desert. Along with Lacey Kendall and her media students. This podcast was produced for OLLI by Lou Gorfain and I am Dr. Arlette Poland.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC FADES)