

Jonathan Mayhew: Oh, okay. One thing I just remembered, Doug Whynott's book was *Giant Bluefin*. It wasn't too hard. [laughter] So, if you want to read a little more about this, you can.

Joshua Wrigley: That would be great.

JM: It's basically about a family in Cape Cod (kind of about bluefin routine?).

Kelly Peyton: So, I guess, jumping off of Josh's question, could you talk about your relationships with specific fishing companies or vessels or how you worked with different people?

JM: Well, in sword fishing, basically, we produced most of the harpooned swordfish on Martha's Vineyard, us and the Larsen's. In our particular year, the Larsen's actually produced a lot in New Bedford and a lot went to Boston. Boston being the biggest hub for swordfish. We would basically sell to Poole's Fish Market and the Larsen's would sell to Larsen's Fish Market type of deal. We went to New Bedford and sometimes I got some for Nantucket. It'd be some fish that they wanted there. They were actually very big into the (aqua and?) fishery for Nantucket. It was a pretty nice fishery. So, as far as which companies in New Bedford, I had Bergie's Seafood, which was a very good company. Some of the other guys who were no longer with us were less good. They would sometimes try to cheat us in what they want to pay us for our fish, and they did.

JW: What was the price when you started out?

JM: Usually anywhere around \$2 a pound for swordfish back in the [19]70s. There was one fellow there who said, "Well, I'm" – of course, the prices when I was a pilot, so I would – my brother was twenty-four hours away. So, I'd start to sell the fish for the guys who are going to buy, et cetera, et cetera. So, this guy who was over in New Bedford and he said he was going to pay us \$2 a pound. So, we came. We sold. We had seventy-odd fish for the trip. So, at any rate, now that I'm thinking about that, we produced seventy fish this particular trip. So, it was probably about three hundred fish a year we got sort of season. But at any rate, he said, "Well, it's going to be \$2 a pound." So, we unloaded. We might have unloaded five or six or eight over here in Poole's and brought the vast majority in New Bedford and we unloaded. I'm quite pleased with the price and everything. It gets all done in the trucks and going away and everything's fine. We go up to get our check. It's \$1.75, \$1.85, and a \$1.95. Yes. "Kenny, what's the story here? You said it was going to be \$2 a pound. And now, you got a \$1.75, which is a lot of money for the smaller ones." The smaller would be around two hundred pounds from harpoon standards. "\$1.85 for fish that were scratched from their – when they get hit and they were on the bottom, and \$1.95. This is not \$2 a pound fish. None of them." He goes, "Oh, well, that was yesterday. That's not today." I said, "I called because you knew and I knew that they were yesterday's fish and we wouldn't get them here until today. But it takes twenty-four hours." He goes, "Well, times change." And he writes this check, gives us the check. So, he goes, "I like dealing with you boys." I said, "Yes, I bet you do because enjoy the moment. You'll never see another fish that we have. Never." He never did either. I was so mad that the next trip we went out, we had another fifty or sixty fish. So, I called him and I said, "Kenny, this is Jonathan Mayhew. Our boat's on the way in with sixty fish." He goes, "Oh, great. You know, I can do

two and a quarter this time" I said, "You know what? You're never going to see a fish of ours." That's the way I feel about it and he never did either. But anyway, that's just –

JW: So, you went to Bergie's instead?

JM: So, I went to Bergie's and I got to know those guys. We had a good rapport. And I didn't feel like I was getting screwed, blued, and tattooed on this deal. So, that's basically on the swordfish where I was quite – had to deal with them. Basically, with the seiners, they dealt with their fish. They might have. Who knows how many – whatever number of fish it was in a particular day. Normally, if we get thirty or forty fish in one set, we'd treat them as nicely as possible or what they considered as nicely as possible. But the harpoon fish thing, when I was with my brother and my own boat and Tom – Tom (Osmond?) was my crew member. Mark Davis was the main guy. Tom was a good harpooner. Marcus was a good wheelman. He was just get on the boat. I was a pretty good pilot. So, we did that fairly regularly. I still have the (skeely?), the boat, and so –

JW: Did they live here on the Vineyard?

JM: Marcus lives in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Tom lived on the Vineyard. He passed away. We had the picture of him there.

JW: So, you had grown up with him.

JM: Tom –

JW: You got an ant on your –

KP: Woo.

JW: There you go.

JM: They don't bite.

KP: Thank you. [laughter]

JM: That's a twelve o'clock noon whistle that we're just listening to. Tom originally was from somewhere in New York. I think it's Upstate New York, but he was short order cook in one of the big spots. It's either in New York – is it Grand Central Station?

JW: Oh, the big train station?

JM: Big train station. He did something like six or ten thousand eggs a morning. Just unbelievable. He was an unbelievable cook.

JW: How did he get into fishing then?

JM: He got into fishing before he got in with us. I know Marcus got into sea scalloping and that's where – and he was down Nantucket, in that area. Tom, I don't know exactly where he started on that, but he was – this is probably fifteen or twenty years.

JW: What were the seining vessels that you worked with?

JM: I worked with three of the five seiners. I worked for Leonard and (Grande?) and Roger Hillhouse. Two of them owned three boats. Roger Hillhouse had a son, the captain of one of the boats. Leonard had two sons and they ran the other two boats. Although Leonard and Roger really were [laughter] the owners and captains. I mean, Leonard would come on board anytime he wanted and so would Roger. The *AA Ferrante* was one of them. That was the small one. I remember the first year – or was it the end? It might have been the second year. But anyway, it was fairly late in the season and we hadn't seen any fish for about a week or ten days. No one had. We were in the bay, Cape Cod Bay, and I was going outside to the eastern maybe up to eighty, a hundred miles, couldn't find anything. Everybody's looking everywhere, all the pilots, all the planes, and the boats were around the area. So, all the way up to Stellwagen, went Middle Bank and further up. The *AA Ferrante* was down in Cape Cod Bay. So, I went out, started at Cape Cod Bay, couldn't find anything. Went offshore, couldn't find anything. It's like one or two in the afternoon. I'm on the way back and I go by Provincetown, and there's a nice fish weir to look at. So, I'm checking that out. Looking outside of it, I saw a fish down deep. It's like thirty or thirty-five feet, but it was – it's a damn full of blue fish, a school of blue fish. I look again and I see a shine. Thirty-five feet down and there's no blue fish. That shine is something real important. I'm looking, looking, looking, going, "I know I saw a shine," so I kept going. It's my first full year. So, I called Leonard and I said, "Leonard" – we all did everything against – the secret way of doing it. I said, "Leonard, I'm going to give you some (bearings?) that" – we're on a secret radio already, but we didn't trust anybody, of course. I said, "I'm going to give you some bearings." I had secret bearings. I said, "I know you're going to look at them and think that I'm wrong, but I know I'm right." He goes, "What?" I said, "Just trust me. Here's the bearings." I gave them to him. I'm like, "Alpha, Charlie" – I gave him the numbers. He goes, "Jonathan, that's wrong." I said, "I know that you're going to think it's wrong and I ain't going to think it's right." So, he goes, "Oh, well, I'm the closest one. I'll go. I got the small boat – I got the smallest gnat." So, he's rationalized it. He goes, "Okay." He's all the way across over to the west side of Cape Cod Bay. So, he starts coming across. Now, all the pilots are talking and I just kept going. Never turned it off. I kept going straight and I'm down, flying ahead of them. It's seven or eight planes and boats are going with us not knowing where we're going, but hey, the seiner is going somewhere. We've got to see where they're going. It's better to be safe than sorry, yada, yada, yada. So, we go about three quarters of the way to Provincetown. My buddy, John (Bezner?), who – good buddy of his. JB says, "What's up with your boat?" I said, "I don't know. It must have a hot day in P town or something, you know what I mean?" So, he laughed about that. Then he says, "Really? What's up?" I said, "Well, maybe a crew member will probably going have to go to the hospital. We maybe have to go to a hospital. I don't know." He says, "Well, geez, you're going awfully fast. You're going to go right in towards P town." Well, boat after boat is peeling away and going back into the Bay, you know? I'm just stupid enough to say something, and John's behind me. I said, "JB, look at my shadow." So, he is looking at my shadow because you're always looking at your shadow being down side. So, you see your shadow all the time. So, to be specific, you say, "Look at my shadow." So, he's maybe

fifty feet behind me. He's going along, going along. We get up towards this gear, here's this fish weir, and right off deep, and here is the shine again. I said, "Check it out." He goes, "Son of a bitch. I can't believe it. You actually saw those fish." I said, "But don't say anything, buddy." He goes, "I won't, but I'm going to bring my boat in behind. If you guys don't get it, well, we want to get it." So, I go, "Okay." But it was the dumbest thing I ever did because now there's a seiner and one other boat and two planes. I kept going straight and John kept going straight, but it's Bob – not Bob Sampson – Billy (Supralis?) who is the captain of John's boat. So, we went and Billy went outside of us and we got ready. And the fish were gone. The fish were outside of us. I assumed, anyhow. Billy's on the damn fish. I went, "Oh, you chucklehead, what did you do to you" – to myself. [laughter] "That serves me right. I had to make a big deal out of it." So, I go out towards Billy and he's got fish there. So, we went out towards Billy and all the other planes came in and all the other boats came in. So, it was like eight or nine boats and we didn't get the set. Billy tried to get a fish but didn't get a fish. Everybody's moaning and groaning about fifteen or twenty minutes. We're working around – everybody's working around major mess up there. I said, "Oh, you dummy, you dummy, you dummy." So, I said, "Geez, maybe I'll go back inside." I went in towards inside and I looked and I saw them again. I swung right away and I went back out to the – and my boat's laying there. So, I said, "Guys, just run slow and kind of mosey in towards that fish weir. I'll keep up" – because everybody's watching the pilot to see what the heck's going on. The pilot would never dare go near a school of fish like that. There'd be guys that are much faster than – our boat might have done nine notch. So, he's doing like three and a half, four notch, Leonard. He's easing up, easing up, and easing up. I talk to Leonard on the secret radio that, "If something happens in here, we're going to watch out for the fish weir – the traps, make sure that their lines are not part of the equation. I said, "Yes, I got that. I got that." So, Leonard gets up that way and I – so, I'm circling behind. Everybody's circling behind with all the eight or nine boats and Leonard gets up that way. So, then I got further and further. Then I went in towards Leonard and I saw a spot of fish, something like – so, I said, "Stand by." I looked and I said, "I got to be going the right way. If they're going the wrong way, I can't set in shallow water." Thirty feet of water, thirty-five feet of water, the net's thirty fathoms deep. So, I go up there and I saw one fish down deep that was going the right way. I said, "Leonard, let her go." They put the small skiff out and they let her go. I said, "Okay. Go up this way. Steady, steady, steady. Okay. Now" – I'd already given up this spot. It's just, "Okay. Now, go to port and go inside, just inside those lobster pots," because there's lobster pots there. I'm like, "Don't get the lobster pots. Go inside here and then take – go to port again and get inside those other lobster pots. We go over this way, this way, and then come around to the stern." So, that's what they did. Leonard said, "I hope those are tuna fish because if they're blue fish, I'm going to be really ticked off." I go, "Yes, I know." Meanwhile, I'm going, "Oh, I hope those are [laughter] the right fish." So, anyhow, we set the net. Fifteen minutes before we can get it all closed up – it's really standard – I've not seen any fish. Not seen any fish and it's really shallow water. I'm like, "Where the hell did the – they must have got out." Now, I got a couple lobster pots still in there and got a problem. So, I flew over and I saw two or three bluefin in the bowl section. I said, "Well" – because Leonard said, "We got the net's uptight. Now, we're starting to get closer and closing them in." So, here in the bowl section, I said, "Well, I saw two or three in the bowl section anyhow." Then he goes, "Well, it's better than nothing anyhow. If we can get those two or three, we'll get something. We haven't got anything in two weeks or ten days." So, I'm flying around four or five minutes to look and couldn't find anything. So, then I go up further around and then I go back in and look, "Yes, two or three fish are now in the stern section." He goes,

"Well, okay. Now, we got two or three. Maybe we'll get six or seven because everything's stirred up." I turn around again and Leonard goes, "Jonathan, take a look." Giant bluefin tuna all over inside the net. Now, I can't believe it. They were everywhere. [laughter] It was 393 giant bluefin tuna. In fact, we have a picture here somewhere. Where's the picture of Matt? Do you know the picture when he's nine or ten and – maybe it's on the boat. Gosh, then another picture we have. But at any rate, Matt went over. He has eleven hundred pounder. He put his little squid reel rig and he's holding up, "I got this eleven hundred pounder going up." [laughter] You know, as a joke, we did that. But anyhow –

JW: So, this was the AA *Ferrante*?

JM: AA. It had 393. It should have been 394 actually because there was one fish – because the fish are going wild in the net. There was actually one that actually managed to get out, but 393 made it or didn't make it, I should say. So, that was a very big school. That was definitely a big school. Then my last set after all the years when – years later, back in the [19]90s, the seiners were allowed to continue to have their airplanes, but the general and the harpoon guys couldn't have it. I mean it's an ongoing situation where we had developed a rapport with the guys who had planes. All the planes worked together. Because very often, you're flying and you see five or six of what we call Hunter Formation fish. I don't know whether – I may have been the first one to say this, but Hunter Formation was basically six fish in a row, six or eight – ten fish maybe – all gone hunting, very heavily hunting, and they're working on something. They'd do that for maybe eight or ten miles. So, what was happening with the Hunter Formation – was that it?

KP: Yes, it is something on the map [inaudible].

JM: Oh, this? There's another one. Yes – no, the swordfish picture. There's a little one with Matt as a ten-year-old.

KP: I know. I do not know where that is.

JM: But at any rate, so the concept being the Hunter Formation is not very interesting for a seiner because if you're lucky, one, they're very active and they're very hard to catch. Two, there's only eight or ten of them tops and once you set your net and make a decision, you can't go again for a couple hours. So, what our guys would do is we'd say, "Hey, we got eight or ten over here. It's a good opportunity for a harpooner to get them." Because there's only eight or ten eyes, or twenty eyes – sixteen or twenty eyes and they don't hear you as quickly. I mean, they're quite active and they're going very straight for a long ways. So, it's a good chance. So, what I would do, and other guys did it as well, we could give the eight or ten to these other guys. When they get a school of forty or fifty, it's hard for them to get into that school of forty or fifty and they'll reciprocate. And we did that. So, we did that for a couple years and it was a very good deal. So, when the issue was the seiners needed their airplanes, the harpooners that had planes said, "Look, we need to help these airplanes do their thing." They did their thing and we won. Of course, I was working with both categories because I was working seiner while my own boat was this harpoon boat. So, that was a good thing. But the next year they came for the general and harpoon categories, not for the seiners. So, I said, "Guys, we got to help these guys out.

They helped us out. Now, we should help them out." My guys said, "Oh, they've got a problem, but we don't have a problem." I went, "Well, you're going to have a problem with me. You're going to have a problem with me because I'm not going to fly for you." I never flew for them after that, but that was ancient history. So, that was one of my big sets. The other big set was my last set, which is the end of the year in late October, early November. Leonard was saying, "We just get the smaller, like thirty or forty or fifty fish." I'm saying to George – my other pilot, George, was tight with other people, tight with the captains and stuff. I said, "George, we can't" – because the schools are now big schools and we're going to have to get – it's very hard to get a big school. Probably impossible, but that's the only schools. You can't find any thirty, forty, fifty giants. They're now into a lot of giants. So, anyhow, George says, "No, no. Leonard says we're going to get no more than sixty fish." I'm going, "Well, Leonard's in Florida and we're not going to get any sixty fish down here. We need" – let's see. I forget. Something like maybe five hundred fish. A lot of fish for the three boats. In fact, it was more than that, six or seven hundred fish. But we're going to have to get two or three of these big schools, I'm afraid. So, about two o'clock in the afternoon, George goes, "You know, maybe you're right. There aren't any small schools here of big fish. Let's try one of these big schools." So, he sets the big school and he got – he did manage to get one fish [laughter]. But he got one and we had three boats out there. So, I go, "Oh, George, you can't get those very easily, can you, huh?" He goes, "Oh, you can't get these. We've got to find a small school. We have two other chances, but we got to find a small school." I said, "George, if you set a big school, it's my turn. That's all we can find." So, I'm looking at this big school and it was coming up. It was coming up on the Western and working up along like this. Then on the Eastern, it would go down and go about three miles and then come up and then go to the Western again. So, I basically went on the school and I went up and up and up and I got way ahead of them. When they were down and deep, they were going slow. I said, "Okay, guys." They let it go. It went down and it crossed and it crossed, and I have it go fairly fast along here and then go real slow and just wait. I waited for these fish to go down and when they come up and they go to the west up on the surface again, they're up high. Because the nets, although they were thirty fathoms, actually, it was like forty fathoms of water. So, I had to wait until they're up on the surface. So, I made this S out in front and they started to come up. Then I said, "Speed her up now. Speed her up now." They sped up and (show us?) the rest of the way and we managed to get them. I know we had fifteen hundred fish that we capped and there had to be at least another fifteen-hundred fish that we opened up the net and let go. No one had ever seen that before actually. It was once in a lifetime. So, at any rate, I managed to have this last school. I said, "Guys, that's enough fish for everybody to be done for the year and we have to let fish go." So, all five boats – I had five skiffs going around. I said, "We have to make sure this net stays open. We have to keep them alive because if they all go dead, they go dead and they break the net in thirty fathoms and forty fathoms of water. So, you have to keep them alive." So, I had all the seine boats – the skiffs going in and pulling apart. So, it worked quite well that year.

JW: What year was that?

JM: That was – let's see. The last year of the seiner, what year was that? I have to guess around [19]98, I think. Something like that.

JW: That was an extraordinary catch at that time?

JM: As one of my buddies said, that was the most fish he'd ever seen of giants. [laughter] Yes. That was a guy named Dave Thompson. Of fifteen-hundred fish we kept, we let go at least fifteen-hundred more fish and they all lived to tell the tale. The fifteen hundred didn't, the other fifteen-hundred. We needed 1505 as it turned out. We were five fish short for five boats. So, that was just sheer luck. All good luck.

JW: Do you remember what the average size was for the fish?

JM: Probably around five-fifty or something like that. Somewhere around four-fifty to five-fifty. Yes. So, those are my two big days. What else do you want to hear?

KP: What about an average day? [laughter]

JM: There's no such thing as an average day.

KP: Yes. [laughter] A less extraordinary day.

JM: Oh, those are extraordinary days.

KP: Yes.

JM: In giant bluefin tuna fishing, when you're harpooning, what we do is we harpoon and we have electric – what we call a zapper, but it's electric and it starts out twelve volt. You put twelve volts to max it out and then go all the way to 660 volts, which is not – it's a lot of voltage but not much wattage. I'm not very good at this whole thing, but 660, it turns out to be the right degree, the right voltage that you do. The bigger the fish, the – let me see how this goes. The bigger the fish, the lower the wattage. So, it's just the opposite. Same thing with a human, as it turns out, when we talked about electrocution, sadly enough. Hopefully, I only talk about that. [laughter] But the bigger the person, the less voltage you need to get them where it goes into their system and – that's what the word is at any rate. So, you'd be very lucky to get four or five fish for a day. Very lucky. Sometimes, only one or two. Sometimes, zero. So, the average is probably, more often than not, zero. Like 0.5 fish or something. Seven would be a lot of fish for a thirty-two-foot boat. Now, there have been a couple guys this year that have gotten twelve, I think, twelve or fourteen. I said, "There is no way that a thirty-two or thirty-five foot boat gets more than seven or eight fish." I know because I did it. I said, "There's no way it's possible." One of the guys said, "There is a way. If you bring in your seven fish, put them on onto the dock, and then you go back out, and you have time to get seven more." And they did it. So, that was very good.

JW: So, this harpoon delivered an electrode into –

JM: Well, it's just a basic – what we call the zapper. It's got one wire. It goes out and it goes right to the dart. So, you hit them with the dart and then you hit the loft. So, the striker throws a pole with one electrode. It's alternative current. It's either AC or DC. It has to be AC, I guess. No, it's DC. It's DC, direct current. So, he throws in and he hits the fish and he says, "Now."

He'll throw it. Then the guy hits the button and he puts electricity to the fish and the electricity from the boat – so you have the second system – and 660 volts goes onto it.

KP: Do you know how recent that technology is?

JM: I do. It was a guy named (Doc Breed?) who started that technology in the [19]80s and he did it for swordfish and he was right in Menemsha. I think he was a – they don't call him Doc Breed. I think he was an eye – no. Yes, eye doctor. He was an eye doctor, and he figured it out. It did not work for swordfish at all. Horrible. What it did with swordfish, it made their system – what we used to call – we got what they called for that. But at any rate, the system doesn't shape up properly. It's like watery fish that's very liquidy. It doesn't make nice firm blaze. So, it didn't work for swordfish and Doc Breed would try and try and kept trying different voltages and tried all this different stuff. It kept getting these – I need my brother, Greg, here to remember what kept – he would tell me. But then he tried it on tuna and it worked beautifully. It was unbelievable with tuna. In his case, I think he had thirty-one fish one day, tuna fish. At the time, they were called horse mackerel – giant bluefin tuna were called horse mackerel. So, they used to be worth five cents a pound for the horse mackerel one.

KP: What year?

JM: Well, the horse mackerel, we even called them horse mackerel as kids.

JW: That is an old term.

JM: Yes. It is an old term.

JW: In the 19th century. [laughter]

JM: Yes, the [19]50s. Definitely in the [19]50s. [19]50s and early [19]60s. My father was a lobsterman and sword fisherman. We'd go sword fishing as kids. We were going out to go sword fishing and we were right off Sri Lanka, right out here. Here was thirty horse mackerel going around in a circle, just what we call – let me think what it is. God, that was – but they're just going around a cartwheel. So, dad says, "Oh, that was a horse mackerel. We're not going to mess with them." So, we went out. We got three swordfish out here, which was a big day on a small boat, no airplanes. We were very happy. So, on the way in, and my brothers – my brother Greg, my brother Skip, and myself – Skip was what they called the doryman. He'd get the fish in and the dorymen would haul the fish, get them up while we were looking for another fish around the area. So, Skip was the doryman. Hauled in three swordfish. Very proud. Now, it's like – it's got to be six o'clock at night, six, six thirty at night, and we're right in thirty feet of water out here. And here were the same school fish. They've been there all day, just going round and round. So, here are the boys – three boys and the three boys go, "Dad, let's get one of those horse mackerel." So, dad goes, "All right." So, he goes up and he strikes one, thirty feet of waters. "Boom." Fish goes down. Doesn't go very far. The other fish take off and it goes like maybe a tenth of a mile out. A little bit towards the Nomans Land buoy, which is maybe right when it goes from thirty feet to sixty to ninety. So, the buoy go – I mean, the buoy goes about, like I said, maybe a quarter of a mile. So, dad gets my brother Skip and says, "Okay. I'm glad

we got one. Let's make sure we do it quickly." So, he goes over and goes around and he gets my brother ready and drops the dory in. So, Skip goes over to – in the normal way, gets the gear in. Puts the keg – what we call the keg – puts it near his feet. Then he takes the line and he starts going like this, closer and closer as he gets. "Well, this fish didn't really hurt that much." Next thing he knows, here's this thin line. It's tugging on him. So, the fish goofs off like a bugger. So, what happens – here, you've got to hold this for a second. [laughter] But what happens is, when you hold the line, you can't put it over the rail and you have to hold it like this. Then when it gets really – he's still very green – what we call greener, not hurt very much. He started going backwards as fast as he can, and he's going faster and faster and faster. Off goes the buoy, and the buoy goes off about a quarter of a mile. It's gone. So, dad goes over and goes, "Okay. Skip, this is a horse mackerel. Don't treat him like a swordfish. Just treat him like a horse mackerel and get the damn thing in. You've got to pull hard." So, he takes the dory and he tows him over and gets up. And now, it's sitting there again. So, my brother Skip goes over again. This time, he starts pulling it. He does the same thing, in, in, in, in, and goes [unintelligible 00:34:05]. He's going the other way. [laughter] Finally, he says, "I tried to keep him in." Dad said, "Don't mess around with that fish. Just pull the dart if you have to. You're only going to get like twenty-five cents if we're lucky. I'm tired of this." He's mad at my brother. [laughter] Skip is like, "I really tried, dad. I tried." So, off we go again and it goes up and goes up ahead of him. The fish slow down and Skip goes – with this fish goes, "I'm going to stop." [laughter] So, he grabs the gear. He starts pulling. He starts pulling. It's stuck. It's stuck. He's pulling really hard, hard as he can. Now, he starts loosing [inaudible]. So, he goes right in the head of her, there's the cleat. So, he turn around the cleat. Now, he's pulling hard and it doesn't – not as hard, but this is a twelve-foot skiff. It's going underwater. So, he's in the back of the boat and the cleat won't let go. [laughter] He goes up two and a half miles outside the green buoy. Dad goes, "Oh, God. I hope you can let it go. I think (Moby George?) is going to be a problem, you know?" Oh, God. [laughter] So, we finally got him. So, we got three swordfish and what we call horse mackerel. The rest of the story – I was probably about eight. It was a lobster boat. So, we had to get them off to the fish monger, Everett Poole. So, he takes the three sword fish off. At the time, he didn't have any system for bigger ones. He had to do it by hand, so the four or five fishermen. So, of course, the boys cleaned this giant bluefin tuna just like we would a swordfish. Cut off the tail, cut off the head, take the guts out just like a swordfish. Well, Everett Poole says, "You know, I think, Benny, you should have left the tail on because they're real round." And dad goes, "Oh, yes." And all the guys go, "How the hell are we going to get him out? We got to get this fish out of here." [laughter] So, they say, "Well, we'll put some planks down." They try to rig. They rigged and, "Okay. Let's heave now. It's low tide." So, they start pulling up three feet up, then three feet up. Then all of a sudden, things go all around and down comes the fish. I'm at the bottom, "Oh." I jumped up and it hit me. It's a good thing it didn't go into the – otherwise, I wouldn't be here today. But I did jump and saved my life. But anyway, he weighed 505 pounds dress weight, which was a pretty big fish, but got five cents a pound for it too. I remember that. So, that's how my swordfish story goes. I mean my tuna story. So, that was the first one. Five cents a pound and damn near rim rack the boat. So, anyhow, what else do we want to tell as far as – oh, one of the things, I guess back to my experience as to why I'm a fish potter was I became a full-time fish potter –

JW: Give me a second.

JM: Right here.

JW: I just have to use the phone. Just give me a second.

JM: Oh, okay.

JW: I will be right back.

JM: So, in becoming a fish potter, I was – gave me more time to do some of my civic duty. Part of the civic duty, from my perspective was, initially, I was in the twenties and so I was on the Chilmark Planning Board. For nine years, I was on the planning board and we did some interesting stuff, such as – Chilmark was the first town in Massachusetts to have three-acre zoning in portions. We also had the youth lot provision, which was pretty big and I was young. Nobody else dared to say – no one felt that there was any chance it was going to survive. So, they said, "Well, Jonathan, just do it. So, I had to testify for Chilmark on that. I testified, and a guy named Judge Tauro from the Cape – he was a state judge. So, he agreed with three-acre concept. The people that sued us were these two ladies at the time, Sturges and Pearlson. They were opposed to the three-acre zoning because they were builders and they were opposed to the youth lot provision. So, he agreed with us, the town, on the three-acre zoning for certain areas for farming. But as far as the youth lot provision, he said – which I thought was very clever because no one – we all thought we're dead meat. He said, "The youth lot provision, I won't say yes or no, but I will say that Sturges and Pearlson can't say that it – because here's what it is. The youth lot, if you had say a three-acre zoning, if you had an acre and a half, you are allowed to have an acre and a half for youth, Chilmark youth." So, he said, "As far as Sturges and Pearlson" the people that were suing us, "if they had the" – I'm sorry, this fly. But don't bother. [laughter] "But at any rate, the fact that an acre and a half on a three-acre zoning doesn't hurt you, you the developer, it actually helps you because it assists for the youth to have this ability to have a smaller lot. So, you are not the ones that should sue. You see now, if it is someone from West Newbury or from Edgartown or Oak Bluffs or somewhere from the Cape or someone from Western Mass, now they have the right to sue saying, 'How come Chilmark is allowing youth of Chilmark to have it, but not youth from elsewhere in Massachusetts?' " He said, "But that's not the case here, so I won't say yes, but I won't say no either. I'm just going to say that you the developer doesn't have the right to discuss that." So, I thought that was pretty clever of him to do that. So, now, there's quite a few youth lots and resident home sites and TriMark was the first one that did that as well. I was on the planning board for that for nine years in the [19]70s and early [19]80s. Then I was also – so, what happened was a pilot – and I was home every night. So, I had the ability to do stuff, whereas if you're a guy, an owner or co-owner, you would be out on a boat for ten days and you never know exactly when you could do it. So, I did the planning board for nine years and I did six years on the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission, and six years – some of them concurrent with other ones – six years on the Martha's Vineyard Regional – no, not the regional. Which one is it? Martha's Vineyard – what's it called? Commission, MVC. Six years shows how long ago it was. Then was the president of the association, Fish Potter's Association. Now, since I'm no longer a fish potter and no longer had that issue, I'm now, again, as a selectman of the town of Chilmark. Oh, yes. I was also selectman of the town of Chilmark for nine years the first time. So, there's few year period that I wasn't. Now, I'm a selectman again and it's my sixth year. So, I guess I'm going to be fifteen years as selectman.

[inaudible], right? Which is why it doesn't bother me to have that mad one particular group. I understand that there's a lot of people that are mad at somebody at some point, but I also understand that being a member – that's part of life. But in this case, there's a lot of people that are disenfranchised and what they've done with swordfish – and not just swordfish. I've very much been into harpoon, swordfish harpoon, bluefin. I've been a grunt fisherman. I've been sea scalloper, got absolutely screwed, blued, and tattooed on that one. Unbelievable. What they did there, it was the worst thing they could think of. I mean, the easiest thing they could think of doing. But as sea scallopers, we used to have a lot of sea scallops that we shell stock that we'd bring in and have twenty, twenty-five people stock them here in Chilmark and in the middle of winter. So, we did that for a number of years every winter, when we weren't sword fishing. Winter time, we did something else. So, what they did was in [19]89, [19]90, [19]91, [19]92, we stopped around [19]88. We said, "Look, the scallop population's down and we are what we called multi-species fishermen. You got to let the sea scallops – not harvest right now." That's always been our case. Some years of haddock were working, cod were alone. We left the cod alone. Cod were here one year, haddock were not there. Very often, the symbiotic relationship. So, you leave those alone. So, what happened was, here was 1995 and they say, "It's a retroactive control date." I'm like, "What's a retroactive control date? What do you mean?" "Well, we have decided that if you utilized your license in [19]89, [19]90, [19]91, [19]92, that that's going to be good because that's the least amount of boats." I said, "Guys, this is the worst thing you could do. You're giving the people that did the worst damage when there was no amount of scallops at all, you let them now get to be the rich guys and we can't go anymore. How fair is that?" [laughter] But that's what they did. They are now multi, multimillionaires. You go find out how much they're making and I had four hundred pounds a trip. Four hundred pounds, what a waste of time to try to get four hundred pounds. The only guys who managed to stay in there with four hundred pounds was someone who cheated. I didn't cheat. [laughter] Why make it so that all the guys who did the fishing are the ones that survive and the honest guy gets screwed? Then the same in grunt fishing, just a different scenario where I was there. I was one of the lead people that could advocate for an [inaudible] and they came for the square mesh side on the codfish and grunt fish and everything else. I said, "Wow, this is a good idea." I mean, one, you don't have to throw a lot of little guys who are dead because they're all dead in a net because the net's so X deep and you bring it up and now they're bloated and everything else. I said, "I just want the big fish. I don't want the little fish." So, I went to – for instance, we had a five-inch mesh for codfish back in the – it used to be – there was unlimited. You can have any mesh you wanted. But I said, "Well, I'm going to take a five-inch and I'm going to make a square mesh on it." It was really good for codfish. I didn't get highly any small cod – undersized cod. We started to get the limits and stuff. These other guys were there with what they call squid nets. "What are you guys doing? There's hundreds of thousands of dead fish in the water because you couldn't keep them because they were too small." I said, "You all should have this five-inch mesh or five and a half inch mesh." The other fishermen didn't – a few did recognize it. Vast majority didn't and it was a total – this is right off the Nantucket. Thousands of codfish dead, overboard. It was absolutely a disgrace what the fishermen did, U.S. fishermen. Everybody says, "Oh, gee, the problem is the foreign fishermen out here." This ain't the foreign fishermen. The foreign fishermen, they were back in the [19]60s. What they did, they decimated and that's what's caused the Hague Line, is that what we had, we had Spaniards, we had French, we had Russians, we had Polish, we had – oh gosh, you name it – Japanese. They were absolutely decimating everything and they were right outside the Vineyard. In fact, there

was a Russian right here – a Russian sailor – whose mother – whose father – no, mother, I guess, was American, and he jumped ship. You know what they did? They put him back in the Russian boat. It was a Russian – that's a true story. That's right in Menemsha. It turned out he was a legal citizen. Oh, he got screwed, blued. Talk about, "Oh, nice job you did in the United States." But that was back in the [19]60s and that happened right here. But back in the [19]80s, they were saying, "Oh, those foreign boats." It was terrible. When it all happened, I said, "Guys, it's us this time. We're the ones that are fishing and although it's legal, it's wrong because the fishermen know better." And we proved it better. Now, they have six and a half inch mesh, which is really good, but it's really, really too late in a lot of it.

JW: We want to pause it here?

JM: Yes.

[end of transcript]