

Matthew Barr: Senator, I was telling you a little bit about this project. This documentary looks at one fishing town, but as symbolic of a lot of fishing towns. Over the last couple of years, the story has intensified for a place like Sneads Ferry, where it has always been a tough life to be a commercial fisherman for a lot of men. There is debt. It is like being a small farmer. You have equipment costs. But at least farmers can own the land. Nobody owns the sea. So, fishermen would sometimes start a year off owing money for their boat or whatever. But where it was a marginal but doable life, now for a number of reasons, it has gotten more challenging. Could you talk a little bit about, in other words from your perceptions, of what is going on around the state in Sneads Ferry and other areas? What are some of the things that are going on in terms of towns like Sneads Ferry?

Marc Basnight: Well, people sell their property. You have property where you tie your boat and you could be the owner of that property, and somebody would offer you money for that property and you would sell it. Or either you would be docking at a piece of property that somebody would own, and they would sell it to someone who would do something else with the property. Then the next generation or the person who would have filled that particular dockage, that dockage is not there because of the sale of the property. The cities, counties, and state government and federal government have not taken that initiative to purchase property for the sole reason of a fishery. Where it has, it has not been utilized in some instances.

MB: Well, why do you think that is that they have not done that?

MB: Well, if you own property and you want to sell it – let me back up in that regard. This is a country that allows the freedom of purchase and sale. So, you have that right to sell that property if you like. So, you have a fisherman who is in that business, and he says, "I'm not going to be in this business any longer." Now, why is it that he gets out of that business? I would contend that much of it is the fault of us as a people. We have polluted the waters and we have degraded the fishery, the water quality. We've done things to that water with runoff and changes in landscape up our river basins as whatever comes down from Raleigh, it ultimately gets into Pamlico Sound. It flows into the ocean, and it creates a destructive character of poison. It blends into what was once pristine, clean water. We do it to ourselves. We do it in Sneads Ferry and we do it in Manteo. In Manteo, they got a sewage treatment plant that treats the effluent as well as you can treat it, but not good enough to drink. So, if it's not good enough for you and I on a daily basis, you would understand that it's not good enough for floating organisms that need to grow and become larger fish. So, we lose all of that lower chain of life because of this pristine, treated effluent that we dump into the sand. We do the same thing with storm water, it just rushes in. We're not willing to pay for that cleanness that is necessary to allow for a productive marine environment. So, that fishman does not catch as much as he could have caught. The oyster is a good example. He can't move around like the crab or the fish. Oystering is pretty well gone. We get little spurts where it improves. But we spend a lot of money just to catch a few oysters. So, now we have to import oysters from Louisiana. They've done a better job than we have in that regard. So, we've done a lot of damage, the people of the state, myself included. All of us have and we haven't been willing to pay for it. We have not wanted to invest. So, if we were to secure his dockage – and I'm not so sure that some fishermen want that. They're very independent-minded people. In my opinion, that's what we should do. We should buy dockage and allow these fishmen a place forevermore to continue that heritage that started North

Carolina. That's where we first settled, along the waterways. It was our transport system. It was our means of getting food, along with farming. So, we've done the same to the fishermen pretty well that we've done to the farmer. There's not enough money to make ends meet. I believe pollution's a part of that. We certainly have to manage a fishery. I think we do a pretty good job in that regard. But I think we do a terrible job in maintaining water quality in the state of North Carolina. People aren't very knowledgeable of that. Then the dockage issue that's occurring now where people want to sell their property, they want to take that money and use it for their benefit as they feel like they should. They have that right to do just that. But where do we find money to buy waterfront property today? That would be an issue with a lot of people in Raleigh. Because you're trying to find money for education, for infrastructure in different regards. But that would be the solution, buy dockage and let people lease it and pay some modest fee. We do that with different parks. We make investments ourselves. Research Triangle Park, the state was involved in that effort to see that there was property to put businesses. We could do the same here if the fishing community wanted that. We've been trying to find out just recently if that's what they wanted.

MB: Well, it is interesting in Sneads Ferry there are six fish houses that work as wholesale-retail. That is where they dock, their boat get ice. Sometimes a fish house might own half a boat. Sneads Ferry is mainly a shrimping town, but they also go out for fishing.

MB: Yes, the boats will go out and do other things as well. They just will not shrimp alone. They will move. They'll go to South Carolina and shrimp as well.

MB: Now, half of the fish houses in Sneads Ferry are for sale. There was talk last summer that probably the biggest one, some people want to put up twin condo towers because it is a beautiful location. Sneads Ferry, for whatever reason, was off the radar a little bit. It is a real working town, but it is not a tourist town like Beaufort is, for example. But now it is on the radar. The growth is phenomenal; everything, franchise restaurants, you name it, t-shirt shops. Like a little bit of the Myrtle Beach type feeling of really rampant growth. I am not saying there is anything wrong with that. But the fishermen are feeling like once they lose their infrastructure, the dockage like you are talking about, how can they even be fishermen? There will be no place to dock. The trucks will not have any place to pull in.

MB: Well, you don't have to. You don't have to sell. You and I know that the fish owners that own those buildings do not have to sell those buildings. But then you're asking them to preserve the culture of the past and for them alone not to take that profit. You can't make them do that. You can't say, "Guys, you got the fish houses. We got the dockage today. It's sitting there, but you can't sell it." That is in such direct conflict with what we are as a country and a people. Now, that should not be occurring. Excuse me a second. Let me take care of this. This is getting to be a little bit of a – that'll get it. I don't like that phone so much.

MB: [laughter]

MB: They do that. They like to leave it on. It's my conference room and I got on my phone.

MB: Well, that is right.

MB: Well, if you think about that a little bit, you can go there. If the fish houses are there today and if North Carolina wants to keep them there, North Carolina needs to pay for that, don't they? If it benefits the state of North Carolina and the people of Sneads Ferry, we need to purchase that and leave it as it is and say, "This is a historic part of North Carolina. We're going to preserve it and we're going to keep it." Now, where are we going to get the money? Are the people in North Carolina willing to pay for that effort? I certainly would be. I'm one of these people that believe you need to preserve heritage history and what our communities are, some aspect of it. But not to buy all of the coastal lands. No, I don't think you should do that in the coastal communities. Beaufort is a beautiful community. It changed from that fishing community to what it is today. For the economy, that's been very, very beneficial for Carteret County, Beaufort, and the state of North Carolina. But if you were to take it back to what it was, it would not look what it looks like today. But if you go to Atlantic or you go to Sneads Ferry or you go to Wanchese, to me part of that charm and a lot of the character of the community is the personality of the fishing world. I think you should try to leave it like that. But remember, that's government stepping in. That's your big daddy coming in and controlling a very independent group of people.

MB: There is no question about that.

MB: That's what it takes. Now, normally a fisherman would say, "I don't want you here. I don't want you controlling what we do in our living." We do too much of that today. There are control factors in life that occurs because of the government that shouldn't occur. But if you want the government to make the contribution, it means the people in North Carolina. Because the federal government certainly isn't going to make any investment in that community. Now, the people of Pender County, do they want to allocate some monies in this effort? Or would it be just the state of North Carolina? Or should it be some complement of the two? What does the community think? Well, again, personally, I believe you ought to preserve the character of the past as much as you possibly can. I think that's beneficial for the economy. So, I think a blend and a mixture of an effort by the local people, the county, and the state would be in order. We're looking at that at this time.

MB: Well, I think that is absolutely true. Of course, in terms of cultural heritage, it can be enormously beneficial. Look at the mountains around Asheville, the Parkway, and the grant that I read about to preserve a courthouse. In other words, this leads to all the folk arts and everything, the enormous draws. I grew up in California. Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, that is a working little – you can see the boats come in. It is an incredibly popular place for people over the world to see that. The same thing could be here. But, of course, the challenge is will it happen in time? The story is accelerating pretty quickly. Will there still be a Sneads Ferry. Sneads Ferry, just to use that as an example, you have the marine base. Camp Lejeune is right across the New River. It is becoming a popular place for retirees. Land is still relatively reasonable, although it has tripled in the last year or something. It was reasonable. So, it is a fast-moving story that we are seeing here. For me personally, six years ago I never would have thought, "Wow." Suddenly, it is kind of sad, this Davis Fish House, probably the most successful fishing family in that town, they have their own boats, they have their own fish house, and the place is like a morgue. It is like the patriarch of the family. Buddy Davis is one of the

most optimistic people I have ever met, and yet he has really been so depressed because he is seeing it is a way of life. That is what I am trying –

MB: But did he explain to you what has happened to the waterway, what's happened to the fishery, what we've done to the fishery? Did he talk to you about that? How he can't go out and catch shrimp now? Did he tell you this was a disastrous shrimping year this past year?

MB: Yes, he did.

MB: Now, what is the reason for that? Is that a cycle or did man have something to do with that? Did pollution have something to do with that?

MB: Oh, of course it did.

MB: Sure, it did. Oysters just didn't disappear. It's not a matter of we caught them all. We quit catching them and say that you can't even go into this water for any reason whatsoever to take an oyster. We shell it, we plant it, we seed it, and when they get 2.5 inches in size or 2, they die. Dermo and MSX, so that came in. That penetrated our water column and it got into that food chain, that disease. Now, we allowed that in. You and I did that. You live in Greensboro. You are as guilty as anybody else, and you have not tried to fix that. So, when you feel pain there, you and everyone else that just simply flushes the commode as cheaply as you possibly can, pour the Drano into the sink, and let it just disappear into our waterway, you are as guilty as everyone else. We all are. Look in the mirror and you see the culprit. That's why the guy can't make the money that he once could. That's why so many imports have to be brought to America. It's because we're not willing to pay to clean up that waterway. You don't want to pay another \$5 a month to clean that water because of what you just let go into the ground or into the water.

MB: Well, yes.

MB: You will rebel if a tax is applied to see that the water is clean. You'd just say, "I'm not going to do that. I'm happy the way it is. I got a retirement check. I'm doing pretty good. My health plan is covered. Or I'm employed in a fashion that I don't have to worry. If I just show up Monday morning, do my job, and I complete it on Friday, I got this weekend off." Now, if you do a profile of Mr. Davis, that's not the life he's ever lived. He had to look at the weather. He had to look at the water. Then he had to go out, and sometimes in danger, to bring to you and I this great seafood that people enjoy. If you want that seafood, if you want that cleanness, if you want a state that protects some of its heritage, you better have to get prepared to pay for that. That does not come by this conversation that we're having today and conversation alone. That will take an appropriation. That will take money and not a little money. It will take a sizable amount to clean up what we've done. Then to preserve this waterfront community, you're going to have to purchase that land. Because you can't expect Mr. Davis to donate that to the people in North Carolina. If it's good for all 8.7 million, all 8.7 million ought to pay for it. But then becomes the subject, does Pinder County want to raise a tax? Do the people in North Carolina want to raise a tax? You always have to pay for whatever you have. It doesn't come freely. It's just not a gift from heaven. It has to be paid for. So, this comes down to money. To preserve the fishery, you're going to have to improve the environment. Then you're going to have to

preserve that waterfront community so that it's available to tie the boat up for the working family that lives on the water and gains that value that you and I enjoy.

MB: So, as you are saying, Senator, it is a multi-facet. We cannot just buy the slip space or the dockage. You cannot just clean up the environment.

MB: It's a struggle. I'm going to give you an example. In Stumpy Point, they have septic tanks. There's no treatment system. This is typical of Coastal Carolina. So, the state of North Carolina's made an allocation of funds to go to that coastal community to put a sewer system in. Well, they're working through the permitting process, and they have a lagoon. Then they have to dispose of the effluent after it is collected in a lagoon. Well, here in Raleigh, where I happen to be sitting today, when they get through with treating the effluent, they just dump it into the river, so it goes into the Neuse. Good cheap way to get rid of it. The more expensive way, the more effective way, and the more pollution freeway would be to recycle that effluent. Well, we're trying to discover a way of how to do it in isolated Stumpy point. Working with the permitting agencies, it becomes more difficult because we need to spray it somewhere and not put it into the canal behind the village of Stumpy Point. A typical application in the past, you pick it up, you get it into the treatment process. You purify it, you put some chemical in it, and then you discharge it into the water. That's what Manteo does. That's what you shouldn't do at Stumpy Point or Sneads Ferry or Raleigh. You should recycle these effluents back into the system for our use and our benefit, not for our destruction. So, we're in Stumpy Point trying to preserve and protect the quality of the water. But now we can't find a way to get rid of the effluent. Because that technology is not developed to the end that allows us to do it in an isolated world where there's no field to spray the effluent. So, we got a complication of trying to clean. We made a small investment – the people of the state did – to clean that water in that small bay. But that's a step in the right direction. Now, we're stopped until we find another process. We have to use technologies and science and money to treat the effluent. Then the fishermen and then you and I in the Smokies or wherever we live, better buy it. But we haven't been willing to pay for it at this point in time. We only have, I think, a hundred million dollars in the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. I think we have about 15 million in the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. These are the two major funds along with mitigation funds from DOT, where they build a road, and they take up wetlands for the public good. Then they have to mitigate those properties. We have monies there that preserve other properties. But you have a loss when you actually build the road, there's some damage there. So, there's a lot of work to be done. I'm telling you, the efforts that are being made now are in those three areas. It's pretty puny for the size of this state and what we've done to the water. You can go up into the East Tennessee River or the French Broad, and you find pollution as well. So, we're doing the same. In the Catawba River Basin, got deep concentrations of pollution there as well. So, we have to do differently, but we're not willing to pay for it. We're happy to talk about it, but the willingness to preserve the natural waterways of North Carolina is lacking.

MB: In other words, what is your prognosis in terms of do you think there will be some possibilities, looking down the road, that some of these would be able to keep towns?

MB: Oh, boy, I would like to. The start would occur in Sneads Ferry. Let's center ourselves in Sneads Ferry. County commissioners, town council members, do they have some recommended

plan? Does the general assembly? Does the state representative and the state senator? Does the governor? Are these people who make these kinds of decisions willing to find money? Now, where do you find that money? I don't think you can find it in the existing flow of funds that we have today. I think you have to have some special tax that the people in North Carolina will agree to that says this is okay to preserve Sneads Ferry and every Sneads Ferry in this state for the future of what we are. So, it's not just the dockage, it's the water, it's the air.

MB: Well, I think that is very well put. One thing that has occurred to me, Sneads Ferry, there are fishermen there and it has been a proud tradition in that town like other towns. Fishing is a dangerous job. It is a job that harkens back to the beginnings of human civilization. It predates agriculture. In some ways it is not that different when you are putting that in the water. One thing that I am trying to show in this documentary is that these fishermen in towns like Sneads Ferry, they fish locally. I know some of them go down to South Carolina or all the way down to Galveston, Texas.

MB: The shrimp boats do.

MB: Right. But one of my good friends, Johnny Wayne Midgett who is a crabber, he could probably crab blindfold. He knows around these estuaries. He has been doing this since he was about 10, 11 years old. He is 32 now. He essentially has a Ph.D. in crab biology, you could say. It is more of a sustainable type of fishing because worldwide fishing, there are huge problems with overfishing, for example. Especially with the industrialized fleets which are much bigger in Europe or Japan and countries like Russia with these huge freezer trawlers that freeze the product onboard.

MB: We have them too, but not as large as they have. No.

MB: Right, Alaska. I have been in Seattle, and you see these 300-foot-long ships with big crews. But the people in towns like Sneads Ferry, it is more of a sustainable type of fishing that is more in balance with the ecosystem, partially by size alone. As all these people will say, the last thing they want to do is fish the sea out. So, they are as interested in keeping this way of life going. They are as interested in conservation as anybody else is. They are not raping the sea. They want this. They know the sea better. I interviewed Dr. B.J. Copeland who was at NC State, who was head of Sea Grant for years in the state. He said to the people, it is experiential knowledge. But these fishermen, they know an incredible amount of knowledge by being in the sea, spending half their life at sea. So, what I am trying to say in this documentary is if we lose outside Sneads Ferry, we are also going to lose this incredible knowledge that we may really need to come back to because the industrialized ways of doing things, that is one of the reasons why.

MB: We don't have the will to do this. We're not willing to pay for the corrective actions that should be taken. You have to listen to the Midgett. You have to listen to the Gray and Salva. You have to go to the Twitty and Manns Harbor. You have to go to the Etheridges in Wanchese and Manteo. These are people who have an extreme amount of knowledge of the fishery. The Caravans in Hyde County or the Newmans. These are people that are closing down their shops. We happily import crab meat and shrimp from around the world, farm-raised product, no flavor.

But boy, do we take it and we don't give any concern whatsoever to that crab or to the Midgett that's in Sneads Ferry that works that water, brings in the most beautiful crab meat you can find anywhere. Yet, we'll go to Whole Foods and buy that crab meat from Argentina or wherever it may come from. There is no restrictive protective measure. Free trade has opened up this flooding of the markets, and we're happy to do this. We're not discouraged by that. I am, as I feel that we all should be. But I see no effort. We used to have a lot of crab-picking plants in North Carolina. We're probably – I don't know what those numbers are – little of nothing. Little of nothing remains of that particular heritage and that crabber. We should pay attention to that crabber and his knowledge. But protecting him, it goes farther than just the waterfront. You have to have the waterfront piece, but the quality of the water, and then what do you do with exports? America changed its ways a few years ago. It said, "We're going to tear down these barriers." With the tear down of the barrier comes the cheap meat. Boy, does it come in. We don't even know what we eat many times with that meat. We don't know under what conditions it was picked, it was caught. In North Carolina, we govern that. We control that. We know that that product is safe. But that still, again, isn't so much of a concern. If you go out to the consumer at Whole Foods in Raleigh off Wade Avenue, you don't see him asking any question about that meat. No. There's none whatsoever. What kind of chemicals on it? They talk about, "We fly the fish in." Well, that's the biggest hoax you've ever heard [laughter] in your life. I mean, it comes from some sea bass in South America brought in overnight on a Piper Cub, I guess, directly to that restaurant. You know that's not occurring. You don't even know when it was caught, what kind of conditions it was taken care of, yet, we buy it. We're happy to get that. If you paid a bit more for your seafood, the midget crabber would be in existence. If you kept a place for his dockage and you cleaned the water, but that's a high price tag.

MB: Yes. You are absolutely right in terms of this whole globalization thing. I mean, of course, it is tasteless and it is interesting that the European Union doesn't allow all those Asian farm-raised shrimp in there. Yet, ninety percent of the shrimp consumed in this country is imported. Now, it is virtually all farm raised and they use antibiotics. A lot of people do not know that they are eating a lot of antibiotics when they eat shrimp.

MB: Don't care. Now, look at that price. What does that shrimp cause? Quality and health concerns – what we put in our body. Probably should not be eating any of that stuff.

MB: Well, seventy percent of all seafood is imported now. I mean, it is rampant in terms of that whole thing. One thing I wanted to ask you about was –

MB: Yes. I mean, that will still occur. But if you protect it, if you want to preserve the fisherman, he's going to have to have enough money to stay in business, won't he? I mean, I have to. You're going to have exports and imports. That weren't the condemnation, but the controls and the rightful knowledge that you should have on what you buy and purchase. I mean, we should see that it's safe. When somebody gets an upset stomach, they think, "Well, I just got a virus. Food poisoning." To what extent did it affect you? Maybe you just had a tummy ache for a few hours. Maybe you got really sick. Well, this does occur and the majority of that will obviously come from what you ate.

MB: I also wanted to get your commentary. In other words, if you look at a town like Sneads

Ferry, it is a fishing town. But I mean, you could ripple this out to the styles, furniture. I mean, we are seeing the outsourcing, the loss of jobs, whether they are auto workers and the (rust belt?) here. We are seeing – in other words, it is the same. It is not that different. Furniture towns or textile, we are seeing all these jobs, and ways of life get lost to the same thing. I mean –

MB: Well, [laughter] that's pretty big. You remember Ross Perot and George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton and the big sucking sound going south to Mexico. Both of them, the Democrat and the Republican, said, "This will not happen. There'll be job replacements that are more valuable if we lose." Well, for that person in Kannapolis that lost his or her job, that didn't occur. Our losses in North Carolina were much larger, I would argue, than anyone else. So, it didn't work to our advantage in this state. But for the consumer, when he or she buys something, it's much cheaper. So, how do you suppress competition from a world market? That's a pretty tough one to deal with. I believe there ought to be some limited protection based on quality. I do think that you have to value your technology and your knowledge that you have. If you export that as well as the job, the creation of whatever it may be in the bio worlds, the biosciences, the loss could be much larger than you could afford. I think you have to be very cautious about being able to grow your food to provide for your country and its people. I mean, you have to import and you have to export. We all fully realize that. But you can't lose that farmer and I don't think you can lose the fishermen either. I think that is part of our nutrition, that's a part of our life that we have to have every day. So, some protection in that area that these people are still here. I believe that's important. Because I like trading worldwide. I think it's good that we understand the world markets and that we participate as a society of people with our brothers wherever they are around the world. But you have to be cautious about the energy of China and India – two big trading blocks. What are their intentions for their people versus our people? So, I think that America could do better than what we're doing today. But that doesn't get us away from Sneads Ferry. We can take care of Sneads Ferry. We can't take care of that global competition that occurs and how the consumer reacts to that. He doesn't have to buy it if he doesn't like to. But there's not much identification or knowledge of where it was made and what it means to us. I shop for a pair of shoes and I can't find them hardly made in America – tennis shoes. I think Converse might've been the last pair down in Lumberton. I guess we used to see them on the feet of the Carolina basketball players. You don't see that now. You see the little Nike or something like that.

MB: Right. Made –

MB: Made somewhere in Korea. Yes, Malaysia, somewhere.

MB: Yes. You are absolutely right there. These are huge phenomena. In terms of Sneads Ferry, [inaudible], another part of the story is the young people are not – there are not a lot of young people or high school kids saying, "Well, I think I will be a fisherman because" –

MB: Well, you can't make a living. There's the Peele family on Dough's Creek in Manteo. Wesley Peele and his wife, they crab. She works at the Ace Hardware, and he crabs – hard crabs, soft crabs. That's where I buy my crabs for my restaurant, is from Wesley Peele. He sheds them just the way I want them, he brings them to me, and they're wonderful. But he struggles. Then his son, he crabs as well, but you can see the worn nature on their face that they

can't make much money. The effort is there, but at the end of the year, they don't have enough. We haven't provided for the environment for them to continue their life. So, many of them just walk away from it. There's a good crabber that just went to work for the county in Manteo that I know. He's now changing tires. He's no longer crabbing and oystering. There are no oysters much to catch. Got a limit of 15 tubs or 15 bushels a day. The season stops about now. Crabs aren't really out yet. So, he's got no income for a short period of time. Then what will the crab market bring with all this flood of foreign crab meat in here? The price is down and then the cost to pick it is up. If we want to preserve that heritage, we're going to have to build in those ingredients that are necessary to allow for some decent or respectable return on what his effort gives.

MB: Yes. Then of course, in the last year, the fuel prices. I mean, you are running 110,000-pound shrimp trawler with a thirteen liter Cummins diesel right there.

MB: Well, I got this from a fisherman. He said he really feels good when the corporate jet flies over his head with the Exxon executives sitting inside the comforts of that. They're flying to the Mediterranean for the weekend, and he's sitting in the water trying to make a living at that expense. Now, that was coming from a fisherman. His cost goes up, his profit goes up, mine goes down. This guy goes up, mine goes down. Free enterprise.

MB: That is it. Between the vortex, between all these things, it is –

MB: Yes, all of it kind of collude. You kind of get through. If you can get enough money for your product and you can catch your product and you process it and do something with it, I think you could continue it. But you're going to have to pay. I come back to that. How do you pay for this? Do the people of Pender County want this? You stop. You start locally. The county board of commissioners, have they held a hearing on this effort? Do they have some suggestion? Just like my county board of commissioners, well, they're really not in that business too much. Something new facing them. Something always new, facing all of us.

MB: I think I read that up in the Northeast and the states up there, the lobster industry, Maine and – actually, the state of Maine, I believe, appropriate a lot of money to –

MB: I doubt that.

MB: Really?

MB: I think you're incorrect. I mean, people are moving out of Maine. It's cold.

MB: Oh, absolutely. But –

MB: I mean, they don't have a growth like we have. Find out, Tony, how much money they've spent in Maine. How much did you find out they spend?

MB: I do not know if it was Maine or some – where they do a lot of lobstering, which gives all those states there. Massachusetts where they have more money, but they wanted to keep – I

think they were talking about buying some of the [inaudible].

MB: But I think they want to keep anything, don't they? I mean, if you're in Maine, you want to keep anything.

MB: Right [laughter].

MB: I mean, really, honestly, I don't think it's a growth area like we are, or like Virginia or Massachusetts or New Jersey or Florida. I think Maine is so cold that people leave. They don't move up to Maine – you got any friends move to Maine recently?

MB: No, I –

MB: You got some move to Florida though, don't you?

MB: Oh, yes.

MB: Okay. So, you see the differences?

MB: Yes.

MB: It's very cold up there. So, they don't have the pressures of development that we would have, do they?

MB: No, they do not. But in the summer, it is big tourism.

MB: It is for two months – three.

MB: The southern part, so they were – I do not know if it was Maine or what, but they were trying to say, "Let us keep some of these waterfront areas, at least buy a fish house or something, so that these lobstermen can keep going a little bit." Because they –

MB: I'd like to see what somebody's done. I'd be interested in that because when I go to Mystic, Connecticut, man, it's tourism. I mean, a beautiful – what was a waterfront community is now full of tourists. People like me gawking around, buying the T-shirt and the ice cream, looking for the best restaurant, reasonable accommodation for the night. I'm typical.

MB: Well, me too.

MB: Well, Charleston once was a seaport that provided for local fishermen as well. Then it moved out of there up into the different hamlets of the water. I don't think you'd find much of a fishing village in Charleston today, or Savannah. Savannah River used to be pretty shallow. Now, they're talking about even digging it deeper. They kept larger ships, larger boats. The water pushes out quicker, comes in quicker, does a little bit more damage to the environment. We're changing quickly, you're right about that. But Swan Quarter, if you go to Swan Quarter, there's no condos there. If you go to Engelhard, there's no condos there. There's no restaurants.

There's no t-shirt shops. It is a fishing village that is dead. Claudia Cahoon buys crabs and oysters there in Swan Quarter. Go see Claudia. She is struggling – her and her family – to keep their little house open. But it's not because of what's occurring in Sneads Ferry. It's because there's nothing to catch. They had a terrible shrimping year, terrible crabbing year. They were the two big, main item species that they need to catch. It's not fish there. Now, if you go to Hatteras, it's fish. If you go to Wanchese, it's fish. But that's a different story in Wanchese because you can't get the government to dredge or [inaudible]. You can't get the water deep enough to get a boat in and out. So, all the boats – Timmy Daniels or the very well-known Daniels family that's has what, ten boys in the fishing world, they moved to Hampton, Virginia, with their fleet. Joey Daniels took much of the Wanchese Fish Company and moved it to Hampton. That's where the fleet goes in. Fish is off our coast, but it goes back into Hampton. That's where they employed the people. Timmy told me he'd bring – I don't know, three or four boats back to Wanchese if we had water to get in and out. That's not so much the Sneads Ferry problem. But if you go to Swan Quarter, it's not that somebody's buying the land. Mitchell Newman has a fish house there that he's pretty well closed up. His brother, Tommy, has one there. Sheds crabs there and buys flounder. Beautiful flounder, beautiful fish. But not like we once had. I had a fisherman from Swan Quarter tell me – he gave one of those old Rose Bay gallon oyster cans. Well, if you ever get one of them, hold on to that. They're hard to find. There was one that said Swan Quarter and one that said Engelhard. There were two different oyster cans. Ralph Jarvis was his name. He told me maybe twenty years ago, that crabbing, he noticed one day, he just felt something in the water on the crab pot water that was different. It was slicker. Something was wrong. He said, "Marc, something's wrong with the water." That was when I first got elected. Something's happening to the water. We're getting more of these large spots of water in the summer, always have, that are devoid of life and just kills everything if it stays on the oyster bed or, around the fish and they die because there's no life in it. But he said they're larger than ever and something's in the water that's different. Yet the cities will tell you, "We got it cleaner than we ever had it." Not so, but it's somebody operating a sewage treatment plant. Somebody elected to a town council. They don't have enough money to repair the plant and to fix it. Now, that's not the case in Manteo. I feel like they have enough money. Or Raleigh. I feel like Raleigh's got enough money to take that affluent and make it usable and put it back in your pipes to drink. You don't have to go to the Falls Lake every day to get your water. You can recycle your waste and send it back into the pipes. We'll do that one day. One day, we'll do it. But we never react until it's costly. You mentioned San Francisco. You were proud of how they developed to San Francisco. I can't disagree with you more. I mean, they [laughter] sort of destroyed San Francisco back – the sturgeon run and the herring that went in there. I imagine most of what you eat in San Francisco came from another country. But I mean, we city folks and people that are pretty comfortable in our lifestyle. We don't want to be troubled with San Francisco Bay or Boston Harbor or Puget Sound. They're just places that look good. The guy that makes his living on the water, he doesn't surface very well. He struggles. He really struggles. We're at fault, I believe.

MB: You are absolutely right. I mean, I grew up in California. Ninety miles north of San Francisco is a little tiny fishing town called Bodega Bay. It is a real fishing town. They have been going bankrupt there, buyback programs to buy the boats. They go for Dungeness crab out there. Delicious crab.

MB: Not as good as the blue. We did that taste test in there.

[laughter]

Close. It's a good crab.

MB: [laughter]

MB: But you have to sauce it up a lot. You've got to get some other stuff on it.

MB: A little mayonnaise.

MB: Yes, a little mayonnaise.

[laughter]

MB: But anyway, I mean, you know, there is the same story out there in Bodega Bay and all the way up in [inaudible], or Washington. I mean, this story of Sneads Ferry, it is a worldwide story for that.

MB: It is.

MB: I mean, you can go to a little – I have read about little fishing towns in Norway where none of the young people want to do it and it is over with. So, what we are talking about here is really a big story.

MB: It's pretty big.

MB: It is.

MB: It comes back to man and his influence on the land and his willingness to take corrective actions.

MB: Well, I think also, beyond the economics, it is also – the thing that I really try to look at in the documentary, there are like three or four fishing families, I really try to portray them as people. So, when the audience sees the film, they begin as they meet Johnny Wayne and his wife, Kim, and they met in high school, and their kids.

MB: He'll look at the documentary, and just like he does National Geographic, he'll enjoy it. Your customer will enjoy your documentary.

MB: But then I started to try to turn the angle here and say, "Yes, here are these wonderful people. Look what they can do. But now, look what's going on here." Then hopefully, by the end of the film, it is not like people could say, "Well, can this documentary maybe change things?" But maybe it can make people aware that saying that it is not fish you are buying, it is men's lives. I thought that is a great statement that says a lot about not just the danger aspect of

this, but that people are really giving their heart and soul to do this. But you cannot expect people to sacrifice themselves forever to be fishermen. Even though as much as they love the freedom that they have, the sense that when they are out on the water, they are free. They are that independent, some less that kind of pioneering spirit that made this country great in terms of fishermen having that can do. If the engine conks out, [laughter] you do not call AAA out there. They better be able to deal with it.

MB: Yes. That's right.

MB: So, I wanted to invite you to the screening of the film, which will be –

MB: I won't come.

MB: You will not come?

MB: No. I'm overloaded.

MB: You are overloaded?

MB: Yes. I got enough. But thank you.

MB: Well, yes, it will be Saturday, April 29th at UNCT. We are going to show the initial screening of it. Are there any other things you would like to add to this? It has been a great interview. I really appreciate.

MB: Well, I think that you care enough to understand – why'd you do this?

MB: Well, I do documentaries about working communities.

MB: Okay. Yes, but why this one? I know you've done other – why did you choose the Waterman?

MB: Because I used to spend a little time at North Topsail Beach. I started looking at those shrimp boats out there. Then I thought, "Well, I am really interested in this little community and this way of life." Then I met a lady named –

MB: Did North Topsail have a fishing community?

MB: No. No.

MB: Okay.

MB: I used to have a piece of a condo there.

MB: Oh, you were on that place where they probably shouldn't have built the condo?

MB: Yes, I was. I admit it. [laughter]

MB: Oh, well, see now, you're a guilty party. You're just as bad as everyone else.

[laughter]

MB: Well, I am too.

MB: Anyway, I had used for my first wife's ex-husband – this is a long story, if you do not want to hear – of a condo. I was first teaching UNCG and I saw those boats. I was just finishing up a documentary that UNC TV showed about a whole different talk about a carnival show. It was on UNC TV called *Carnival Tournament*, about the last carnival show in America, the straight shows that played the state fair in Raleigh for half a century, that went around the country on a train. So, I did a documentary. I spent seven years doing about carnival people because I spent five years seasons as a carny myself.

MB: Did you?

MB: I did.

MB: What did you do?

MB: I was a barker. I would take money [inaudible].

MB: Oh, okay. All right. Oh gosh.

MB: [laughter]

MB: I like that. I like that world. I like those people.

MB: I love it. Yes. So, I did a documentary about carnies and the big –

MB: Did you have a game or what did –

MB: Yes. I used to run the machine gun game, where you showed [inaudible] the star and the play pitch and all that [inaudible].

MB: Okay. I bet that was fun.

MB: It was fun. The thing that always felt when I was a carny was the sense of community. It was like a little traveling village, the carnies. Even though we had a terrible reputation wherever we went, it's so nice for good reason, that is what I try to show in the documentary. Which they showed on UNC TV back in – I finished that in [19]99. So, I was looking for a story about another – I am interested in community and really the –

MB: Yes. I see that.

MB: – main points in the film is the sense of community they have at sea. They don't have any money, but if a fisherman dies at sea – I mean, that happened in 2001, where two –

MB: We get it. We get it.

MB: Right. So, they will make sure that the house does not get foreclosed on. They will –

MB: The word runs through our community. I go to a little church in Wanchese, which is a fishing community. I mean, it is purely a fishing community – boat building community. I mean, some people are into tourist trade, but mostly it is adhered to that independence. No zoning in there. If you want to put a house trailer in there, you put a house trailer in. If you want a horse in your backyard, you put a horse in your backyard. Everybody gets along really well. It is in that community that you hear when somebody's washed off a boat right then. I mean, it's – and everybody prays for that fisherman or that fishing family right then. It's still alive there. Yes, I understand. I understand. But the people of this state do not understand, nor do they care enough to pay. It has been a huge fight to get a little bit of money to protect the environment. Just a little bit, and people hate it. They hate it. So, I don't know where we're going. Yes. Thank you.

MB: Well, thank you. I want to ask you one –

[end of transcript]