

heckman-jake-2017-12-04.mp4

[00:00:12] You know it's a good question. I think it's just something I've always done. Since I was a little kid and I can't really remember the first time I fished. My mom would drop me off at the Fish and Game ponds in Bozeman. That was my babysitter washing machine shop once a week and. I grew up right off the Gallatin River. So I'd ride my bike down and go fishing since I was a little.

[00:00:46] The first one I remember catching you know I guess I haven't really given that much thought. When you're a kid and you got dropped off at the ponds What was it that you catch. Just trout that they would stock in there. Down on the Gallatin River I've gotten some really.

[00:01:06] Cool fish that I'm not even sure what they are. One had a. Black. Belly on it. And a big. Under her jaw. You know. Yeah. I've done a lot of sea fish in. Spear fish in. A. 14 year diving career and. Lived. In Louisiana for a while. I have a lot of really interesting fish stories there. What do you tell us. One of those. Well. All right. One of my favorites is one of the first really deep dives that I did. I was. Probably like 23 24 years old. And we went down past. 700 feet. But. On our way down we were doing an installation on a platform. Where prey about 600 foot down and we lived under pressure the entire time. Well. You get down that deep and there's not a whole lot of sea life. But everything you see is. Totally out of this world and. My belt partner he was and he'd been diving for 20 years and. There was a nine foot grouper down there. And. Right before his six hours by six hours it was up. He had the supervisor send him. A whole bunch of Vienna sausages and he feeds this grouper grouper His back's this tall and he's got spikes that tall on top of his back. His mouth is like this big. His eyeballs are like this big. You know.

[00:03:10] He feeds him all these Vienna sausages and his time's up. Well he comes back. Gets in the bell and he tells me man there's this vicious grouper out there. Just be careful if you got to smack him smack him you know and I'm like. All right whatever I throw my stuff on and. He clips a can of tuna fish. To the back of my bailout bottle pokes it full of holes. Right before I locked out of the bottom of the bell. And I'm scooting over there and there's all these I don't know what you call him I call him cigar fish because they look like a cigar but. They they kept hitting me and helped me cause I'm chairman basically it over there. And I get there and I got one hundred some foot a quarter inch rope that I got to clean up. I was doing some survey on and stuff with this rope and it's mint water the bottom of the platform was seven hundred eighty five feet and we were. You know a few hundred feet off a bottom hundred and so on. And you gotta watch a depth you can't fall off and you can only go so high up. If you fall off then. You're kind of stuck down there because of decompression. So. I get over there and there's this grouper that's the size as big as Sophia's car. Pushing me around nudging me trying to eat you know always like trying to get the stuff it's charming and he knows there's food there the other guy fed him a dozen cans of. VIENNA SAUSAGES.

[00:04:48] And groupers are like a pet too. They're always hanging out there like a dog we name on Fido or. Whatever. Well I got this rope and underwater the rope floats up when you're coiling in your hand. This grouper was behind me and he swallowed my arm. Up to here. It was like getting your arms sucked into a dredge lake. There was nothing I could do. If he if he were to win like this he would rip my sock it out like. Me instantly like spit my arm out. And. I was very grateful that he did. But yeah that's one of my fish stories. Many. You know that's that's a great question. There's definitely way more people out. When I was a kid it was really cool because I lived between two bridges on the Gallatin River. Was

pray five miles from one and 20 miles from another one so I could ride down to this old lady's driveway and. Jump over a fence and I was in the middle of nowhere. Every. Year I cast three times in a hole if I didn't get it by I was moving to the next hole. Where now. You know you can walk in five miles up the Yellow River and there's still. Good you're going to come across several people on that trip and. There's just a lot more people within the state. Over the years but. Still foreign. Just. Getting out and lettin everything else just go away. Enjoying nature. When you catch that fish or. You know you get that strike and it's like. Sweet you know. It's exciting. It's an adrenaline rush. A little bit. And. They're getting. This is one of my older pieces. A few years ago. Back when I was. Kind of learning where I was going to go at Trout and. Wildlife and my metal sculpture. Nice. But so can you tell me a little bit about peace what is it. What's it made out of. This is all plasma cut by hand hand ground hand polished. All the colors are from heat patina. So.

[00:08:00] Hit them with a propane torch or bake them in the oven. Get those different temperatures down. And basically I'll start with the hottest temperature first which is blue. That's around six hundred degrees five ninety six hundred. Now. Seeing them would grind into a more and add the next colors up. This one's just a two time one. It's not. One of my. Better ones. I don't have. A better trout with me right now but I definitely have better pieces that. Kind of portray. The colouring process a little better. Like trout fishing. This is a trout area. It's one of those things that is I'm an animal person. Oh I. All animals are cool and Trout's just one of those things that I really enjoy. Doing is gone trout fish and take the kayaks out the gates of the mountains is fun. There's huge big trout in there. There's. A lot of streams and stuff that are really fun. I use a fish on Ted Turner's when I was a kid. Nice crawl underneath the fence I don't think that you can do that anymore. But. That was really good. Brook trout fishing. I try to stay out of favorites when it comes to wildlife. I mean. I appreciate any animal as soon as you look it in the eye and you see it and there's just lay. To me it's. A magical moment. Really. So is that what inspires your art. It's just been in nature. Yeah. And the wildlife that. Live there. I always knew I wanted to be a wildlife artists do a metal sculpture when I was a kid. And. I didn't really realize. How much it was going to take to get to that point. Of actually producing quality stuff. Being able to walk away from everything else in life to just do that. Well I started. Working for my dad when I was 10 years old for an irrigation company we started. We built a shop and. I don't know maybe by the time I was eleven I was well-known. Nothing fancy. By no means but. By the time I graduated high school I did all that fabricating all the pipe. Plans were. That that we did down there and.

[00:11:11] So that kind of. I really enjoy it while I love working with model we build some and it will last forever. It's not. You can always cut it off. You can always stack more on Wilder. You know you can do anything you want with steel. And. When I was in high school I was in careers class and. They you know everybody wants you gear's you to go to college in school. And I just did not want. I was so sick of school. I knew I need to be working with my hands. And learning on my feet. So. I. Was fighting in court like I really want to do electrical engineering and I really like elect Christie since I was a kid. I live on solar power all this work's done on solar. But. I still want to sit down shut up pay attention for four more years and go into debt massive debt and. Get a job sitting at a desk doing. I was a diva. I had to be. I was moving around. In. Our careers class teacher brought up underwater welding and I was like. I can do that. That was. It gets me out in nature. I'm not in office. I'll have to go to college. But it was not. That easy right either. It was a lot of work and. A lot of fun. And. So that. Is what paid for me to be able to set up my shop up here off grid. And do what I love to do which is wildlife and. I'm really excited to get into the sea life more. I never know going into it. I was going to do elk and trout. In my native animals but the more I ventured out and saw different things it just really blew my mind even more.

The. The intensity of nature is all the. Different animals. And what they're doing and how they act and.

[00:13:34] So venture go do you mean like your time dive in and seem like old life and oceans. Yeah. Because it's a feeding frenzy in front of you. You have outlaid on little bugs are coming in. Little fish are coming to eat those bugs bigger fish are coming in to eat the littler fish. One day. Well when I got to the bottom of a deep job. I was at seven hundred eighty five feet and there was thousands of these little eels like this being. You know. Playing with them grabbing them and they're trying to bite me but I got a little garden gloves on. They couldn't hurt me and the guy on the radio is like. Mom is gonna come get you. You know. And later that day they were launching a. 16. Ton piece of equipment that was going to install. Over the side of the boat. So the divers go up underneath the boat. While they launch if it falls. Hopefully the current doesn't take it and smash it anyway but at least it's safer. You know you don't want to be back there where they're launching. And. I was kind of up towards the back because I want to be well clear of it and I was looking at these little. But no idea what they are. I was calling back battle axe fish or battling fish. Kind of like a flounder or a stingray but they're only about this big and they're really creepy looking and they're only really seen in the real deep depths. And the mud. Was coming up. From me walking around the silt cloud. And I seen this head. It was right about this being. And. It was pink. And I was like Man that's a weird. Red snapper. Lonnie. And. I leaned down to look at the head. My sucks back in to the cloud and I can't see it but the currents kind of taken that. Silt cloud out. And his head comes out of it and this thing. Comes and swims right underneath me and he was this bigger around.

[00:15:50] I have no idea how long he was. I saw like 12 feet 10 feet of him and he never started. That is the biggest eel I've ever seen in my life. And he was totally cool. He was like I mean he could or shredded me apart like he had a mouth. Figured any dog and it's a snake they think could a swallow whatever dude and he was just chillin. And. Eaten fish that were underneath the belt because it was attracting like. Well with the blue herons. I just. Every time you're out fishing on the gallon river the massive river there's always a blue hair now hanging out alone. Or a pair of them sometimes but not they're generally. By themselves and I'm generally by myself too you know. And they're just they're beautiful they're. Amazing. They're these huge wingspan fans a fly right over the top you don't even hear sound hardly until they flap their wings. They're ninjas like. Snap fish right out of the water. It is cool like they're. Inspirational to me. Any any kind of wildlife though. That I've seen. Pretty much. I can find the beauty in it and I appreciate it. I had no idea where I was going with this piece when I started it I just. Started. Going down the river and watching good hands looking at photographs. And. Getting online looking and stuff and I was like Man I really want to do a blue heron. I don't know why I just. Got to do it. And from do what I wanted to. So I started two of them. I only got one finished but. Yeah I just. Started working on it and. Didn't know how I was going to frame it end or anything and. It just kind of comes together. I guess. The. Dragonfly. Is actually like. One of the coolest parts of the piece to me and that's why I named it after. Because I knew I need something else and I was like. Thinking. What can I put into this piece that's going to tie it and make it. What I want. And. I just knew it needed a dragonfly. So I started making one and. Then I started looking at all the other metal guys on line and looking at their dragonflies. I was like Oh yeah I'm doing good. And then I saw one guy I was like man. Throw this away I got START OVER AND I PRAY made four of them before I got to the point. Where. I wanted to be because I wanted to make the best quality stuff that I can do which is the most important to me to really take care about the time frame of it. But to me the joy is of creating something that.

[00:19:21] Hasn't been seen before hasn't been done. And. I'll get there. I have about a year into that piece but not full time. I figured the hours were around two hundred eighty eight hours. So the best I could come up with. But. I didn't stamp the time clock. Every day I was scratching it with chop on a piece of metal. On the back of it. All right I got a full day into it. Make a mark. You know. That's a good question. When when I left high school. I knew I needed to make enough money to be able to fund. My art. That I wanted to do and I wanted to live. On solar power because it's just. It was kind of just starting to happen. I guess at that time. Late 90s you could actually start buying stuff and people were doing it and. It was expensive. Not very many people were doing it. And I really wanted to. Be able to connect with nature. And being in town. Off the side of a highway. Cars roll in bio they run in the rat race. I just. I. Yeah. It's not very inspiring. I'd have to. Make special trips and. This kind of distanced me from. The everyday life it. Is distracting of what I want to do. And. The hard work that I want to make and. I don't know I just. Like I said too I really wanted to do. Electrical engineering too. And it really intrigued me that I could. You know. Live. For free. Well it's not free. You got it. As you know. You got to buy batteries you got to do maintenance when you're your own power company. You know lights go out. You can't just. Sit around and cry about it and make phone calls. You got to fix it. So. It's a little different but. I enjoy it. I like the puzzle. I like the. The fact that. I can. Take power from the sun and produce something like this to me. Is this just phenomenally you can't put a price tag on that. You guys really want to get closer to nature get away from people and.

[00:22:20] I do enjoy people I appreciate people. But. City life is just wanted some space. Yeah. Oh man. Well just the other day there was a white ermine which is a little weasel. About the size of for my stacked in the hand. And we had two feet of snow. So he turned white. But then on the snow melted. And he's running round white little weasel in the brown thinking he's totally camouflaged. And I watched him for about ten minutes. That's just recently. One time I was laying in bed. And I thought I saw a moose which there are moose up here very often where I'm at. And I stared out for ten minutes in the twilight first thing in the morning and I was like wait for it to move. It wasn't moving I was seeing go back to sleep but I couldn't close my eyes. And finally it lifted its head up and looked at me and was I. Also feel like there's a moose in our backyard right now. You know bull owl. One day I was butcher and a. Mule deer Buck. And came up to eat. Sitting there and. Doing my thing and there's three bull elk just run right across the ridge. I couldn't get one but that was. Pretty cool. There's. Mountain lions or I seen a wolf up on the ridge up here during hunting season one day with my brother in laws and. Was out this year. No that was I think it was in 2011. I have my old paying and in the garage and. One of my brother in law's was like. Want to go on tell him I said well I said We can hunt up on his ridge over here. And I pointed up there and. There is a wolf up there was a big you. He thought it was an elk and I was like No I didn't. It was huge. I was like that you know. He's like let's a big mule deer I was like that looks like a dog. And. Just the way it was move and he goes over a thousand yards away. And that kind of hit the tree line and the skyline and wrapped around some trees and nose. So we went down there. And talked to Al and hiked up there and there's. Dog tracks this big. I. Was kind of fun. Never seen a mountain lion. But I catch him only game camera all the time at the spring. There's bears all the time up here. Really cool bears. Yeah we we don't really buy me. We work on organic veggie farm in the bottom once a week all summer and.

[00:25:25] We get all our eggs and stuff from there all winter. So. Now we get honey and beets and all the different colors and carrots and potatoes and tomatoes and melons. Yeah. We'd really good. But. It's a lot of work too. It's enjoyable. I really enjoy gardening you know. Enjoy. Processing all my meats. I mean I. Have a lot of people on Instagram. That. I really enjoy and respect and I've just met them over the last six eight months that

I've been on there. But as a kid I mean it was Jim Dolan. For sure. Seeing his geese in the airport. The Elk in front of the bank. Old rusty. All All the wildlife stuff that he does it's right up my alley. And I really. There since I was a kid. I was like man. I could be working on pumps all day or I could be making the coolest animals on the planet out of metal. So yeah he really inspired me. And he's been a lot of help in the recent past too. If I go stop and talk to him and he gives me tips of a try this try that. As far as the art goes because I'm not a trained artist I don't have any formal training in art. And. I just really love doing it and I have. A knack for it. So. Well definitely the pettiness will change. In this lighting. It's hard to give it justice because every sunset. Through the clouds every different. Way the light shines on. It shows a different color through it. So as you're walking past it it changes colors. This metal age will this look different in 20 years than it does today. We'll find out. It's coated with a sculpture coat. That I use. I'm really happy with it. Took me a long time to find out the right type a clear coat to put on this stuff. The. Stuff at the hardware store. Doesn't. Work for me. But. Jim Dunn told me he doesn't coat any of his stuff so. You definitely. Get. A richer color for it if you don't do that. But as soon as somebody touches it you have a rusty fingerprint on it. And everybody is going to want. Let. Me.

[00:28:28] Cut myself on that real quick get it fingerprinted up. So it's just nice to put a coating on I can wipe it off. I have no idea how long it's going to last. This is. You know I've only. Been code known for a couple of years now. I've got so much in my head the next project I've been working on all summer is a life sized boyl. That has real antlers that. I found. On Easter Sunday hiking. In. The backyard. And. It's kind of something I've been working on in my head for quite a few years that I wanted to do. So. It's fun. It's taken a lot of time it's a massive project it's going to be hundreds of pounds. And. I plan on. Starting a few other things aside on the side so that. Just to. Break it up a little bit I really want to get more into sea life and do. I got to do some octopus and some squid. I want to do some native trout species in Montana. Some cutthroat. Maybe a Grayling or something. Something different. I have a lot of prints available and that's what I've been working on. In my business model is that. The first I was doing trout like the trout I showed you. And trying to sell each piece and manufacturer each piece. And keep it inside of someone's budget. When I'm using. 20 some thousand dollars worth of solar equipment to do it and I gotta wait until. The sun's just right. And. So I've been working to try and take the production end out of it. And just work on a few pieces at a time that are of the best quality that I can make. And not worry so much about selling the originals. Because that's a hard market to. Until. Somebody starts offering me what I feel they're worth.

[00:30:58] Giving me reasonable offers of acceptance. But. For now I want to try and make a product that. Resembles the original. As good as possible that I don't have to produce that I'll have to manufacture and. I learned that I had to. Figure out how to do photography. And take pictures and research a bunch of different printing companies and find the best one that I could find. And. That way I can. Have. Product that people can afford it. Displays my artwork and I really enjoy too is. Taken little parts of that and blow it up and showing the detail it's in the work in a big piece. Now I almost think that it's a better piece of art in the end. More comparable. But I'll have to spend two or three hours. For each person and find someone that's going to paying for. All of that work. Is that the part of being an artist that you like the least. The marketing for sure. Yeah. I mean. I wouldn't be on Facebook and Instagram.

[00:32:16] If it wasn't for my hard work. I'd be out. Catching a fish and. Sneaking up on Yelp or taking a picture of a. Black. Bear in my backyard. You know. Excellent. Excellent. Well we'll link. I guess he had a Web site where people could buy prints if they wanted to write. I will have my store link to my Facebook and Instagram is Jake Hackman. Ah. I.

Have it. By the time this video rolls out we got a few shipping. Things we're working on. Excellent go public with it. Just get out and enjoy it. Walk away from it and. Take some time for yourself. That's. What I'm doing.