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A D Maddox [00:00:10] What fishing means to me?

Jim Thull [00:00:14] Yeah.

A D Maddox [00:00:14] Well. Fishing is nothing but a fun game and outdoors it's a chance to get away from the, you know, the chaos of life. It's, it's very, it's a very serene setting and you get your mind off everything that's going on. It puts you right there in the moment in present time, you're watching that fly, and waiting for that fish to come up and bite. It is just, oh my gosh, it's it's riveting. Absolutely. I mean that's actually what fishing is to me. It's, it's a chance to get away and to be in the good ole outdoors and, and breathe. It's a resting point for me.

Jim Thull [00:00:56] Kind of your ability to lose yourself in that moment?

A D Maddox [00:00:58] Yeah.

Jim Thull [00:00:59] Yeah sure.

A D Maddox [00:00:59] Lose myself and, and take a break because you know I live really hard, life for me is just a grind. I'm going and going and going and actually I go out fishing on Tuesday.

Jim Thull [00:01:12] Excellent

A D Maddox [00:01:15] And it's going to be so relaxing. So, it's a chance to breathe.

Jim Thull [00:01:20] That is.

A D Maddox [00:01:21] That's what it is for me.

A D Maddox [00:01:29] You know, I, I would abs-, I do have advice for somebody who's, who's getting into fishing. I would go with a guide, because guides know they're the professionals. And that's exactly what I did. I learned from all these different guides. You know, they taught me how to cast and, and predominately it's the cast, then you worry later about tying flies, reading the water, knowing how to mend, it just kind of builds on itself. But, but they are the ones that know. So, for me, my father taught me how to fish in the beginning, and, and then he kind of let me go, and, and it got very frustrating. I remember it was the second time I was fishing up on a lake. Actually an immigrant. I think it was Story Lake which you might be familiar with. Get a sip water. But you know the wind was blowing. And that line got tangled so many times, my cast was all messed up and, and I about threw it in the water. I was about done with it and, and I kept at it, and you know I've actually never had an experience like that again. I really worked on my cast and went with guides who'd teach me, and, and it was one time I was in the very beginning, I was fishing on Flat Creek, outside of Jackson, and I was with a guide named John from New Zealand who has guiding in Jackson Hole. And it was getting dark. And the funny thing is is that I couldn't really see the line or my fly or anything that I started feeling the weight of the line when it went forwards and backwards. And that's really how I kind of honed in the cast, was feeling the weight of when it extended, when it needed to go back, and it really is an art form to learn how to do this. I mean the cast is very important. I mean Lefty Kreh will

tell you how important the cast is. So, yeah the presentation of the fly. So, I still have some work to do but you know I think you're constantly learning, right?

Jim Thull [00:03:51] Absolutely. I agree. So it's almost like having been deprived of one sense your others kicked into higher gear. The feeling the line more without being able to see it?

A D Maddox [00:04:01] Exactly. Yeah. You have to be able to feel this thing, the, the cast and know where it is. And with it getting dark I, another sense kicked in that picked up on this cast and I'll never forget that. It was a moment where I said this is how you cast. You have to feel it.

A D Maddox [00:04:20] So kind of after that moment you were able to recognize or feel that a little easier?

A D Maddox [00:04:24] Yes. Absolutely. That was the turning point in my cast right there.

Jim Thull [00:04:28] Great.

A D Maddox [00:04:29] Was feeling that line because you don't think you can't fish thinking you gotta feel. So that's, that's where the shift began. I think that was in like '01. Because I think I started fishing it was in 2000, I was painting trout before I was, I was fly fishing. Yeah. For photos, so.

Jim Thull [00:04:50] Now have you always fly fished? Did you ever do spinning or anything when you were younger? Or did you start out-?

A D Maddox [00:04:56] Oh yeah, absolutely.

Jim Thull [00:04:56] OK. Great.

A D Maddox [00:04:56] I used to, I used to fish with a, with a, we called it a fishing pole.

Jim Thull [00:05:01] Yep, yep, yep

A D Maddox [00:05:02] You know my brother and I, my, my grandparents had lakes, both of them did, and we'd go down to the lakes and I, hell, I would fish with a, with a baloney and cheese sandwich, whatever I was eating for lunch, I'd put on that hook. And we'd catch all the sun fish, you know, the bream and, and then we bass fished with crickets and worms. So we grew up bass fishing and doing all this type of, you know, lake fishing ,.

Jim Thull [00:05:34] Sure.

A D Maddox [00:05:34] With the, with the spinner rods.

Jim Thull [00:05:36] We still use little mini marshmallows.

A D Maddox [00:05:38] Oh my God, that's so funny. Yeah. You done put whatever you could and then and I was so afraid of the fins, I would yank the fish out and throw it in my brother face because he knew how to put the hand over the fins so you wouldn't get stabbed. I got stabbed once, and I was like. I'm never touching one of those fish again.

There's another reason why I like fishing trout because you don't get, they don't draw blood, you know?

Jim Thull [00:05:59] That's true.

A D Maddox [00:06:00] Except for those sharp teeth. Sometimes those young ones can have some really sharp ones, you know.

Jim Thull [00:06:04] Yeah.

A D Maddox [00:06:05] So,

A D Maddox [00:06:06] Is that what you primarily fish for now, is trout. Yeah it's, it's the. Well, I have I have gone bass fishing just once in the last couple of years. I went out on a lake around here with a guide. And it was really fun, it was some type of, I forget, it was like a popper or something that we just kind of yanked across the water and made. This fish would just come up and just latch on. It was really interesting.

A D Maddox [00:06:41] Patience. Gosh patience and a really good attitude. Patience goes a long ways. Are you talking about like fishing with a guide like?

Jim Thull [00:06:53] Fishing with a guide, fishing with a friend.

A D Maddox [00:06:55] Yeah just people that are, are, high tone people. Happy people. You know the, the ones that are, are comfortable. And it's, they're comfortable in the environment. They love being there. And they're relaxed and not uptight. I don't particularly like hanging out or fishing with uptight people. So the same thing goes with, with you know, who I'm fishing with. And but, but the real, you know, soft spoken, patient type people, who are, teachers, you know. Like when it comes to guides, there is guides that really have that talent. The really good ones have that talent. And, if, I was just fishing with somebody being an adventurous person, because I'd rather not go in a drift boat, I'd much rather hike, and, and get these fish in the small mountain streams than can get in a boat. You know.

Jim Thull [00:08:06] Yeah, I obviously prefer the smaller tributaries to the larger rivers yeah.

A D Maddox [00:08:10] Yeah. Go, go get the exercise and, and I like dry, no dry wading. Where, is it, yeah, where you're not wearing your waders. I don't like waders. I almost fell into a river one time with waders, and I had a friend save me. So that was, could have been the end of A D.

Jim Thull [00:08:31] I own a pair I think I've worn twice. So yeah.

A D Maddox [00:08:33] Yeah. There's too many stories out west of the people going down in them. I just don't.

Jim Thull [00:08:40] Well, and you know how those mountain rivers move. You know it can be six inches of water and it can be enough to knock you off your feet almost.

A D Maddox [00:08:46] It is, that's exactly what happened. I had a friend just Bob Chuleck grabbed me and yanked me out of that river and I just, I was filling up. And I was like, God. Yeah, yeah that does the end of the waders, so I'll freeze.

A D Maddox [00:09:07] Jim Corconan. From Sun Valley, I think I, I caught my first trout with him on the Wood River that went to Ketchum. And this man is a giant. I think he, I think he used to be a pro basketball player. I think, if he wasn't, sorry I'm just kind of mocking it up but, but, he is the most soft spoken gentle, patient guide that when I caught this, this tiny little rainbow I mean you could just, you know it's a tiny one. He made the biggest deal out of it. He was like wow, AD. You knew he how special it was, you know, it's my first trout. Like he, it, it was just a really cool moment, but he was, he was so patient. Every single second of the time that I was with him, I actually have fish with him I think at least three times. And, yeah, Jim Corconan. Absolutely.

Jim Thull [00:10:14] Great.

A D Maddox [00:10:14] I mean there's a lot of other ones too. I don't want to discredit those guys.

Jim Thull [00:10:18] No, no.

A D Maddox [00:10:18] But yeah.

A D Maddox [00:10:25] You know. That's going to have to be Tom Montgomery. And you know my situation for learning how to, getting into angling. Was one out of desperation because number one, I was painting trout. Well the first trout show on canvas that I had was in Ketchum. And, that was at Sagebrush Gallery and Tom Montgomery who is a guide, gave me, and photographer, gave me the material that I needed to paint these canvases. So great, I had a a wonderful show. And we actually did another show following that, Tom gave me more photos to paint from. Well now I had a problem because the trout were selling but I didn't have any pictures, and I think I milked Tom for all the pictures I possibly could. So I actually had to buy a Canon, learn how to shoot, and learn how to fish so I could go catch these things. So, you know, I leaned heavily on Tom to help me with getting the camera set up and also you know going to go fish. Well, I dove in big, I said, it was Bob Chuleck too, Bob's another one. You know I told both of them, I said I want to go to South Island, New Zealand and they hooked me up with the guides and I went down there for five weeks to go shoot, catch the fish, and shoot. It, it was a really successful trip for me. But those were the two guys, and I, and my dad helped me out but I didn't catch, I didn't catch a trout when I was with my father. He just got me into it and my dad bought me the setup. My, my fly rods and the waders, everything. Dad bought for me. So, and he got me out there but it took awhile until, you know, Jim Carconan was with me to get my first trout. But, That's what, that's how I had to, I had to get in it, because I had to get the material to paint these canvases because they were selling and I've always known as an artist, if you weren't selling then you got to keep on painting it.

Jim Thull [00:12:46] Sure.

A D Maddox [00:12:46] I mean. That's common sense, right?

Jim Thull [00:12:49] Well it sounds like you-, I knew you grew up in a family that was, that was artistic and into the arts it sounds like you also grew up in a family that was into fishing.

A D Maddox [00:12:57] Oh fishing and hunting. My, my grandfather won the Weatherby in '76, we come from a big family of big game hunters and, fishing I mean, all, all of the men in my family have always been hunters and I mean even the women. My dad's wife is a hunter she just got a stag in New Zealand.

Jim Thull [00:13:23] Wow.

[00:13:24] And yeah there's there's a lot in the outdoors that goes on and we have a lodge outside of Nashville with a lake, and it's a hunting lodge actually. So, yeah. That's, that's pretty much what runs in the Maddox blood you know.

A D Maddox [00:13:46] Gosh you know, I, pollution. The first thing I think of is, is pollution. You know, water supply too. That's something I think is a huge threat. And they tell you, they tell you out east with FUDR, France Upper Delaware River, I mean the fracking that goes on. We, I don't, I think that the population is growing at such a large rate. That all these places are putting water into everything. Well, it's going to run out. 60 years from now, I think that it's going to run out out west. We're going to have problems and some of those faucets are going to go dry. I think Las Vegas is going to fold up. They've got a serious issue and all this affects the rivers. There's a, there's a finite amount of water that's on this planet and the population continues to grow and also production and production is nonstop. I mean, manufacturing we just keep on building and building without regard of what's going on, to, to, the water.

A D Maddox [00:15:12] Well, I, you know, I, using a certain brand, as far as fly rods. Orvis is good. Sage is good. Five weight. Fly, my favorite fly is the Parachute Adams. That's my favorite. That's the one that all those huge lunkers in New Zealand were latching onto. Dries, they just come right up and get them. It's my favorite fly.

A D Maddox [00:15:44] Do, do I have a favorite trout? I, I love painting, I love painting all of them. But, the, the one obviously I think that is the most beautiful is the brookie. The brookie has got an incredible palette of contrasting colors, complementary colors as well, that bangs, just a beautiful design. That's it. Now the other one that is the, the runner upper. You could say ties with it is, is you know, look at the brown trout. The brown trout got a great color palette. I'd say my least favorite would be the rainbow and the cutthroat, just because they had these light, lighter pastel colors that I don't particularly like painting in pastels, so I have to change them and make him a little bit louder to make it my own art. Because, i don't really, particularly like light colors so I have to darken them up and, and give him my little flare. The rainbows are more fun to catch. They fight pretty good.

Jim Thull [00:17:04] Yeah.

A D Maddox [00:17:05] That's, they, they're the ones that jump out of the water and break you off and they're always very zippy, so.

A D Maddox [00:17:25] Favorite. Snake River. Snake River because of the scenery, the Grand Tetons.

Jim Thull [00:17:41] Spectacular, aren't they, yeah, yeah, you can't beat that, yeah.

A D Maddox [00:17:41] I mean I got stuck in Jackson Hole for almost 20 years. That, that place every single day you look out at the Grand Tetons and you just say Oh my God. Can it get any better than this?

Jim Thull [00:17:53] Yeah, they're gorgeous.

A D Maddox [00:17:54] Yeah it's absolutely very comparable to the South Island of New Zealand where Queenstown is, you know the Remarkables with the Tetons you know, they're, they're very similar places in latitude on opposite sides of the hemisphere. And this, another place that's just as gorgeous the tables that runs through the mountains up there. But the Snake. I'd say it's the one that I've probably fished the most and, the scenery, and of course because of the fine-spotted cutthroat trout right there. I mean it's so unique to that area makes it a very special place and I think that's why there's so many fly fishermen that would just kill to go out to Jackson Hole and do go out to Jackson Hole and go fishing.

Jim Thull [00:18:46] Sure.

A D Maddox [00:18:46] Yeah.

Jim Thull [00:18:47] Yeah it's gorgeous so you can't beat the scenery.

A D Maddox [00:18:49] I mean, I could sit there and say you know the Yellowstone River but you, the, Montana is beautiful too. But if you have to compare it to any place, Jackson Hole, there is, I don't think there's a place that can hold a stick to it. I mean,.

Jim Thull [00:19:01] It's tough to beat.

A D Maddox [00:19:02] Tough to beat, absolutely.

A D Maddox [00:19:09] Well. First of all I support these groups because they are doing good for this industry. I mean they they're the ones that look out after the trout in the waters. That's what they do. And we have to have that to continue anyway. And, I mean, that's, that's the main reason right there. They're, they're getting it done. They're doing it. As far as which ones are doing the most, well, there's ones that focused on the rivers and the species, conservation. And there's also non-profits that help children or help veterans. So either way they're doing good in our society. And I always support those type of groups that are helping.

A D Maddox [00:20:03] I think. I think usually it can swing the other way in the sense that, if you're a really good angler, or, sometimes a really good anglers don't necessarily need photographs to paint from because they know the species so well that they can sit down there and draw it right from their imagination. And I know quite a few artists that do that because they've spent so much time catching these fish. Me on the other hand, you know, obviously, I do pretty well with painting these fish but I don't fish as much as I'd like because I'm on the easel painting. So I have to I have to work from a lot of photos to really get the anatomy right on these. I mean obviously painting them for 18 years, I'm getting the sense of what they're like, I use the photograph to get the anatomy right, but after that, the photo goes down and I paint from my imagination to pull it together. So yeah I think it makes you stronger being a better angler. You know, it would definitely help the art a lot more. That's why I'm trying to fish a little bit more than I have been since I moved to Nashville. Because, it's it's more difficult to go fishin in this area than it is when I lived in

Jackson I could walk out the front door and be on Flat Creek in 10, 15 minutes, casting a line. It doesn't happen here. And the other thing is that if I was going to compare fishing a river in this area, to the west, forget it. I'm going straight to the airport and taking a flight.

A D Maddox [00:22:10] Yes it did. And here's the answer that I wanted to tell you in the beginning is that, Jackson made it easy for me. Because, I needed to go catch trout. Well it's right there. All the guides were there. All the people that knew could tell me, So it's easy for me to learn what to do to go get these and so it didn't make it a huge production. I remember when I lived in Colorado and I was painting horses and aspen trees. Well, it, you know I had to go get permission from people to go shoot their horses. It just seemed like it was a little bit more of a production than what happened in Jackson and not only that, the reason why I'm doing it today is because when I first started painting these trout they sold at the gallery. You know, being an artist if you're selling your work you're making a living so you're going to continue doing it. And it just made it easy, very, very easy to do. And had I not gone to Jackson Hole, there's no way that I'd be here today. With all this work with trout, it's being in the environment having it accessible to be able to produce.

Jim Thull [00:23:32] Well that's great. I know I'd read a story about one of the first things you did was furniture, right?

A D Maddox [00:23:38] Yeah.

Jim Thull [00:23:38] And that one sold within an hour of, the first piece you sold within an hour of putting it out, that's wonderful.

A D Maddox [00:23:42] Yes it did, and it had trout on it.

Jim Thull [00:23:44] Yeah that's great.

A D Maddox [00:23:45] And, and you know there were so many people. Oh my gosh I, it would take forever to tell you all the names of the people that helped me with the fishing and with the art. And the gallery owner. I mean I was, you know, I had to quit my job at the hospital and start painting full time and, and the gallery owner Beth Overcast was giving me advances. No gallery owner does that. Well she saw the potential of what I was doing. She said keep painting the trout. So. Wow. And the other thing that brought about was I had this huge challenge. Well, I love challenges. I mean if they're too much it's kind of like, you know if you hit a brick wall with some things it can get a little boring but, that's, that's how I went about. So.

A D Maddox [00:24:45] You know there are so many pieces of mine that are reproductions. The Sammy prints we have on our website. I really don't know if I have a favorite. Usually. My favorite piece is always the one that just got off the easel.

Jim Thull [00:25:04] That's fair enough.

A D Maddox [00:25:04] Because it's the last it's the new release. And I love to share it with everybody. I have nailed quite a few of these characters. And some have been tougher than others but, I have so many favorites. There, there, I mean you've seen them. there's,.

Jim Thull [00:25:28] Like picking a favorite kid or a favorite dog or what have you I guess, right?

A D Maddox [00:25:32] I mean, there's, there's the body of work is growing and there's, there is a lot of really good ones. I mean one swings the yellows, one bangs the blues and, there's some that I just some. So the answer to your question is, No I do not have a favorite.

Jim Thull [00:25:53] That's fair enough. That's a fair answer. Alright.

A D Maddox [00:25:57] Maybe that's a good answer there.

A D Maddox [00:26:05] How is art like angling? Oh gosh, man, I tell you what, it is. I fish every day in my studio. I tell you what, I start these canvases and these fish get away from me. There, there are some fish that I can reel in. That's why I always, I always like, have this analogy with painting fish like, like fishing because they, they can, they get squirrely they're all over the place and they zip me around here and there and it's usually the ones that I'm painting from my imagination because there's so many different avenues I can go with them with the color palette, or adding something in, or taking it out, design elements, you know, the composition, and you know, when I catch it and reel it in, it's coming in for a close and it's nailed. So, that's how I liken you know, my painting to fishing.

Jim Thull [00:27:03] Well that's a great answer. Yeah that's great.

A D Maddox [00:27:06] It's kind of funny but that's just the way that, that's the way it is. I just pretend like I'm fishing in my studio.