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Virginia Garrison ([00:00:00](#)):

Today is November 25, 2025. My name is Virginia Garrison and I'm conducting an oral history interview with George Watson.

George Watson ([00:00:11](#)):

My name is George Watson, G-E-O-R-G-E-W-A-T-S-O-N.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:18](#)):

Great. You have any other Georges in your family?

George Watson ([00:00:20](#)):

My dad, he's passed away.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:24](#)):

Oh, are you a junior?

George Watson ([00:00:26](#)):

Yes, yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:27](#)):

Oh, wow.

George Watson ([00:00:27](#)):

Well, no, excuse me. No, not really. My father's name was Alexander George Watson, but he never liked Alexander, so he always used George.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:39](#)):

Is there an Alexander, one of your kids is an ...

George Watson ([00:00:41](#)):

Alexander? Yeah, my son's boy. Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:45](#)):

Okay. And where were you born?

George Watson ([00:00:48](#)):

Staten Island. 7/5/'44.

Virginia Garrison ([00:00:54](#)):

And your parents' name, we already know Alexander George is your dad, right?

George Watson ([00:00:59](#)):

Right. And Alice Watson.

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Virginia Garrison ([00:01:01](#)):

Oh, like your sister. What was her maiden name?

George Watson ([00:01:06](#)):

May MAYE.

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:11](#)):

Okay. You want to tell me a little bit about your family heritage and where your parents came from?

George Watson ([00:01:17](#)):

Alright. We got Irish, English, Scottish, Swedish. My parents both came from Staten Island. Have we ever visited Ireland, Scotland, what else did I say?

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:36](#)):

Sweden.

George Watson ([00:01:36](#)):

Sweden? No. And what was the Irish? English and England? Yes, of course. Yeah. Three out of the four.

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:44](#)):

They did visit. Okay. But they grew up in Staten Island as well? Yes.

George Watson ([00:01:48](#)):

Okay.

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:48](#)):

And what did they do or what did your father do?

George Watson ([00:01:50](#)):

My mother had kids.

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:53](#)):

How many?

George Watson ([00:01:53](#)):

Nine. Nine altogether.

Virginia Garrison ([00:01:55](#)):

Whoa.

George Watson ([00:01:56](#)):

Three were born on the same day, but no twins.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:00](#)):

Wow.

George Watson ([00:02:01](#)):

Yeah, my father was a fireman. Amongst other things, in having nine kids, he had to have more than one job. They ran a dry cleaning store, he worked various plumbing, odds and ends. He did everything.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:20](#)):

So you had eight siblings then?

George Watson ([00:02:21](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:22](#)):

Where are you in the lineup for ...

George Watson ([00:02:24](#)):

Siblings? The number one son.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:25](#)):

The number one son. Do you have older sisters?

George Watson ([00:02:28](#)):

One older sister. She has since passed away.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:30](#)):

Okay. And what are the names of your siblings?

George Watson ([00:02:33](#)):

Alright, there was Bernadette, George, me, Kathy, Robert, Joe, Paul, Tommy, and Audrey.

Virginia Garrison ([00:02:43](#)):

Wow. So Alice is Audrey.

George Watson ([00:02:49](#)):

Alice, sorry. Bernadette, George. Alice. Alice, Tommy, Paul. Oh wait, I'm sorry. I'm forgetting Kathy. I hope she is not looking at this thing. Sister Kathy. She was third in line. Kathy was third in line. Okay.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:09](#)):

I think you said Kathy..

George Watson ([00:03:10](#)):

Did. I did. Okay. Alright.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:11](#)):

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Yeah. And your mother, father, their relationship, it sounds like they were very busy basically.

George Watson ([00:03:19](#)):

All the time.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:20](#)):

Yeah. Okay. And so you grew up in Staten Island and you went to school there?

George Watson ([00:03:24](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:25](#)):

Okay. Did you have a nickname when you were a kid?

George Watson ([00:03:29](#)):

Bonehead?

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:30](#)):

No. Really?

George Watson ([00:03:31](#)):

No. Yeah, that was the kind of a family nickname.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:37](#)):

Why did you stand out in a particularly boneheaded way?

George Watson ([00:03:38](#)):

Oh, no. Just joking, half joking, half serious.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:43](#)):

Was your family like that?

George Watson ([00:03:45](#)):

Oh yeah. Yeah. We used to have, once a week we'd sit down and do the family council, see who was looking for attention or ...

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:53](#)):

Seriously?

George Watson ([00:03:54](#)):

Yeah, we made fun of one another.

Virginia Garrison ([00:03:58](#)):

It sounds like it. Yeah. Oh, so, oh, I see. I get where that came from then. Okay. And then, so how did you or your family end up with a connection to Montauk?

George Watson ([00:04:07](#)):

When I was very young, I remember going into the bathroom one morning and there was a fish in the bathtub that was, yeah. And of course, where did it come from? My father had gone out to Montauk Point and fishing, and he caught the fish. Subsequently, we started camping at Hither Hills.

Virginia Garrison ([00:04:30](#)):

A lot of people, that's where they got their start.

George Watson ([00:04:31](#)):

Yeah.

([00:04:33](#)):

Yeah, yeah. It was great. I remember being a little kid trying to, we had an army surplus then trying to hold the thing up in the wind, put it up. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:04:46](#)):

It sounds like a lot of fun, especially when you have that many kids in your family.

George Watson ([00:04:50](#)):

Oh yeah. I had a very happy childhood.

Virginia Garrison ([00:04:54](#)):

That's great.

George Watson ([00:04:56](#)):

One time, if you don't mind, we got back to the, we had gone shopping up to East Hampton and we had two cars and a police car pulls up and we had left my brother Joe in East Hampton.

Virginia Garrison ([00:05:13](#)):

By accident?

George Watson ([00:05:15](#)):

Yes. No, it was completely by accident. They thought he was in the other car, whatever.

Virginia Garrison ([00:05:22](#)):

Oh, right. That makes sense. Yeah.

George Watson ([00:05:23](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:05:25](#)):

And so what kind of stuff did you do when you were staying in Montauk for fun?

George Watson ([00:05:29](#)):

Juvenile delinquency,

Virginia Garrison ([00:05:30](#)):

Of course.

George Watson ([00:05:32](#)):

No, it was great fishing back then. The only time the police were in town was on Sunday to direct traffic coming out of the church. So we had had the run of the town back then.

Virginia Garrison ([00:05:47](#)):

And so what did you do with that?

George Watson ([00:05:49](#)):

Oh God. I don't want to go into detail. No, it was great. I mean, just mischief that kids did and got into back then.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:02](#)):

And did you get to know a lot of people in Montauk?

George Watson ([00:06:04](#)):

Before? Well, we were dock people and we stayed down here and of course, yeah, the Gosmans.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:15](#)):

What do you mean by dock people? So you were staying, you were at Hither Hills originally?

George Watson ([00:06:18](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry. Im sorry. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:20](#)):

Because you got, okay, go ahead. You go.

George Watson ([00:06:23](#)):

My father never had any money, but he talked, my grandfather was a fisherman and he talked him into coming out here and buying a piece of property on East Lake Drive, a half acre, I think.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:35](#)):

West Lake, right?

George Watson ([00:06:36](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry, West Lake. Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:38](#)):

Yeah.

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George Watson ([00:06:39](#)):

West Lake Drive. I think they paid \$1,500 for the piece of property.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:43](#)):

That's where Chris lives now, right?

George Watson ([00:06:45](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:45](#)):

Right next to Tipperary.

George Watson ([00:06:47](#)):

Right on ...

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:47](#)):

On West Lake Drive by the docks.

George Watson ([00:06:49](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:49](#)):

That's how you became like a Dock family,

George Watson ([00:06:52](#)):

Right? Right. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:06:53](#)):

Okay, gotcha.

George Watson ([00:06:54](#)):

Yeah, Freddie Houseknecht was down the street building the motel. I can't remember right on the other side of the intersection. Annie Breyer.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:09](#)):

It is Annie Breyer's.

George Watson ([00:07:10](#)):

Was it Annie Breyer's right on the other side. Right.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:12](#)):

Next to the liquor store.

George Watson ([00:07:13](#)):

There? Yes. Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:14](#)):

Yeah, I think so.

George Watson ([00:07:15](#)):

And Freddie Houseknecht was doing the building, and my father and our grandfather, they had never built a house, and they would go down and they do the exact measurements that they would, they copied Freddie's building down there, the exact same thing.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:33](#)):

Oh, that's funny.

George Watson ([00:07:34](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:36](#)):

So that's good for fishing and stuff too.

George Watson ([00:07:38](#)):

Oh yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:39](#)):

So you got to know the Gosman family and the dock families, like that?

George Watson ([00:07:42](#)):

Oh, sure. The Behans. We worked on the Viking, the boats.

Virginia Garrison ([00:07:48](#)):

The kids did?

George Watson ([00:07:50](#)):

Oh yeah, I got violently ill, I never got over being seasick. I would go out, we went out to Cox's Ledge and boaters leave at 3 o'clock in the morning. I'd be vomiting about 3:30, and I wouldn't stop until I came back. People kept telling me, you're going to get over it. You're going, I never got over being seasick every day. I

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:09](#)):

That was your job?

George Watson ([00:08:11](#)):

Yeah, every day.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:12](#)):

Horrible. Did you like fishing or not?

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George Watson ([00:08:16](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. But like I said, it was more of a job than enjoyment.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:23](#)):

Okay. So let's see. So around when did your father buy or build the house on your property?

George Watson ([00:08:29](#)):

I think it was '57, 1957.

([00:08:30](#)):

Virginia Garrison

([00:08:30](#)):

Okay.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:37](#)):

The family never moved there full time?

George Watson ([00:08:39](#)):

No, no, no. It was just a vacation spot.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:42](#)):

And you were still in Staten Island

George Watson ([00:08:43](#)):

Then?

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:44](#)):

Yes.

George Watson ([00:08:44](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:44](#)):

And you went to high school in Staten Island? Yes. Did you go to college?

George Watson ([00:08:47](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:48](#)):

Where'd you go?

George Watson ([00:08:49](#)):

Fordham.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:50](#)):

In ...

George Watson ([00:08:50](#)):

In Manhattan. In lower Manhattan.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:53](#)):

Did you serve in the military?

George Watson ([00:08:54](#)):

Yes, the Marine Corps.

Virginia Garrison ([00:08:57](#)):

Oh boy. Okay. Was that during a war?

George Watson ([00:09:02](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:09:04](#)):

Yeah.

George Watson ([00:09:04](#)):

Yeah. I went to Vietnam 13 months.

Virginia Garrison ([00:09:12](#)):

How old were you then?

George Watson ([00:09:14](#)):

I was old. I was 21.

Virginia Garrison ([00:09:19](#)):

Anything you want to say about that experience?

George Watson ([00:09:22](#)):

I'm glad I'm still here. Well, you can imagine. I'm very lucky.

Virginia Garrison ([00:09:39](#)):

All right. When you got back, then, what did you do? Back to Staten Island?

George Watson ([00:09:41](#)):

I had taken the test for police department. First of all, my father was a fireman, so the kids took all the tests, police, sanitation, post office, just to get in line. And I wanted to go on the fire department, but I didn't get to take the fire department test until I was still in the military. And what happened was, the way it works, if you go on a city job, cops or firemen, right after you get out of the military, they'll give you a retroactive time to the day that they called you, which was really a big thing. So when I went on the cops, the day I went on the cops, I picked up two and a half years seniority. And then subsequently, after

spending a little over a year on the cops, I swung over to the fire department. So I had over three and a half years seniority.

Virginia Garrison ([00:10:51](#)):

So the time that you were in the military sort of counts ...

([00:10:55](#)):

As seniority experience in the, okay.

George Watson ([00:10:58](#)):

Yeah, and it's very important because I was able to take the, you have to be on the fire department a minimum of three years to take the lieutenant's test. And the lieutenant's test only comes along once every four years. So you could literally be on the job for seven years before you got to take the test. And I was on the job only a little over a year when I took the test, and I passed the test to the dismay of a lot of guys that I worked with because I was a new guy. And here I am going to be a lieutenant. Anyway.

Virginia Garrison ([00:11:38](#)):

So you passed that, did you start, did you take that job?

George Watson ([00:11:41](#)):

No, I left prior to being promoted. I was number three of 437 on the list. They made 1,100 guys off the list for lieutenant. But I left before I got promoted.

Virginia Garrison ([00:11:57](#)):

And you left to do what?

George Watson ([00:11:59](#)):

Come out here for the ...

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:02](#)):

To buy the Dock?

George Watson ([00:12:03](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:05](#)):

Okay. So Bob Fitzgerald owned it then, right? He was like a professional basketball player.

George Watson ([00:12:09](#)):

Right? He played for the Knicks.

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:11](#)):

Okay.

George Watson ([00:12:11](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:13](#)):

And it was a bar?

George Watson ([00:12:14](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:14](#)):

It was kind of like a dive bar kind of bar.

George Watson ([00:12:16](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Pretty much a dive. I don't want to get in trouble here, but yeah, it was a dive bar. And I'll tell you a humorous story if you want to hear it.

Virginia Garrison ([00:12:27](#)):

Sure.

([00:12:29](#)):

No other place in Montauk interested me enough where I would've left the fire department. Right.

([00:12:38](#)):

You were in a good situation.

George Watson ([00:12:39](#)):

Yeah, I had a great thing going, but I always loved the bar. And the last time I was in the bar, the way that it worked was all the restaurants closed at 10 o'clock, but Bob was still open after 10 o'clock, so you could still go in and get a hamburger or mussels. The last time Terry and I went in there, we walked in and there were just a couple of guys. One guy was passed out at the bar. And so I asked, I said, can we get a hamburger? And he goes, well, I don't know. And he goes over to the guy that's sleeping, and he's going, Bob, Bob, are you still cooking? And Bob gets up and he's "Son of a bitch," and he's cursing and he walks into the kitchen. And that was fine by me, but we were down at the end of the bar.

([00:13:39](#)):

So Bob went into the kitchen at my back, and the next thing I know, I heard the door squeak open, and I looked to my side and I saw a double barrel shotgun. And this is the God's honest truth, and he's still cursing. And he walks behind the bar with the shotgun, and he leans the shotgun up against the cash register, and he starts to walk away and the shotgun falls down. And it's pointing right at Terry and I, so I said, we're out of here. We left. And that was the last time I was in the bar until Bob's wife came along. I had expressed an interest to John Behan, Joan's brother, that I loved the bar, and I was interested in buying it. So she came to the house one morning,

Virginia Garrison ([00:14:26](#)):

Joan Behan was married to Bob Fitzgerald.

George Watson ([00:14:28](#)):

Yes. And she said she came one Saturday or Sunday morning, I can't remember. It was a Saturday or Sunday. And she said, you're still interested in buying the bar? I said, yes, I am. So she said, you better get down there, because John Gosman was supposed to be there at eight, and now he's coming back at 10,

so you better get down there. This was like at nine in the morning. So I throw some water on my face, and I run down, and Bob's we're drinking blackberry shots of blackberry brandy, and beers at

Virginia Garrison ([00:15:02](#)):

Nine o'clock in the morning,

George Watson ([00:15:03](#)):

Nine o'clock in the morning, yeah. And he's going, look, I spoke to John Gosman first, so he's got first shot at the place. Shortly after the phone rings, and Bob goes back and he's on the phone. He goes, oh yeah. Oh yeah? Well, you can go fuck yourself. And he slams the phone down because John thought he had Bob over a barrel. The place was kind of run down. And so he was telling Bob that he couldn't make it until 12 o'clock, that's when he told him to go fuck off. And then he turned around and we shook hands and we agreed on a price. And shortly after that, John came along. I wasn't there at this point, but he offered him, I think it was \$3,000 more than what we had shaken hands on. And Bob told him, no, Bob is a man of his word. That's how I wound up getting the place.

Virginia Garrison ([00:16:14](#)):

Because that would've been valuable for the Gosmans. It's right there.

George Watson ([00:16:17](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:16:18](#)):

Yeah.

([00:16:19](#)):

You know what he was going to do with it? What his plans were?

George Watson ([00:16:23](#)):

He just wanted it adjoining, the adjoining piece of property.

Virginia Garrison ([00:16:27](#)):

What year was this, do you think?

George Watson ([00:16:29](#)):

That was, wait a minute, '73.

Virginia Garrison ([00:16:34](#)):

Oh, okay. So then did you move, it was called Fitzgerald's at the time, right?

George Watson ([00:16:42](#)):

Yeah. And actually I wanted, I had no money. Absolutely. I had no money at all. My father put the property that we had on West Lake up for mortgage, and that's how I got the down payment.

([00:17:00](#)):

The place. And like I said, I asked Bob having no money, I asked him if I could use his name because everybody knew it as Fitzgerald's. It had been there for a dozen years. And Bob was tickled that I wanted

to use his name. And he said, sure, sure. And then I call shortly after that, I got a call from Joan Fitzgerald telling me that if I wanted to use her name, I'd have to pay I forget what it was, a couple of thousand dollars. So I said, no thanks. I'll make my own sign.

Virginia Garrison ([00:17:41](#)):

What made you want to buy it in the first place?

George Watson ([00:17:44](#)):

I always loved it. I just loved it.

Virginia Garrison ([00:17:46](#)):

For the people? For the atmosphere? The location?

George Watson ([00:17:48](#)):

No, just the place itself. It was just a down home place, I thought.

Virginia Garrison ([00:17:55](#)):

And you were with Terry already?

George Watson ([00:17:56](#)):

Oh, yeah. Yeah. She always tells her friends, Here I was marrying a guy that was going to be a lieutenant in the fire department, and now he's dragging me out and make me tend bar out in Montauk.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:06](#)):

That's right. And did Terry tend bar?

George Watson ([00:18:08](#)):

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Sure, sure.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:13](#)):

Let me think. Okay, so that was '73.

George Watson ([00:18:18](#)):

'73, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:20](#)):

And then you moved out full time? Yeah. Did you go into the house that's on West Lake? Is that where you were living?

George Watson ([00:18:25](#)):

No, actually, we rented a place off the old highway.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:30](#)):

Okay.

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George Watson ([00:18:30](#)):

Yeah. And we lived there for I guess, a couple of years.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:35](#)):

Did you have kids yet, or no?

George Watson ([00:18:36](#)):

No, no, no. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:18:40](#)):

And then what did you do with the bar? Did you change stuff right away, or did you wait or

George Watson ([00:18:46](#)):

The first thing I did was I got rid of the pool table, which I always hated. It made too much noise, and it created fights. And I got rid of the jukebox, so I didn't have to listen to the same song 36 times a day. And we put a stereo system in. We were one of the first people to have

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:06](#)):

I remember that. And I remember really liking the music

George Watson ([00:19:09](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we had ...

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:11](#)):

I wanted to ask you about that, too. Are you into music very much?

George Watson ([00:19:15](#)):

Oh yeah. Big time. Big time. Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:17](#)):

What types?

George Watson ([00:19:20](#)):

Blues, basically, but I'll do jazz, pop, depends.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:26](#)):

And the stereo system, to me at least, it sounded really good.

George Watson ([00:19:29](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:30](#)):

It just,

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George Watson ([00:19:31](#)):

Yeah, I was always a stereo. I always had top of the line stereo equipment, so I just brought my equipment out.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:40](#)):

Who made the decisions about the playlist? Did you or?

George Watson ([00:19:43](#)):

Yeah. Well, I had albums to begin with, and then people would recommend stuff or bring albums in.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:53](#)):

You'd try them and, that makes sense.

George Watson ([00:19:53](#)):

Sure, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:19:54](#)):

And then, so what about the decor and stuff like that? Was that always the kind of quirky things?

([00:20:03](#)):

It was a cinderblock building. It was kind of raw looking. And one of the first things, I did the double doors out front. I cut the doors out and put two big windows in the two front doors. So you had a beautiful view. You could look out and you'd see the Coast Guard station and the boats, and then we put wood board and batten siding on the outside. It just softened things up. And

([00:20:42](#)):

Had that building always been a bar, or was it something before?

George Watson ([00:20:45](#)):

No, Bob built it.

Virginia Garrison ([00:20:46](#)):

He did build it.

George Watson ([00:20:47](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:20:49](#)):

And like you said, it was like in the '40s or something?

George Watson ([00:20:51](#)):

Oh, no, no, no, no. It was there for 12 years. Bob had it for 12 years.

Virginia Garrison ([00:20:57](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry. So '73, so that was the '60s. Okay.

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George Watson ([00:21:00](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. He had all the local guys down there building and drinking.

Virginia Garrison ([00:21:07](#)):

Oh, like

George Watson ([00:21:08](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:21:09](#)):

Barter kind of ...

George Watson ([00:21:10](#)):

Thing. Yeah, big time. When you went in there, there were about five half-gallons of booze on the bar. It was a real down home place.

Virginia Garrison ([00:21:21](#)):

And who were they? Like fishermen, who were the clientele or,

George Watson ([00:21:24](#)):

Oh, of course. Yeah. Yeah. It was mainly fishermen.

Virginia Garrison ([00:21:28](#)):

And a lot of fishermen are also carpenters and

George Watson ([00:21:31](#)):

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:21:34](#)):

And then, so with the interior decor, I guess I should say, how did that kind of come about with the taxidermy, and

George Watson ([00:21:48](#)):

That was just add-ons. Most of the stuff the taxidermy came from irate wives, like get that shit out of here. Worked out good for me.

Virginia Garrison ([00:22:02](#)):

Yeah. And then did you pick stuff up as you went along? Signs or ...

George Watson ([00:22:08](#)):

Oh, yeah, sure. Yeah. It was just a collection of, yeah. Yeah. It was funny because a number of years back, maybe 10 years ago, my wife Terry, she comes in and she goes, you got too much shit in here. You got to thin the herd out. You got to get rid of some of this stuff. And I guess I'm a semi hoarder or whatever. I hate to throw something out that's still usable. So I reluctantly agreed to have some of the stuff removed, but if it would be put down in the dump that people could adopt it,

Virginia Garrison ([00:22:44](#)):

Put it on the free table.

George Watson ([00:22:48](#)):

So she and my son came down and took about 15 pieces of taxidermy and took it down, left it on the table, and within 45 minutes, two different people. Jeff, the Bay Constable.

Virginia Garrison ([00:23:06](#)):

Havlik.

George Watson ([00:23:07](#)):

Jeff Havlik. Yeah. He was one of the people, pulled up and go in, George, George, I got some great stuff for you.

Virginia Garrison ([00:23:13](#)):

It's the same stuff he just got rid of. You didn't take it back did you?

George Watson ([00:23:18](#)):

No, no, no. I couldn't. I

([00:23:19](#)):

Terry would have killed you, right?

([00:23:20](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:23:21](#)):

Oh boy. And what about the boxing? Because you used to have all those events, right? Like the boxing matches, the rowing races and stuff. How'd they come about?

George Watson ([00:23:31](#)):

Well, I was a runner, and I used to participate in local running back in Staten Island. So I just thought I'd bring it out here. And I guess we started out with the running race, and then it expanded to the bicycle race, rowing race, sailing race.

Virginia Garrison ([00:23:54](#)):

And what about the boxing mat? That was a repeat thing, right?

George Watson ([00:23:58](#)):

No, that was a one-shot deal.

Virginia Garrison ([00:23:59](#)):

Was a one-off?

George Watson ([00:24:00](#)):

One-shot deal. Yeah. That was in 1977. And that was really great because in the bar business, you run into a lot of tough guys, or so-called tough guys. And the nice thing about that day was all the tough guys got beat up and other guys that you were never expected to do well, did well.

Virginia Garrison ([00:24:30](#)):

Why do you think that was?

George Watson ([00:24:33](#)):

Anybody can walk over and knock somebody off a bar stool, just sold-cock somebody, right? And then subsequently, they get a reputation as being a tough guy. But when you got to stand there and go face to face with somebody and put your hands up, it's an entirely different thing.

Virginia Garrison ([00:24:54](#)):

The surprise factor is gone too.

George Watson ([00:24:56](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:24:59](#)):

I saw a picture of that. It looked hilarious. Like with the boxing ring set up right by the dock.

George Watson ([00:25:05](#)):

Oh, you've never seen the book. You have to come down. I'll show you the book. My brother is a photographer, he's a fashion photographer. He, you'll see, he did a great book.

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:18](#)):

It looks hysterical, like they're right there by the fishing dock.

George Watson ([00:25:21](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:24](#)):

So he did a whole book about,

George Watson ([00:25:25](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:26](#)):

Wow.

George Watson ([00:25:28](#)):

Yeah. Make sure you come down.

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:30](#)):

I'd like to. Yeah.

George Watson ([00:25:32](#)):

At that point, I swore off. I realized that I couldn't fight people anymore, and I made a vow to myself that I would not fight people.

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:45](#)):

This is after the second fight, the one where you used your left hand?

George Watson ([00:25:48](#)):

No, no, no, no. This was after

Virginia Garrison ([00:25:50](#)):

The one where you broke.

George Watson ([00:25:50](#)):

Yeah. I still had a cast on my hand, and now I got to tend bar with one hand. So I realized I can't do this any longer.

([00:26:01](#)):

So I swore off fighting. And then my sister Alice called up on my night off one time, and she said, you got to come down here. I got three guys at the bar. We packed one guy pissed on the floor, and they're refusing to leave. So I hate to admit this, but I come down there and I was begging the guys, please, you got to leave. You got to leave. And the guy just kept saying, fuck you, fuck you, fuck you. And after about the 12th fuck you, I just started punching him with my left hand. And once again, after that thing cleared up, I swore I would never do that again. And that was the end of my fighting career.

Virginia Garrison ([00:26:52](#)):

Now, did you know boxing? Is that why?

George Watson ([00:26:54](#)):

Yeah. When I was a kid, my father used to take us all in the cellar and the neighborhood kids on Staten Island, and we had boxing gloves, and we would box one another down there, and I'm going to continue. I've always been a boxing fan. And a number of years ago, Jerry Cooney with was out here, and I had won a lot of money when Jerry Cooney fought, what was it, Kenny Norton? I can't, no, no. He fought Larry Holmes. Larry Holmes. It was a championship fight.

([00:27:44](#)):

And all the people, the rednecks out here were betting on Jerry Cooney. And so I was taking all the Larry Holmes bets. And I have to admit that Jerry Cooney did quite well, much, much better than I thought he would. He stunned Larry Holmes at one point during the fight, but he subsequently lost the fight. So now here I am, we're out drinking Jimmy Hewitt and a whole mess of us. We were over at the Port Royal, and I look into the dining room and lo and behold, who's sitting back there, but Jerry Cooney with a number of his goons. And so now, believe me, I know enough not to bother people, especially celebrities, but I was so impressed seeing he had just been on national tv, and I really respected and admired the fight he had put up. So I walked back to him and I said, Hey, champ.

([00:28:57](#)):

I said, I just wanted to congratulate you. I said, I thought you really did a good job the other night. And he just sits there and he looks at me and he wouldn't shake my hand. So I immediately turned around and I went back out to the bar, and they had the maitre d' station out there, and people were starting to come in

for dinner. So I was at the maitre d' station, and I said, hi folks, how you doing? Would you like to sit at a window table or would you rather go back and sit next to the guy that lost to Larry Holmes?

(00:29:30):

I did that a number of times, and he sent a couple of his goons up, and they tried to shut me up, but that didn't work. I turned up the volume, and finally Jerry Cooney comes up and he says to me, A little man with a big cigar, how would you like me to put that cigar out in your face? And I said, I'd like that because I'll sue you. And then after that, Jimmy Hewitt had a baptism party, a confirmation of baptism, I guess baptism party for his daughter. I can't remember her name. Anyway, Jane, Jane, Jane. And he was having a party {?}. It was a dressed up dress up thing. I had a suit and tie on, and I walk into Ruschmeyer's and who's standing there, but Jerry Cooney, and he always considered himself a ladies man. And he had a number of girls with him. So I said to Terry, I'll be right back. I ran home and I got the headgear and the 16-ounce gloves. I'm wearing a suit and tie. I wanted to make a spectacle of myself, which I did. And I walked in and I said, alright, let's find out who the baddest motherfucker is here right now. And everyone started laughing, except Jerry Cooney. He said, every time I see you, you are an asshole. You're an asshole he's screaming in my face.

(00:31:02):

My last time I saw him, we were up at the Scenery Greenery up at the

Virginia Garrison (00:31:08):

Manor?

George Watson (00:31:10):

No, the golf club. The golf club? No, it was the Manor, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. And he was up there, tending the bar, and I was going to the bathroom and I walked by and I said, Hey Jerry, do you know what goes in a rum and coke? And he charged me. I really thought he was going to punch me. He didn't punch me, but that was the last time we met up.

Virginia Garrison (00:31:42):

You were really baiting him.

George Watson (00:31:45):

Well, he couldn't take a joke. And subsequently, I can't remember exactly when it was either prior to Cooney or it was post Cooney. We had run a running race up in East Hampton, and we went, we came back to Montauk and we were drinking all the way. And it was in November, I think it was. And we were over at the yacht club. There was no one in the place, just us. And we're laughing and making noise and stuff, and the bartender's going, Hey, you got to hold it down. They're doing an Dick Cavett's doing an interview with Muhammad Ali inside, and what are you kidding me? And so we were sitting there and having more drinks, and the next thing you know, the door opens and who comes walking out? Muhammad Ali, my hero. And I yelled at him. I said, Hey, champ. And he turns and he looks and he comes running right over. And he goes, did you say Champ or did you say Chump? I said, I called you Champ. He goes, you're not as dumb as you look. And we went back and forth like that for 10 minutes.

Virginia Garrison (00:32:56):

He was much friendlier.

George Watson (00:32:57):

Oh yeah, yeah. He was there for the confrontation. It was great. Just the way you hoped he would be.

Virginia Garrison ([00:33:04](#)):

Nice.

George Watson ([00:33:04](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:33:06](#)):

What a difference, huh?

George Watson ([00:33:07](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:33:08](#)):

That's funny. Oh, talk about the tough guys at the bar and stuff like that. How do you handle, I mean, you got that, and then you have this sort of annoying people with the kids screaming kids, but the tough guys,

George Watson ([00:33:22](#)):

You

Virginia Garrison ([00:33:22](#)):

Keep them in control.

George Watson ([00:33:25](#)):

Originally, never having run a bar or worked in a bar before. I didn't know how to handle things. You just go along and learn, you know on the job experience. And I made some mistakes and thank God there's no more fights. Fights as you remember, or it used to be a regular occurrence in bars. I mean, that just doesn't exist any longer because people will have, if you hit me, I'm going to have you arrested and I'm going to sue you. That never existed back then. A fight was a fight and it broke it up and one guy was bleeding and he let it go at that. Do you remember Billy McCabe?

Virginia Garrison ([00:34:20](#)):

The name sounds familiar, but I'm not drawing a picture in my head.

George Watson ([00:34:25](#)):

One night we had a fight in there with Ernie Libasci.

Virginia Garrison ([00:34:30](#)):

I remember him.

George Watson ([00:34:31](#)):

Earnie the Knife.

Virginia Garrison ([00:34:32](#)):

He's the guy who died in the post office. Is he the guy? He lived down off Soundview kind of.

George Watson ([00:34:39](#)):

He did live down at Soundview, but I don't remember him dying in the post office.

Virginia Garrison ([00:34:43](#)):

I could be wrong.

George Watson ([00:34:43](#)):

Yeah, I can't remember how he died, but he subsequently passed away. He got in a fight with Bruce Hawthorne, and I was friends with both guys and being inexperienced, I broke the fight up and I said, all right you go down that into the bar and you go down that into the bar, I should have thrown both of them out. And I didn't. So of course it was like they're sitting down at the end of the bar giving one another the finger. Next thing you know, they're out in the parking lot and Ernie takes out a knife and runs it right across Bruce's face.

Virginia Garrison ([00:35:20](#)):

Is that why they called him Ernie the Knife?

George Watson ([00:35:23](#)):

Yeah, he stabbed Jimmy Mulhern and in Salivar's, I mean, with a big Dexter. And there was another person he stabbed as well. But so I stayed up. I was working the night shift, and the next day I had to work the day shift. Terry, we used to rotate shifts and Billy McCabe came in with a couple of other guys, and they're sitting at the bar and Billy's going, ah, well, Ernie taught Bruce a lesson. He won't mess with Bruce anymore. I mean, he won't mess with Ernie anymore. And I heard that a couple of times. And then foolishly I didn't handle it properly. I called him out and I said, listen, that's your last beer. You get out of here. I'm not going to serve you anymore. So he said, I'm going to finish this beer and I'm going to have another one. So I said, no, you're not.

([00:36:27](#)):

And so of course he comes around the bar and he's going to tap out his own beer. So I grabbed him and we started grappling. Somehow I knocked him to the floor, and now I got him by his shirt collar. I'm dragging him across the floor. And I had a doorknob on the door at the time, and I reached up to trying to open the door to throw 'em out, and he starts kicking me. So I start punching him, and then the last two knuckles on my hand disappeared. Boom. I broke 'em. And now I'm holding them by the shirt collar. And he says to me, give me one more beer and I'll go. I said, okay, alright. You can have another beer. So he comes up, he has another beer, and he leaves. And now I got to go to the hospital and had my hand straightened out.

([00:37:23](#)):

And so there was a Dr. Spinzia, he was a bone doctor. He was up in the Southampton Hospital for 30 years or whatever. And once again, this is the first time I was hospitalized because of fighting. And I didn't know how to handle it for insurance purposes or the police or whatever. I didn't want to tell anybody. So Dr. Spinzia says to me, how'd you break your hand? So I said, I was holding up a piece of sheet rock and I was nailing it, and I hit my hand. So he goes, oh God, that must've hurt. And I said, yeah, it did. He goes, I've seen that breakage hundreds of times. And it's always from people fighting. It was the first time I ever, someone ever did it to themselves. So I just smiled and said nothing.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:14](#)):

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Geez. Yeah, there were a lot. So Terry bartended, that must have been tough.

George Watson ([00:38:21](#)):

Yes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:22](#)):

She must have been tough.

George Watson ([00:38:24](#)):

Well, you have to be being a woman, number one. And that's where all the tough guys come in. They can always pick on a woman.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:33](#)):

Wow. How did you and Terry meet?

George Watson ([00:38:37](#)):

At Fordham.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:39](#)):

At Fordham?

George Watson ([00:38:39](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:40](#)):

Oh, okay. Alright. And when did you get married? What year?

George Watson ([00:38:45](#)):

I guess it was '70 ... '73.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:50](#)):

Oh, the same year.

George Watson ([00:38:51](#)):

Okay. Yeah, like I said, I upset the apple cart.

Virginia Garrison ([00:38:57](#)):

So you really, the two of you really ran it originally.

([00:39:00](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

([00:39:01](#)):

Wow. Alright. Then I want to talk about the, I mean, there's still fishermen and stuff like that and lots of locals and everything who go to the bar, but there's not as many of the, I don't think, right. The fishermen types down at the docks.

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George Watson ([00:39:22](#)):

As you know, things have changed. Fishermen, fishing isn't what it used to be, especially the town dock there. We had all the commercial guys. We just lost Dave Krusa and John Nolan.

Virginia Garrison ([00:39:42](#)):

There were some real characters.

George Watson ([00:39:43](#)):

Oh, big time. Big time.

Virginia Garrison ([00:39:45](#)):

You'd see a lot of those guys walking. Not those guys, but the dock characters would just be like...

George Watson ([00:39:56](#)):

Yeah, all the Uihlein guys. The Hunchback and Chester Shore seashore.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:04](#)):

Oh, Joey Flap Jaws.

George Watson ([00:40:05](#)):

Joey Flap Jaws.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:06](#)):

Yeah.

George Watson ([00:40:07](#)):

Yeah. And Hans Finney. Hans Finney, he froze to death outside the Sail Inn.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:15](#)):

Oh my God.

George Watson ([00:40:15](#)):

Yeah, in the snowstorm. He is so drunk. Fell over and froze.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:20](#)):

Oh, that's horrible.

George Watson ([00:40:21](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Things have changed a bit.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:26](#)):

But the, it's still like the Dock's pretty cool in the sense that it does have a mix of people.

George Watson ([00:40:32](#)):

Oh yeah, yeah,

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:33](#)):

Yeah.

George Watson ([00:40:35](#)):

We have half and half.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:37](#)):

It seems that way.

George Watson ([00:40:38](#)):

Half locals, the other half are second homeowners and tourists.

Virginia Garrison ([00:40:43](#)):

And what about the rules and the no cell phones and that? How did that all evolve?

George Watson ([00:40:49](#)):

All those rules have evolved by circumstance. You learn as you go. Yeah. We were one of the first people to insist that you didn't use the cell phone in the bar. Now a lot of people, well, number one, they say, I hate kids, which is a lie. I love kids. I hate the parents. I mean, I think it's extremely rude if you're going to bring your children somewhere and let them run around or scream and yell. It's not fair to other people. And the same when the people say, oh, if you use a cell phone and he's going to scream at you on the bullhorn. That's not true. We will always be very polite and walk up to somebody and say, I'm sorry, we have a no cell phone policy. That should be self-explanatory. But a lot of times you get important people and they'll just wave you off and they'll stay on the cell phone. That's when you get the bullhorn.

Virginia Garrison ([00:41:53](#)):

Does Chris do that now that he's there? Oh yeah. I haven't seen. Okay.

George Watson ([00:41:56](#)):

Yeah, no, but people know now, and they used to on the Jitney, you can't use it your cell. There's a lot of places that no cell phones, please. It's become

Virginia Garrison ([00:42:12](#)):

A lot of cashiers when you go up to the counter and stuff

George Watson ([00:42:16](#)):

Sure.

Virginia Garrison ([00:42:18](#)):

What are some of the other rules? So there's no screaming children? No, I mean some of them are in jest, right?

George Watson ([00:42:25](#)):

No, no strollers. I mean,

(00:42:29):

No whining.

(00:42:29):

People will come in with a double stroller and they'll be pushing a big double stroller. And it's a small spot. If you have any common sense, you can look around and no, this is not going to fit. It's not going to work.

Virginia Garrison (00:42:44):

Right.

George Watson (00:42:47):

No whining. That's sort of a joke. But who wants to hear someone complain? Nobody wants to hear it. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison (00:42:55):

That's funny. And what about the staff? You've had some people there for a very long time. T's still there, right? She's been there a long time.

George Watson (00:43:05):

No, the best thing you can do is have return staff. I mean, it works from an owner's standpoint, it's the best thing you can have. People that know what to do. You don't have to, oh, you can't do that. You got to do it this way.

Virginia Garrison (00:43:25):

The rules. And you don't have to train.

George Watson (00:43:29):

And if they're good, you want to kiss 'em and love them.

Virginia Garrison (00:43:33):

Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense.

George Watson (00:43:35):

Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison (00:43:38):

And then, so you had the publication, The Truth, is that still going?

George Watson (00:43:44):

No, I haven't written that in a while.

Virginia Garrison (00:43:47):

What was the deal with that?

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George Watson ([00:43:48](#)):

Oh, it was all jokes. And actually I like to think that everybody liked it. You are making fun of people in a sense, but everybody gets their turn in the barrel, so to speak. And no one ever sued me.

Virginia Garrison ([00:44:14](#)):

Did it have a long run? I don't.

George Watson ([00:44:18](#)):

I did it for a couple of years. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:44:20](#)):

So basically, I mean, I've read some of them, but not always, but it would kind of just skewer the regulars and stuff.

George Watson ([00:44:28](#)):

Fun

Virginia Garrison ([00:44:28](#)):

Inside jokes ...

George Watson ([00:44:30](#)):

But in a nice way. I mean, I've had people come up to me and say, you know who's sleeping with so-and-so's wife? You got to put that in the paper. I'm going, what? Are you kidding me?

Virginia Garrison ([00:44:43](#)):

So what's the deal with Chris now? He's totally running it now, or both of you are, or you're

George Watson ([00:44:50](#)):

Transitioning? Both of us. I used to be able to do it, but that was 50, 40, 30 years ago. Now it is a two-man job. I'm still working down there. I'm down there seven days a week. I do 60 hours a week.

Virginia Garrison ([00:45:08](#)):

That's a lot.

George Watson ([00:45:10](#)):

It has to be done. Somebody has to do all the ordering, put, there's no room down there. We've outgrown the size of the place, so everything has to be nice and neat and putting smaller boxes and you have to know where everything is. And then I take all the orders in and then they got to clean up. I do the windows, polish the brass, blah, blah, blah, all the housekeeping that has to be done every day. And then Chris, I'm down there till like 4, 4:30 every day. And Chris comes along, he does the heavy lifting. He deals with the people. It works out good.

Virginia Garrison ([00:45:51](#)):

Did you get tired of dealing with the people?

George Watson ([00:45:56](#)):

In a sense? In a sense. I mean, don't get me wrong, it requires a lot of perseverance to have the people come in and complain about the same thing all the time.

Virginia Garrison ([00:46:12](#)):

No, no doubt. Yeah,

George Watson ([00:46:14](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:46:15](#)):

So how long has Chris been involved with the,

George Watson ([00:46:18](#)):

Oh God, I'm going to be wrong about it, but he's been down there 20 years, I guess.

Virginia Garrison ([00:46:23](#)):

Wow.

George Watson ([00:46:24](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:46:24](#)):

And then Terry, is Terry involved

George Watson ([00:46:26](#)):

Anymore? No. Yeah, she does the books.

Virginia Garrison ([00:46:28](#)):

Oh, okay.

George Watson ([00:46:29](#)):

She doesn't come down to the bar.

([00:46:35](#)):

She told me when Chris started working down there, she said, make sure you don't get 'em to like it down there. And I know what she means because I would never, ever recommend anybody going into the restaurant business. I mean, I love it, and it's been very good to me, but it's not for everybody. That's why eight out of 10 bars fail because people's expectations of it is not reality.

Virginia Garrison ([00:47:04](#)):

Please elaborate on that if you don't mind.

George Watson ([00:47:06](#)):

Like I said, eight out of 10 restaurants fail within three years.

Virginia Garrison ([00:47:11](#)):

Do they not realize it's how much work it is? Yes. Is that it?

George Watson ([00:47:14](#)):

Yeah. It's terrible. People come up to me and say, oh, I love to cook. I'd like to work in a restaurant. Yeah, but do you want to work in a restaurant for 12 hours a day cooking? No, nobody does. And then, oh yeah, it looks like fun. You can have drinks with your friends, you can't drink. It's work. It's hard work. And it's not for everybody. It doesn't make you a good person or a bad person, but it's not for everybody.

Virginia Garrison ([00:47:43](#)):

Yeah, there's the bar atmosphere too.

George Watson ([00:47:46](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:47:46](#)):

It's not probably the most wholesome thing. So you don't particularly miss working at night socially?

George Watson ([00:47:56](#)):

No.

([00:47:57](#)):

No. And it is nice to be able to walk out of there and not worry about it, because I know Chris has a handle on it, a perfect handle. It's funny because Chris's wife, Riley, just got the job up at the school as the school nurse. Prior to that, she had been working at Southampton Hospital as a nurse. And so every once in a while, Chris would have to take off and I'd have to fill in doing his shift, the night shift, and people would come along and go, oh, I thought Chris was working, it's you? Yeah, exactly.

Virginia Garrison ([00:48:40](#)):

That's pretty funny. It must be nice to kind of work with your son.

George Watson ([00:48:50](#)):

Oh, most definitely. Most definitely. Most definitely. Yeah. Yeah. All the kids worked down there, but it wasn't for everybody.

Virginia Garrison ([00:48:59](#)):

So now tell me what you have for kids. You have Chris and who else?

George Watson ([00:49:04](#)):

Nick, James. Nick and James were adopted. And then there's Alex and Chris.

Virginia Garrison ([00:49:14](#)):

Okay. And besides Chris, is anybody else in Montauk or no?

George Watson ([00:49:23](#)):

No.

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Virginia Garrison ([00:49:24](#)):

Okay. Where do the other three live?

George Watson ([00:49:29](#)):

My son Alex works for the State Department. He's down in Tijuana. James runs the county park up in Riverhead. Nick is out in Las Vegas. He works for Tesla. And who am I missing? And Chris? Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:49:50](#)):

Okay. And how many grandchildren do you have?

George Watson ([00:49:52](#)):

Oh God, I got to count 'em up. We got 2, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Virginia Garrison ([00:49:59](#)):

Wow.

George Watson ([00:50:00](#)):

Nice.

Virginia Garrison ([00:50:00](#)):

Yeah. No great-grandkids?

George Watson ([00:50:02](#)):

Oh yeah, they are. They are.

Virginia Garrison ([00:50:04](#)):

No, I mean, you do not have great-grandkids. You just,

George Watson ([00:50:07](#)):

Oh, no, no, no, no. Great ones. Not great grandkids. That's funny

Virginia Garrison ([00:50:11](#)):

Though. That's funny. So I asked you about Terry. Okay. So you get to spend, I guess, a lot of time with Chris's family anyway.

George Watson ([00:50:24](#)):

Oh, that's so great. Just being a, I try and make sure that I'm not a pain in the ass, going over to see them too much, but oh, it couldn't be better being able to see them on a frequent basis.

Virginia Garrison ([00:50:41](#)):

I asked you about, okay, what'd you major in at Fordham?

George Watson ([00:50:46](#)):

Well, I got kicked out of the School of Education, and then I got ... drinking mainly. Then I got kicked out of the School of Business.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:00](#)):

For the same thing?

George Watson ([00:51:00](#)):

The same, yeah. I was still drinking. And then I went in the Marine Corps and I got my ass kicked. And I realized, I went back to night school and finished i night school while I was

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:12](#)):

What's your major in a night school

George Watson ([00:51:15](#)):

History. I was going to be a teacher supposedly.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:18](#)):

Oh wow.

George Watson ([00:51:18](#)):

I never taught a day in my life.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:20](#)):

Okay. And what about Terry? Because she was

George Watson ([00:51:25](#)):

She was a school teacher.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:25](#)):

Okay. Did she teach a subject? Was she upper level?

George Watson ([00:51:31](#)):

She bounced around Catholic school.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:35](#)):

Did she teach at the Montauk School?

George Watson ([00:51:36](#)):

No. No. No. Brooklyn,

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:38](#)):

Was that probably why she was interested in being on the board of Ed there?

George Watson ([00:51:42](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. She was always interested in education. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:51:51](#)):

What do you like to do for hobbies?

([00:51:55](#)):

You still riding your bike?

George Watson ([00:51:55](#)):

Oh yeah, sure. Yeah. Yeah. I go out, I can't run anymore. I had a knee replacement. And so, I mean, at this point, the bar occupies most of my waking hours.

Virginia Garrison ([00:52:15](#)):

Sixty hours. Yeah.

George Watson ([00:52:16](#)):

Yeah. And so right now just sort of take it easy and try and enjoy things.

Virginia Garrison ([00:52:24](#)):

So when you go down to St. John, what do you do down there when you were spending more time there?

George Watson ([00:52:30](#)):

I was drinking back then.

Virginia Garrison ([00:52:32](#)):

Oh, did you stop drinking?

George Watson ([00:52:33](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's a real happy hour is a big part of life down there.

Virginia Garrison ([00:52:41](#)):

I get that impression kind of from Sally with Ron and stuff.

George Watson ([00:52:44](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking it. I certainly enjoyed it, but you get a little old and you can't drink the way you used to.

Virginia Garrison ([00:53:01](#)):

And you have Chris and the family here, and I guess they're here pretty much year round now.

George Watson ([00:53:05](#)):

So that's nice. Yeah. So we spend more time with the, yeah, we have a family reunion coming up. We're going to all go out to San Diego and get everybody together.

Virginia Garrison ([00:53:17](#)):

Oh, which part of the family is ...

George Watson ([00:53:20](#)):  
Everybody. All immediate family.

Virginia Garrison ([00:53:24](#)):  
Great. That sounds really nice.

George Watson ([00:53:25](#)):  
Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:53:28](#)):  
What else? And so what do you want to say? Anything about changes to Montauk over your time here? Which has been how long?

George Watson ([00:53:37](#)):  
Well, I started coming out here when I was probably six years old in 1950, you know, camping. And I mean, it was a lot more rural. And it was funny growing up on Staten Island, everybody in Staten Island went down to the Jersey Shore for vacation. People didn't even know Montauk, where's Montauk? And the crowd, of course, has changed. It used to be solid blue collar. Now, of course, it's upscale Range Rovers and Lexuses.

Virginia Garrison ([00:54:18](#)):  
Even at the docks.

George Watson ([00:54:19](#)):  
Yeah. No, but it's still, I don't know where else I would rather live. I mean, I still totally enjoy living out here, especially off season. It reminds me of the old times. You still get the town back.

Virginia Garrison ([00:54:38](#)):  
Yeah. And what do you like, the community, the landscape?

George Watson ([00:54:42](#)):  
Oh yeah. I mean, everything. Clean air.  
([00:54:45](#)):  
Clean air, the people, you kind of feel like the mayor of town sometimes.

Virginia Garrison ([00:54:52](#)):  
Everybody knows you. Yeah.

George Watson ([00:54:54](#)):  
Yeah. It's nice. It is nice. It's great.

Virginia Garrison ([00:54:58](#)):  
Yeah. Anything that you're particularly proud of?

George Watson ([00:55:05](#)):

My kids.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:06](#)):

Oh, well, yeah. That's fair.

George Watson ([00:55:08](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:09](#)):

Yeah. Were you strict when they were growing up, or not strict?

George Watson ([00:55:11](#)):

Definitely.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:12](#)):

You were?

George Watson ([00:55:13](#)):

Sure. Well,

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:14](#)):

I'm thinking Marine Corps and all that.

George Watson ([00:55:16](#)):

No, I was one of nine kids. So I mean, it was strict. I'm not saying I was a good kid because I wasn't.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:24](#)):

No, it doesn't sound like it.

George Watson ([00:55:25](#)):

No, no. But there were rules and you had to follow 'em and went to Catholic school with the nuns and stuff, and then the brothers in high school. And I guess that's what made me what I am.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:47](#)):

So you were fairly strict as a parent?

George Watson ([00:55:51](#)):

Not crazy. I mean, I was a wild kid. Right. So, yeah. Within limits.

Virginia Garrison ([00:55:57](#)):

Yeah. It's nice that you're proud of your kids though. And what, I dunno, it's going to sound corny, but happiest moments or something that you can think of, things that, or even currently, what makes you happy?

George Watson ([00:56:19](#)):

Well, of course, the birth of the kids and just having a good day at work and watching people enjoy themselves. And when the place is clicking on all cylinders, it couldn't be better. You couldn't ask for anything else.

Virginia Garrison ([00:56:41](#)):

I kind of remember that sometimes from restaurants when things were going well. There's sort of like a groove or a momentum or something. Is that what you mean?

George Watson ([00:56:49](#)):

Yes. Yeah. Everyone's doing their job and everyone's having a good time. Everything's clicking. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:56:57](#)):

That sounds really a, it's very satisfying it.

George Watson ([00:57:01](#)):

It's definitely.

Virginia Garrison ([00:57:01](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And what are you looking forward to now? The reunion, maybe one thing.

George Watson ([00:57:07](#)):

Yeah, sure. And maybe living on a little longer.

([00:57:13](#)):

How old are you?

([00:57:15](#)):

George Watson

([00:57:15](#)):

81

([00:57:15](#)):

81.

([00:57:15](#)):

Wow.

([00:57:15](#)):

Yeah, I had a heart attack a year ago. I died. I flatlined.

Virginia Garrison ([00:57:20](#)):

No, really?

George Watson ([00:57:21](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([00:57:24](#)):

Where were you?

George Watson ([00:57:25](#)):

I was down at the bar and just doing work, whatever. And now I'm leaving and I got down to Gosman's and made the turn.

Virginia Garrison ([00:57:37](#)):

You were driving, right?

George Watson ([00:57:38](#)):

Driving, yeah. And all of a sudden I felt lightheaded, no pains or anything like that. And then, I'm going to make it home. And the next thing I know, I'm sitting in the car and the EMTs in the car and they asking me how many quarters are in a dollar, what the hell's going on? I had made it up to the top of the hill, but fortunately

Virginia Garrison ([00:58:03](#)):

Flamingo?

George Watson ([00:58:03](#)):

Yeah.

([00:58:07](#)):

Fortunately, What's her name from Liar's. I, I'm drawing a blank on her name. She saw the car swerving and she knew my car. And when I went off the road and she got on the horn and called 9 1 1, and I mean, I could still be sitting up there if she didn't see me. And people would've thought, oh, he was on the cell phone.

Virginia Garrison ([00:58:34](#)):

So what they did a, what's it called?

George Watson ([00:58:36](#)):

Yeah.

([00:58:39](#)):

They told me you got to go to the hospital. And I said, I'm not going to the hospital. I want to go home. And then the guy goes, you got to go, you got to go. And so I was conscious the whole way going up to Southampton, talking to the people in the ambulance. And I knew where I was looking out the window. And the last thing I remember was beep, beep, beep, beep, the ambulance backing up, and then the doors open and I saw a doctor standing there and that was it. I died. I flatlined

Virginia Garrison ([00:59:10](#)):

Right as you were getting to the hospital?

George Watson ([00:59:12](#)):

Right when I got there. But fortunately they were waiting for me because they had called in and they almost gave up on me, but they were paddling me and pumping me. And one nurse just kept working on me. Oh my God. Yeah, I came back at the last minute.

Virginia Garrison ([00:59:33](#)):

And when you came back, were you like lucid?

George Watson ([00:59:38](#)):

No brain damage. To be honest with you, no, I don't remember coming back. When I came to the first thing I realized I was in, they had done, they had put a stent in and I was up in a hospital room. But like I said, I had gone. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:01](#)):

Wow.

George Watson ([01:00:02](#)):

Yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:03](#)):

So that's why you think about time being very valuable.

George Watson ([01:00:07](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:08](#)):

No, I don't blame you. That's really scary. You used to have, didn't you used to have a rivalry with Jimmy Hewitt with pranks and stuff like that during, was that like the '80s or something?

George Watson ([01:00:23](#)):

Yeah, you name it, we did it.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:25](#)):

I'm trying to think of, can you remember examples?

George Watson ([01:00:29](#)):

One I remember right off the top of my head, he brought a number of drunks down naked and had them run through the bar.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:36](#)):

You took them from Shagwong down to the Dock? Like streak through the bar?

George Watson ([01:00:41](#)):

Yeah, streak through the bar. Oh,

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:43](#)):

That's very nice. And then what did you do in retaliation?

George Watson ([01:00:48](#)):

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I used to put signs up and all sorts of crazy things.

Virginia Garrison ([01:00:55](#)):

Funny. I don't know, is there anything else that you want to add or clarify or anything that we haven't covered?

George Watson ([01:01:04](#)):

No, just that I'm very happy to be here and I love Montauk. Okay.

Virginia Garrison ([01:01:10](#)):

All right. You sure? That's it?

George Watson ([01:01:13](#)):

Off the top of my head. I'll think of things when I get home, but

Virginia Garrison ([01:01:18](#)):

You can always get in touch with me and we can add 'em or something. Alright, I'm going to say this is the end of the interview with George Watson. The interviewer was Virginia Garrison. This recording can be found in the archive collection of the Montauk Library.