

**We're asking everyone this: in five words or less, what is the theme of your campaign?**

Support the mission statement of Malibu. Is that five?

**Almost. We'll give it to you. Tell me about your history in Malibu. What prepares here to take on this role?**

Previous to entering public service, I represented my community when I was in Paradise Cove, which is a community of 266—I think, if memory serves me right—mobile homes. And they were involved in a big, long, protracted battle with the park owners. And I think it went on for like 10 years. I always felt guilty about the people who were on the homeowners association and all the hard work they had to do, et cetera. Through a series of events, I wound up getting on the board, and then somebody quit, and I wound up being that person. But what I—before that, when I was sitting there in the meetings, and they would say, you know, bad things about the property owners, I always thought, “Can we hear from the property owner?” I never met them, you know. And so when I became the president, I sat down with the property owners and worked out and negotiated a settlement. I was very reluctant to get involved at all, to be honest with you, it wasn't something I sought. And my next door neighbor was the guy, of the guys who was involved, I always felt super guilty. And when I did it, it was a very busy time of my life. So I just was going to paramedic school. And it wasn't actually my idea to do that and negotiate a settlement. Strange enough, it came from Jeff Jennings and another woman whose name escapes me now who lived in the cove. And they had met at a soccer game or something like that, talked about it. And she brought that up to me. And that's kind of where they went with it. And that was, I think, a great success. It's actually one of my proudest leadership accomplishments. This is pre-internet, you know, so I had to write letters to everybody, put them in the mailboxes. And that's how I had to do it. And I'd say pre-internet, but pre-everybody having internet. That's one thing. And once that was done, I wound up moving into my, uh, wife's childhood home that we bought from her mother in Ramirez Canyon. And I stumbled into a similar situation where they were dealing with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. And I got, I got shanghaied to be the head of the 501(c)4, which is Ramirez Canyon Preservation Association—Preservation Fund, excuse me. And that was an even bigger challenge and culminated in a lawsuit where the city joined us. And they sued the coastal commission and the conservancy and a big landmark case having to do with local control. Those two things are big examples of me being the reluctant guy who didn't really want to get involved but wound up stepping forward because something needed to be done. Kind of, you know, that's, when I look at—one thing I've learned about elected officials, both from observing them and from being involved in it: Sometimes the people who want it really badly are not necessarily the best people for the, for the job, especially when it comes to elected positions. It's often the people who when you look at them, and they say, you know, they could definitely do without this headache and their life is pretty good. But they have stepped up and are willing to sacrifice time and, and their life to do something for the community. It's just an aside to that. And we wound up getting involved in city council stuff is when there were new a number of development projects that we challenged, so to speak, in our canyon that we felt were way out of line with the, um, planning directives of the city. And we got involved and that's how I learned about all that. My initial foray, shall I say, into going down to a city meeting and pressing our case as a community leader.

And, strangely enough, it was at one of those meetings where a citizen got up to the podium and read the mission statement for the City of Malibu. For me, that was a revelation because I knew ... I didn't know that much about the founding of the city. I actually came to the city in 1990, just before cityhood, but I wasn't that literate on the foundation of the city. And when that person read that, I thought, "Oh, my God, I can't believe that. I need to educate myself on that." And that's essentially—realizing that and getting involved in understanding why Malibu became a city—is, is my background, I guess, and how I got involved with—But when I ran for city council, it was another case of I didn't really want to do it. People had been after me for a number of years to do it. And it's sort of a common thing. It's like, "Hey, you'd be the perfect guy for it." And everybody takes one step backwards and you're maybe dumb enough to not take a step back with them. But that's how I got involved, is a number of people had been asking me for a long time to do it. I held off when I was involved in the military still because there was no extra time in my life. Once I stopped being a military reservist, I had a little more time and I decided to run. So that's, that's generally my background in Malibu leading up to my election, four years ago to city council, and how I feel my community involvement, neighborhood involvement—those are kind of specific neighborhoods, those are specific neighborhoods—gives me a good perspective on how to communicate with a larger body of people, build cohesion, understand what their concerns are, because it wasn't all those solutions weren't—"This is my solution that I'm going to impose on everybody." Especially in Paradise Cove, I put it out to everybody, you put it to a vote, which is pretty crazy when you think about it. We put it to the vote of the 260-some property owners when we crafted a settlement, which was fairly detailed. And it was phased in over, like, seven years. So that gave me a lot of understanding on how to build cohesion in a smaller neighborhood. And I think that works for a bigger city.

**OK. You mentioned your military service a little bit. Um, how do you think that plays into your experience that brings you to where you are today?**

That's an excellent question. My positions in the military were leadership positions. I was a helicopter pilot. So I was in charge of an aircraft at times. But I was also a squadron commander of a group of 120 people and we deployed to Afghanistan. And we, you know, when I deployed, I was a reservist. I was a fireman here in Malibu, and I got called up for a year, and I was the guy in charge. And I had 11 helicopters and 120 guys and deployed. I only took six of the helicopters, though. It took 18 C-17s to deploy us to Afghanistan. And it wasn't just the working with my unit and making sure that they operated safely and all came home alive, which they did. But the interesting thing about my deployment is that I didn't, I didn't go to like the marine sector of Iraq, you know. I went to a joint task force, which means I was one of three marine units in a giant coalition task force. So that means, in the little camp, we had right next to us it was Korean guys, on the other side was, uh, Army National Guard guys from Minnesota, they were Egyptian people, there were people from all over the place. So it was like the bar scene from "Star Wars," in terms of different people, you know, off the beaten, normal Marine Corps beaten path. And command relationships were a very important part of being successful. In other words, establishing good working relationships with other units, not only in my hierarchy, but also the other units that are my peers, so to speak, so that we could get things done and they come from different tribes. And I think that man is sort of tribal by nature, certainly military pride, figures into

that but I, as I said to my marines, I said, "Hey, this is a great opportunity that you're not going to normally get; I recommend that you extend the hand of cooperation with everybody you meet. We're gonna learn a lot from the people that we're here with. And our ability to do things is really clearly a function of how well we can get along with everybody, one, but also to listen to them and to advocate for our position while being empathetic to theirs. And they do things differently, we want to understand how they do it." One of the units that had gone there before me, which was a marine squadron, had established a, unfortunately, very poor working relationship with his army superiors, because we're part of an army joint task force. And I picked up on this through communications prior to going there. So I made sure that when I got there, that I made up for

the corrosive nature of the relationship of my, my predecessor—was, wasn't actually the same kind of helicopter I flew, but a different one—with his boss, because when I first got there, you could see that his army boss was like, "Is this guy going to be as much trouble as the last guy?" and we established a great working relationship, and I'm very proud of that. And I think that, well, part of the leadership game is understanding your own personality, and understanding the personality of the person across the table, or whomever it is that you're interacting with and understanding how to best employ your personality to get things done. And I learned a lot there about, um—I think that a lot of the things that I learned before I went to Afghanistan, I actually learned, strangely enough, while being a reservist and dealing with the active forces, because those are two different species, also. How does that apply this to my role as an elected leader here? I think that when you think about Malibu, Malibu is not a little tiny town where we do everything within our little border and we decide on what goes on. We've got a state highway going through the middle of us that's run by the state. We have all these, you know, conservancy land, state land, federal land. We do—our law enforcement is done by the county, as well as as the fire department, et cetera. So it's the bar scene from "Star Wars," in terms of the relationships that we have to do with all of these other agencies. Establishing good working relationships with those agencies, I think, is paramount. We've done—I would say, we've done a very good job of that in the city of Malibu. Not all me. Most of it falls onto the, you know, the professional city staff that have long-term working relationships with them, but we've been very good about supporting them. A great example of that is—I'd say the one exception to that is the conservancy, which still is very difficult for everybody to do. We're not alone. But a great example of how those good working relationships have benefited this city is this recent event where the public works director, Mark Pastrella, got involved in the generators for the pumps for Big Rock, as well as his promise to do a big assessment on all of the pumping stations in the city of Malibu that are really key to, um, safety during a fire. You know, right after the fire, I went down and talked to Dave Rydman, who's the District 29 guy, to do sort of an after action on the fire. And the answer I keep getting from him and from others is, "Hey, the water system is not designed to fight a brush fire." And my answer to that is, "All we're asking for is that the water system work when the electricity goes off," and it wasn't capable of doing that. It's a long story. And this goes back to, you know, the '93 fire and before. It's not a giant volume of water, because sometimes it might be just a garden hose that can make the difference. But that good working relationship that Malibu has with the public works director of the county—who's in charge of 10 million people, OK, we're just one small little town that he's involved in—made a difference in time. It really made a difference. I think that's—I just use it as one example. And

there are lots of examples of that, you know, some of my predecessors did a really good job of that. I think you can think of, like, Lou La Monte, I think he probably set the gold standard for establishing good working relationships outside of the city walls, so to speak, with other organizations and going up to Sacramento, et cetera. So I think that's how my experiences in the military have helped me understand and benefit me. Knowing the importance of establishing good working relationships with other units. Because we can't just—you know, I went and visited my brother in Colorado recently. And he lives in a really nice town. It's a suburb of Denver. I was there for a few days. And as I'm driving around, I thought, "This is really a nice town," and I thought—it dawned on me that that's what the town is like all the time. They don't have 100,000 people coming into their town on the weekend from a major city next door. So we've got some crazy challenges here in Malibu that other towns don't have. And I think all those—beaches and harbors, lifeguards, everybody, you know—all those other entities we have to be able to work with.

**So you have really emphasized in that answer, the relationship between Malibu and the County of Los Angeles, more or less, and the State of California. And a lot of that comes down to the city staff. There's a ... I think it's fair to say that there are a lot of people in town who are—they're running a crusade against city staffers. There are even, at least one candidate running for this election who has vowed to fire Reva if he gets the chance. How do you feel about city staff? I mean, do you think that city staff are functioning up to the level that you think they should be? Do you think that they're all sort of doing their jobs adequately right now?**

Well, that's a big question. And I think that one of the, I would say, one of the biggest challenges of the City of Malibu city government, is that there is a bit of a disconnect between the people who work at the city and the community. And I don't think it's necessarily because they don't want to have anything to do with the city. It's just they're not necessarily as integrated into the community—some, some parts of it are, you know, like people would do. like, community activities, etcetera. But others aren't. So it is an issue. It's definitely an issue. And I think that, um, that perception that, from other, from people about the city staff is, you know, I'd answer a specific question if you had one, but I think it's, it's a challenge for sure. To have ... to have there be better cohesion, and *esprit de corps*, shall we say, between the actual full time members of the city of Malibu and the residents. Yeah, that's always—that's been identified as a challenge. And I think that that's very real.

**So to give you a real question—**

Mmhmm.

**Do you feel that City Hall staff, specifically, let's say, the city attorney and the city manager, are fulfilling their duties adequately at this point of time?**

And their duties are?

**So, No. 1 ...**

Mmhmm.

**The functions of a city manager as directed by city council, in the case of Reva, and the same thing for the attorney. And number two, what you just touched on: integrating in the community. Obviously, that's important for city staff, especially in a city this size.**

OK, so let me answer the first one, which is, are they fulfilling their professional responsibilities? And I would say, um, and I heard that “fire Reva” stuff before I got elected, and people said that to me. And I said, I don't even know her. OK? I did know the city attorney a little bit, because I talked to her a little bit during the Paradise Cove thing and during the Joe Edmiston thing, but I did not meet the city manager. So in ... from my experience, I would say yes, because they're—the city attorney is required to give us advice on legal issues, make sure that—her mission is to protect the city and also to find legal solutions to challenges that we have. OK. And I don't have any problems with anything that she's done. My, as I said, one of my first interactions with her was when my organization, along with her, sued the coastal commission. OK, successfully. And the conservancy. That's a pretty significant accomplishment. On behalf of—and that was a local control issue—on behalf of the citizens of Malibu. So I think that's, that's my first interaction with the city attorney, and that was a significant accomplishment. OK. The city manager is responsible for making sure that the staff functions properly and that the staff attends to all the particular administrative support functions for the residents and to carry out the direction from the city council. And I don't really have any problem with that at all. Let's talk about, let's say, the financial management issue, which falls under the city manager. We just had—you know, Lou La Monte used to say, “Hey, you're just one natural disaster away from financial bankruptcy.” Well, we just had two. You know, we had the Woolsey Fire, which wasn't just a fire. It was the largest fire in LA County's history—20 times bigger than its recent predecessor, the Corral Fire. I mean, gigantic in scale. On a scale that Malibu has never seen, and we actually did pretty well financially, all things considered. Followed by the pandemic, OK? Right on its heels. We haven't even completed the rebuilding from the Woolsey Fire and we got the pandemic to deal with—a significant impact on the community and on the city. And we're weathering it. financially, very well. Now, as you look ahead, we've got some challenges that have been identified. They've been identified by the city manager. And I think the fact that the city manager and the assistant city manager have done a very good job being conservative in the allocation of the taxpayers money along the way. That has put us in a good position to not only acquire 29 acres of property at a key moment in time. We actually had enough money to pull that off and had the appropriate, sterling credit rating to go out and finance the rest of it. That's pretty good for a little small town with 13,000 people. And then, to weather these two very significant natural disaster events—I'll say COVID is ... kind of falls under the same scale as the Woolsey Fire. So that's not bad. You know, I think that's pretty good. Those are the primary fiscal responsibilities of the city staff. I think a lot of the complaints that the citizenry has is probably ... a lot of it has to do with those who go through the planning process to get their houses built, which is onerous. It's quite onerous. And we're, we are—certainly with the fire rebuilds, we're dedicated toward making that as smooth as possible. But even with that, it's an onerous process to do for sure. This city has waived \$5 million worth of fees. We've hired Yolanda, who is magical in her ability to get things done. You know, I have the interesting perspective of—my station is in the County of Los Angeles. And I get to see people who are trying to get their houses built in the county and talk to them about what they're going through

and compare it with what people have to go through in the city. It's completely different in the city. As challenging as it is, they do get the loving embrace of the city trying to make things happen as quickly as possible. You know, you have Yolanda down there, getting on the phone with the fire department and making sure that they get stuff done. We've got numerous laudatory letters of praise for her from people who've gone through the process. That does not happen in the county, at all. The reports I get back from people are like, "Get in line, you're with everybody else. And all that stuff you had before, you can just forget about it." It's not the same. And that's, that's also, that was also true after the fire, where we tried really hard to get people back in as quickly as possible. The county was just like, "Negative. Nobody is in for 45 days." OK. So I'm just giving you a couple of examples of things. And I, you know, I, my relationship with the city manager and the city staff is a professional one. And I ask for help on things that I may not know about, or I say, "If we want to go to Sacramento to talk to somebody about something, who is the appropriate guy to talk to?" And they're very helpful on everything that I need to accomplish. So, I understand that people have some concerns about the disconnect between the city staff and this community. I think it's ongoing. And it's a challenge. It is a challenge.

**OK. You touched on the budget. If, as Reva predicted may occur, there is a budget crisis upcoming, what would you propose to cut from next year's budget?**

Well, we have to look at it. We have to look at it. When the time comes. We'll see how it goes. I think everything's on the table, to be honest. And when it comes to the budget, I'm not one of those people—and I don't think Malibu is—OK. There are other towns—let's put it this way—there are other towns that have different priorities than we do. I went down and I was in a meeting with the fire chief down in El Segundo. And it was kind of an El Segundo, a meeting of the chamber of commerce, something like that, and they're all about, you know, bringing businesses in, "We got the Clippers, here, we got this, we got this building, and we got that." And they're all about bringing commerce and, and lots of money into the city and growth and all that. Our priorities are not the same. You know? We just dealt—and I'll give you an example—we just dealt with the short-term rental issue. OK. That's been a long time coming. And it's been very difficult, because it's one of those things that's not—it's evolving. It's based on smartphone technology and the internet. And it's been evolving before our very eyes and growing, and we're not the only ones dealing with it. But it's been one of our biggest challenges. We just, in the last city council meeting, I think, finally dealt with it in an effective way. Wasn't perfect. And once again, we can't wave the magic wand and say, "Hey, what we do in Malibu goes" because guess what, we got the coastal commission here, and we got all sorts of other legal realities that we have to deal with. Because of the fact that it took us a long time to get it done, we're actually the beneficiaries of what other towns have had to go through: Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach. I mean, real time, these are like really happening just before we're doing things where we can see which way the legal winds are blowing, in terms of the coastal commission and challenges from private people, et cetera. But when I looked at that, you know, one of the main arguments from the proponents of short term rentals was, "Hey, this is gonna be a lot of money for this city, or, this is a lot of money in the city. Are you willing to get rid of that?" For me, that was not—not a concern. OK. So the reason I'm telling you that is when it comes to budgetary issues, we're just going to deal with the

realities. When it comes—as far as specifically what needs to be cut? I'm not prepared to answer that at this point. We'd have to look at everything and analyze the law of unintended consequences, et cetera. Because it's, it's one thing for me to just shoot from the hip and say, "Well, I'd get rid of X." Well, you know, when you get rid of X, it may have an impact on Y. And maybe you just shot yourself in the foot. So that's a long, deliberate conversation that we're going to have to have considering everything because it's all like there's a big algebra equation and when you pull on one thing, it definitely, it tends to mean that something else is going to get affected. So the reason I'm answering it in that fashion is because, remember what I said about, we've actually weathered some pretty significant events in recent memory that should have affected—it could potentially have had a devastating effect on our town. And another factor in that whole financial equation is where we get our money from, as opposed to, you know, other municipalities, some of them, like I just mentioned, that are a lot more dependent on commercial activity and visitors and such. As many visitors we get, that's not a big, a big factor for us in terms of what keeps the city financially afloat. Our spine, our backbone—financial backbone—is from the property taxes of residential properties, which—even with the Woolsey Fire, which we expected to have a significant downturn—didn't really pan out. And now, and I'm not, I'm not a guy who keeps my ear to the ground for real estate stuff, but from what I read, people are selling properties left and right in Malibu. So we're fortunate, in a way. You know, Malibu is, like I said, Malibu is very unusual. We're unfortunate in that we have a lot of challenges that other towns don't have to deal with. In this particular case, the way we are set up is primarily a residential community and one that has been able to sustain its value of its properties, we're actually in a pretty good position going forward. So we're gonna have challenges. We'll analyze them as they come, but I think everything's OK. I'm more interested in the city spending less money than doing things that corrode the community like greatly increasing short term rentals, etcetera. So philosophically, I hope that helps to answer your question.

**One of the first things you said in asking about the potential budget shortfall was that everything is on the table. Would that potentially include public safety? And I mean specifically the city's contract with the LA County Sheriff's Department?**

Well, it's certainly worth looking at. OK. I'm not one of these "defund the cops" guys. And I think that's a—I always try to stay away from national politics on things. But that's not a winning trend. Now, does that mean that we can't be more efficient in how we spend our money with them? Certainly, yeah, that certainly would be something we could look at. In terms of us getting rid of the sheriff's and putting in a local police force, as has been discussed in the past, I'm willing to look at anything, but only if it really makes sense for the long run, because by being a part of the sheriff's, um, we plug into a larger capability. But, you know, that doesn't mean that I'm completely married to that whatsoever. I would say generally, philosophically, I'm not inclined to—especially when you consider the way things are going in terms of letting more people out of prison, a lot more civil unrest recently—which hopefully is just a short-term thing, and not a long term thing, but it might be—OK. And those type of things. So public safety, in terms of the safety of the citizens, is not, it wouldn't be the first thing on my docket to cut back on. No. But I'd be willing to look at working more efficiently and with everything that we do.

**OK. So going back to 2016—**

Mmhmm.

**When you ran for council the first time—**

Right.

**You ran on a slate with Council Members Peak and Wagner.**

I did.

**Do you expect to carry the same voters that you did as a slate in 2016 now that you're running alone?**

Um, I would say, I certainly hope so. Because when I ran—and the whole idea of that “Team Malibu” thing, which was my idea, by the way, a great branding moment in time—was, as I've said many times, to try to get the city more back in line with the mission statement, which is generally speaking about preservation of what makes Malibu unique and why it became a city. And what makes it different from other coastal towns, you know, like South Bay towns or Newport Beach any of that stuff. So that was my intention. When I ran—and I think this is true for the other two gentlemen—we didn't say, “We're gonna, you know, put in a skatepark, or we're gonna do this, or we're gonna do two specific things.” At least for me, I made it very clear that my objective was, that in all things that come before the city, that we would place as our guiding directive the mission statement of the City of Malibu. And—I think I left it in my car—I was gonna get you, I brought my list of accomplishments that we did. And they're all pretty significantly in line with the mission statement of the City of Malibu. So if I put myself in the position of somebody who pulled the handle and voted for me four years ago, based on what I said I was going to do, which was put the mission statement is a guiding directive, then, I think that they would say, “He lived up to his vow of what he said he was going to do,” which is what public trust is all about. When you vote for somebody, and they don't have any track record, then you're kind of taking a chance, and you're rolling the dice, and people took a chance with me. I made it very clear what I wanted to do and I fulfilled that and I will continue to fulfill that. I didn't promise to be a preservation guy and go in and approve a big shopping center. I did the opposite. We bought some property that essentially took a potential shopping center out of the equation. OK, I didn't go in and say, “Listen, I think we should introduce more pesticides and you know, things that are bad for the earth.” I supported—and these are ideas that came from the citizenry—anticoagulant rodenticides, anti-pesticides, dark sky ordinance, all of these things. So those are—I believe, I lived up to what I said I was going to do. So if there's somebody out there who pulled the handle for me, I don't see any reason why they wouldn't be disappointed in what I said that I was going to do. And what I actually did. And you can look at my website and my list of accomplishments and go down them. It's actually ... I was fairly surprised when I looked at it, how long and extensive the list of things that we did, which are essentially in harmony with the mission statement and the vision statement of Malibu. So yes, I would hope that they would still vote for me.

**Four years ago, you ran more or less as an outsider to City Hall. And as you told me earlier this afternoon, you were a reluctant candidate, who felt that you sort of had a duty to serve the city. After four years working out of City Hall, as a council member, do you**



**see yourself opposing a status quo? Or do you see yourself as someone who has sort of integrated into what City Hall is and is trying to work, you know, sort of from the inside with, with the other council members?**

That's a good, excellent question. And when—I'll use an example of Lou La Monte. He was, he's somebody who, essentially, when I ran, I was kind of—he was on the other side of the table. You know, he was a pro Measure R, pro Wholefoods guy, and all of that and when they had the big Rob Reiner debate, etc, he was on the other side of the room than I was. But we worked very well together when I was at City Hall. We didn't work—we didn't—essentially, I didn't get co-opted into not supporting the mission statement. But we worked well together on a lot of things for the benefit of Malibu. For example, you know, he's a big proponent and did a great job on the rehab issue. And I support that, because I think that's corrosive to the fiber of the City of Malibu. So, in terms of that, I don't—and I hope I'm answering your question—I don't come in and see the people who disagree with me on things as the enemy. We're all representing the citizenry who put us there. And I may disagree with people. I've even disagreed quite a bit with, you know, my Team Malibu cohorts on things. We don't necessarily agree on all the finer details of everything. But I believe that I've always kept the mission statement in the forefront of my decisionmaking. And I have a fine ability to work with people on the other side of the table. Sometimes I agree with them. Sometimes I don't. On the bigger issues, in terms of the direction of Malibu, I think that I've always stuck to what I came here and said I was going to do without co-opting my beliefs and giving into, you know, “the dark side,” so to speak. Does that answer your question?

**Yeah, it does. Um ...**

OK.

**I have a question that we're asking everyone: It's generally acknowledged in Malibu that the Woolsey Fire and its response were mishandled.**

Mmhmm.

**Do you agree with this perception? Yes, or no?**

Yes or no?

**Because I have a follow-up on it so I wanna get to it. [Laughs]**

That's too complicated to answer as a yes or no question. You know, there are lots of variables in a big event like that. There are some things that went, you know, better than others, for sure. And that's—this is what I said, at the first city council meeting. I said there were things that were fairly good. And there were a lot of areas for improvement. And so that's what we should focus on.

**So, what do you think should have gone better or could have, you know, gone better?**

Oh, I think that the flow of traffic out could have gone better. I think there's always going to be a bit of a traffic jam, though, because there's only essentially one way in and out, or, one road in

two directions. But I think it could have gone a lot better. Because there were instances where they were red lights, you know, it would turn into a stop sign and could have easily been handled by some law enforcement person doing this. So that's an example of something that could have gone better. The hydrants going dry is something that certainly could have gone better. And that's kind of a pretty important thing. We're working on that right now. That gets back to the generator issue that I mentioned earlier. OK. The ability to have communications after the electricity went down, that can be better. We just, just now got the Castro Peak, repeater antenna operational, which Richard Garvey from the CERT team has been working on for a long time. He's really adept at the radio stuff. So now we have new emergency radios, so that the city staff—and what I would hope for in the future, I think that it and that's the intention of this, that's what I've told them from the beginning—is that they should also have ability to communicate within the neighborhoods themselves, which because we're a series of communities, so those are types of things that could have gone better and we're making improvements on.

**Do you think that there's any one—individual or agency—that bears the brunt of the mistakes that were made in dealing with the fire or the things that went wrong? Or it's aftermath.**

There were a lot of agencies involved. And I've spent a lot of time talking to people about this. I think that the ... there were three major things, initially, that made people mad. The traffic jam on PCH. The perceived lack of fire department resources when compared to other big fires in Malibu. And three—and this is probably the one that infuriates people the most—was law enforcement not letting people back into their neighborhoods afterwards. That is the biggest factor. And unfortunately, that's probably the one that's gonna be the most difficult in the future to deal with. Doesn't mean we shouldn't try to figure out how to deal with it but I'm just acknowledging the fact that it's big because even if we say it's big is even if we iron out all the details and we work out some deal with the sheriffs where we can get our people back in because of, you know, we've got a dolphin sticker or whatever, when these things get big, they bring a lot of people in from other places and that was very true in the wake of the Woolsey Fire. And that is the thing that infuriated everybody the most. Because I've done a lot of interviews with people who—and a lot of people that I've spoken to successfully stayed and defended their homes and had to provide for themselves afterwards, and you know, here's a guy who stayed when nobody else shows up and saved his house and maybe two or three of his neighbors' houses and now he can't even leave to go to the store to get food a week later. That is the most infuriating thing and I think that's the thing that probably—and I'm not trying to push blame off from the stuff that the city because this is something that the city has to work with, has to figure out, because it's one of those things I mentioned before that we have to work with agencies from the outside that are much bigger than us to make things happen. And that is the biggest factor. One of the other outs—fallouts of that is that a lot of people who would be inclined to leave next time may not. Because of that. And they may be putting themselves in danger. OK? So that's the biggest one. And I'm not saying that because I'm just like, "Oh, everything that the city did was perfect." I don't say that at all. I know because of my line of work and because of my experiences with the city manager of Malibu that the next day or two after a fire are very important. There are still houses that can get burned down. I was working very hard with her

and with the command post to try to get people in the day after. The day after the fire . We had, like, zero authority at that point. It was a state run event. As I said before, compared to the county, we were able to get people in much quicker with these, you know, soft openings, and a series of those, than the other place. But even with the people who came in in Malibu, it's infuriating, especially for people who know that their house burned down on the second or third day. That's horrifying. That's horrifying. My feeling is, I want people back in right away because they'll understand who's a looter and who's not. I mean, that's a big thing, is like, "How are we gonna check for looters?" How is this cop from, you know, Claremont who's here for this event, gonna know who belongs in this neighborhood and who doesn't? But Bob down the street will be able to say, "Uh, what's wrong with this picture? That guy shouldn't be here." So that's a big issue. And that gets into the whole—I think when I look forward to what makes the town more durable and resilient should Woolsey Fire 2.0 come down. Really, it starts with the communities themselves, the neighborhoods, the specific neighborhoods. It starts with the individual, his home and family, and what their plan is and how well they prepared their home, whether it be what it's made of, brush clearance, palm fronds that need to be trimmed, their plan for evacuation or should they make the decision that they wanna stay, and then how well they cooperate and communicate with their immediate neighborhood. That's the key to success in the future. You know, I hear a lot of people say, "Oh, we're gonna have this, like, reserve corps of firemen or we're gonna expand the call fire program," and I disagree with that. I think that those are nice ideas but the ability of the community to sustain the impact of a disaster starts with the individual and their home and family and then it goes to their immediate neighbor and that's about it. You know? Then those neighborhoods should be able to communicate with adjoining neighborhoods and the city. That's really the key to resilience. And I don't say that as a public official trying to slough off my responsibility. I'm not. There's a scale these events can overwhelm the ability of public safety agencies to adequately deal with everything and there are so many great stories of people who were ready and did a good job of looking out for themselves and their home and family and four or five houses around them, working together. There are really phenomenal stories that came out of that. It's too bad that in the aftermath of the Woolsey Fire, there wasn't more celebration of those stories, um, which can be kind of overshadowed by the negativity and the corrosive stuff that came out about the community, but there are some fantastic stories of people who did some really good things for their neighborhoods. You know, it's, this—it's a natural disaster. It's not like Mr. Smith's house down the street caught on fire and the fire department didn't do a good job of putting it out. It's a natural disaster. OK. Why do I say that? The plants burn and they're dry because the weather and the wind. Fire may be started by a human being or a human activity, but it's a natural disaster. And it's gigantic. It's really on the scale of a hurricane. I was talking to one gentleman after the fire and he said—he was mad, as a lot of people are when they lose their homes and I completely understand that. And he said, "If I put in a 20-foot driveway and a fire department turnaround, I have a reasonable expectation that there's gonna be a fire engine in my driveway." And I said, "OK. If your house is on fire, we'll have four engines, a truck, and a chief, and we'll have 17 guys, and if we need 17 more we'll get 17 more. But if you have a 15-mile fire front, a 30-mile deep fire, and 50,000 homes in the path of the fire, it's probably not a reasonable expectation that you're gonna have a fire engine in your house." I think that's difficult for people to understand, but this is kinda like a hurricane or a tsunami. It happens all over the United

States so the key to resiliency is for people to have their own plan and understand that they're living in a dangerous area and we are trying as a city to educate people about that as much as we possibly can.

**Brush clearance aside, how do you weigh the potential danger of telling people, "If you stay behind, maybe you can save your own house?" There are people, clearly, in Malibu who are prepared to do something like that. Their heroism definitely shone through during Woolsey. There are a lot of people who aren't prepared but who are now saying, "I guess that's what we have to do." Are you concerned that that saying, um, "the fire department will most likely not save every home in a neighborhood, but if you stay behind, maybe you can save yours?"**

That is an excellent question. And that's a big dilemma. And I wear three hats in this town. On my one hat, I'm a fire department professional. On my other hat, I'm an elected official. And on my other hat, I'm a resident. These two hats can't really say to somebody, "You should stay and protect your home." This hat, in the middle, that's what I did. I knew I wasn't gonna be there but I told my son what to do. And I said, "Look, it's not that difficult. Here's what you have to do." So it's a very, uh, difficult issue. And so what am I doing about that and what can I do? What I've been doing is I've been interviewing people who successfully stayed and defended. And I'm putting a series of stories together that I will make available to people who are contemplating that—not encouraging anybody to do that. But we're in a position, and you correctly identified it, OK, where some of those people who stayed and defended, in fact, a lot of them, are old timers, who've been through a lot of different fires and learned things. A lot of the people who decided they're going to do it next time have no experience to draw on. So it's important that they learn from others. And I think the story format, which is what I'm in the process of doing, is an important way to get that information to them, while still making it very clear that I don't advocate that anybody do it. But I think it's, I think it's—at the same time—this is really what you asked—it's an abdication of my personal responsibility as somebody who does understand, to not arm them with the lessons of others, OK, but also a clear understanding of the risks involved. Because it is all about risk management. Some places are more dangerous than others. This canyon that we're in: very dangerous up at the top, not as dangerous down at the bottom. Malibu West: not that dangerous. Point Dume: not that dangerous. Encinal Canyon: very dangerous. Decker Canyon: very dangerous. A lot of the unincorporated areas, that's where the inferno was. Doesn't mean you can't survive. But you have to kind of understand what you're getting yourself into. And for many people, staying is maybe not the best option. So that's how I'm gonna answer that question. Because I cannot really advocate, as a public safety professional, that people stay and defend, OK? And I can't really do that as a City of Malibu elected official. But I can understand that people are going to do that and I do know a lot of how they can keep themselves safe. That's my answer to your question. And I'm working with them.

**But ideally, this is more of an individual protecting his home and perhaps a direct neighbor as opposed to—you said, you don't necessarily advocate for a call firefighter program.**

Let me give you a great call firefighter programs story. OK. Did you read the "Malibu Burning" book?

**Not yet.**

Oh, you have to read that!

**I wasn't ready, but I will be soon.**

OK, so there's a great chapter in that book about Engine 271, which is the call firefighter and program in Corral. So let's turn the wayback machine to the Corral Fire. And one of those guys, well for the program was established, Matt Haynes, who is a great guy and a general contractor, found himself up in the fire and he had a water tender and he had some ability to spray water. And he saved a lot of pumps. And it got in the newspaper. And he got some well-deserved, um, notoriety, I guess for it. The Corral Fire, um ... They lost 50 homes, basically. And the neighborhood was not happy about it, rightfully so. The fire chief came down. They did a series of public meetings and the public let him have it and he, I think, took that to heart—this is the previous fire chief, not the one who's the chief now, Daryl Osby. And he was very involved in this, like, working group with the Corral Canyon, like, little neighborhood group. And he had a series of meetings with them. And one of those meetings, he went up there—because they were concerned about a lot of things. One of them was they wanted to figure out how to shut off the road that goes up where the partiers were that started the fire. And so he was up there one time and he saw behind one of the things, there was a little fire engine. He was like, “What's that?” And, you know, Matt had and the neighborhood had bought like a little fire engine. Like, “Oh, that's our little fire brigade we put together.” And they did! They put together their little Corral Canyon fire brigade. And this is back when I was a public safety commissioner. And I even went up in and emcee'd a little event for them where they had a dog and pony show and it was really great. It was like a big party and, and they were celebrating the fact that they were—this is after, after the Corral Fire. Because after the Corral Fire, you know, nobody really cared about it. I went up there as a fireman from Station 71 to meet with their group and, you know, I thought maybe I was gonna get tarred and feathered, but they were really nice. And they just wanted to know how to make themselves better next time. So when the chief found out about this, he offered them the call firefighter program. They came to me and asked me, “What did I recommend?” And I told them, “Don't do it.” And the reason I said “don't do it” is because I said, “You guys are already dialed. You know what to do. And if there's any gaps in your training, I will tell you what to do. But if you hook your wagon to a big, large government bureaucracy, when the balloon goes up, and we have the big event, you don't have any control over what you do.” I said—and I actually said this to him—I said, “They could send your fire engine to go protect my canyon. And that's not what you want. What you want is to protect your neighborhood, and you guys are the experts on your neighborhood more than any other fire engine that's going to come here. And this is where you should stay. If you join that program, you lose control of what happens on game day.” And it worked out much worse than I even predicted. So I'm not a big advocate. And you know, I'll be honest with you, the ... one of the local chiefs came by after our session afterwards and said, “Yeah, the chief's interested in expanding call fire,” and I said, “That's not the answer.” I said, “you didn't support those guys last time. You're not gonna do it next time.” No, that's not the key to resiliency. I think the key to resiliency is actual neighborhood groups. Like Malibu West fire brigade – that is awesome. I

talked to Dermot Stoker—I didn't even know those guys were that organized. I did an interview with him also. He was the first guy interviewed, because I had no idea that he was as organized and as dialed as he was so long ago. And they did a phenomenal job. They really did a very credible job of looking out for their—you know, they got like 260 homes in a pretty confined area. And if one goes up, it can be very bad. And they did a very good job. I thought it was—I consider his little group there to be like the gold standard of neighborhood readiness groups. And I think that's something that all the communities should aspire to do. We have a similar thing in mind—not as dialed as those guys are. That's the key to the future, not turning over your destiny to some government bureaucracy that when the balloon goes up is gonna have its own problems getting its act together.

**During the Woolsey Fire, you were mayor and you were in and out of communication for several days, really during the evacuation, during the fire storm, during the immediate aftermath.**

Right.

**Obviously, you're busy defending homes and you know, you were really in the thick of it.**

Mhmm.

**But do you think there's a conflict there when Malibu needs leadership at a time of crisis being that that's your day job?**

Initially? Yeah, possibly. I would say. I was actually in fairly good communication through a lot of that, you know, because it's a month long aftermath, with the city manager. But there was certainly a period of time in the fire impact that I was a little occupied with what was going on. Now. What is my role as an elected official, during a disaster? Do you know?

**You're asking me?**

Yeah.

**Well—**

Because most people don't really know this.

**[Laughs]**

No, there's specific things that are spelled out in the disaster directives as to what the roles of an elected official are in a disaster.

**I can tell you what I would expect them to be, but why don't you tell me what the specific roles are?**

Because the, the, the city manager is the chief executive and is in command, basically, of the functions of the city. The elected officials have three basic functions, response areas of responsibility. One, pass legislation in support of the disaster, which we did. Remember, we had a little meeting in the parking lot of the City Hall? I remember that. Where you there for that?

## **I was there, yeah.**

Two: Interact with other elected officials in support of the overall effort, which I did. You know, I called the Beverly Hills guys who helped us out Santa Monica, who helped us out in Westlake. Anybody who could help us out, I called them. I met with the President of the United States. And three is interact with the media. So those are all things that I did in spades throughout the course of the event. I think there's a misconception that, you know, the mayor is supposed to be in command, etcetera. And that's wrong. And you know, that came out with a series of videos. I remember Jefferson did a video. There were some filmmakers that did a video series with me and Reva and Jefferson. He said, "Well, you know, he'd be down there at the EOC and he'd be tellin' Reva what—," That's not the way it works, OK? That doesn't mean that you can't provide some general leadership by doing those things that I just said, being on the media—and I did so many interviews it wasn't funny. And I ran into people during the event. I said, "Hey, I just heard you on KNX. That was awesome." You know, I was on CNN, I was on MSNBC, I was on Fox News. I was on all—

## **The Malibu Times!**

I was in The Malibu Times. We did one in the library, right? So I did all the local stations, I did KNX. I did—all my schoolmates I ever saw were calling me up saying, "I just saw you on TV." So that's important, because when you think about it, in the aftermath of the fire, there was no communication. You didn't—I mean, all the electricity was down. Most people were supposed to be out of town anyway, so how are they going to get any messages? And some of those interactions that I did with the media, which is actually my official role in a disaster, as prescribed by the city's disaster directives, were part of my leadership role. Now there was a, you know, during the key moments of evacuating the town and stuff, yeah, I wasn't out there with a bullhorn directing traffic, et cetera. That's true. But I think that people, a lot of people, uh ... don't, don't know that there are certain functions that a city official is supposed to do and who is really running the show. So I was in pretty darn good communication with the city manager throughout. I mean, right afterwards, right after the days after the fire, she was down at lifeguard headquarters. And I used to call there all the time and talk to her. "457-2525, Lifeguard Headquarters?" And see what's going on. And as much as we could via cell phone and text message when we could get connectivity. Pretty, pretty good close communication. And there were, you know, people who did an investigation of what I did after the fire and I had to print out all my text messages. And I was like, "Oh." I think it was the Malibu Township Council, actually. They did investigation, they went into all my communications, and even the—Richard Lawrence was like, "Oh, you actually did a lot of stuff. And you did a lot of communicating." So, you know, I feel pretty good about that. And there are people who are going to come away from the Woolsey Fire with their own ideas of what happened. And at this point, I'm not gonna change anybody's mind. But to answer your question about, um, can my role in the fire department impede my ability to fulfill my role as a civic leader? I would say there was one, one example of that, that if I could, if I could go back and change anything, the one thing that I would have done differently, is that the meeting in Santa Monica that they had, I would have gone. I asked my boss, if I could go and I should have just ignored him and gone. Because in my mind, it was like, "OK, they're just bringing everyone up to date with everything that's going on." But I was able to watch it on the YouTube thing when I had a little spot of connectivity. And it, as organized as it

was, they then made the cardinal mistake of not leading off with what people wanted to know, which was, “When can we go back in?” And they became unruly as a result of that. And it wasn't until the, um, I think it was the sheriff, actually, who gave him that information, and then everybody calmed down. And I was, I was mad at myself for not being there, because I would have led off with that information. I think that really was frustrating for people, because that's what they want to know: “When we get back in?” And it took awhile for that to come up. So I learned the lesson and we had a city council meeting and led off with the information that people wanted to know.

**OK. Outside of an active, working fire, since city council takes up a lot of time ... I've heard personally, um, through mostly social media channels, which, you know, um, include a lot of voices in town of people who are unhappy with the way things are going at City Hall—**

Mmhmm.

**—that there are people who perceive a conflict with the fact that, um, as the LA Times wrote about in 2018, you have made a lot of money working overtime at the fire station. Because that happened after you were elected to council, it's not something that came up in our 2016 interview, so do you find that it's difficult to balance working so many hours at the fire station with time on council? Do you want to speak to that story at all from the LA Times?**

Well, I think that's an excellent question. The fire department went through a period after the 2008 financial crisis where they didn't hire people for a long time. They were very short. And it's still an issue. OK. It tends to manifest itself in different parts of the organization at different times. At that period, it was captains. OK? Before that, it was paramedics, and firemen. Right now, it's engineers. The four engineers, essentially—they're prisoners of the fire department. They work five days on, one day off, that's it. There aren't enough of them. And they're super short-handed. And that will get rectified eventually. But these are all sort of legacy issues from the 2008 financial crisis. The fire department's way of handling that was “Don't hire guys for a long time,” and it created some problems. So your question was, is it difficult for me to manage my, um—I would say no, not really. Because the way I approach things with the city council meetings is, on the day of the meeting, I pretty much dedicate myself. I mean, I read all the material ahead of time, of course. But on the day of the meeting, I print everything out, all the communication from everybody. And if I haven't already talked to them, I talk to them. And I make sure that when it's an important issue that I become as literate as possible. So no, I don't think so. I mean, that whole issue, I think it gets blown out of proportion. Here's a quote from somebody that is, like sort of a corollary to that. Tim Corliss who is a—was a paramedic, I think he's in the process of retiring—at Station 71, former lifeguard, longtime resident, Malibu resident, his brother does the Malibu Makos, single dad, OK? And when he read that article, he was like, he said, “As far as I'm concerned, they should make a statue to you because it was guys like you that were willing to work down as a fireman for less pay, which I did numerous times, so that I could go home and see my son. So I appreciate the fact that you are willing to work when nobody else could.” Because every day that I worked, in those instances where people are getting recalled all the time, meant that some guy could go home and be with his son



or daughter, who were at an age when they should be home. And those poor guys are getting recalled left and right. So there's more to the story than meets the eye.

**OK. I want to touch on the MRCA. You mentioned the SMMC earlier, which is its sister organization.**

Yeah.

**You haven't minced words when discussing Joe Edmiston and the MRCA and, um, and how you feel they operate in the city.**

Right.

**Do you think that having not just you but council in general, having sort of an outwardly, uh, being outspoken against operations of MRCA is the type of rhetoric that gets the city where it wants to be in terms of its conflict with that agency?**

I don't think it makes any difference at all. They don't care what we think. They don't respond to playing nice.

**Do they respond to ... I mean, over the past four years, do you feel like you've gained any headway in that conflict?**

No. I think it's getting worse. I would say they're, right now, they're on a full scale assault on the city of Malibu. And it's something that they've been working on for a while. It's happening in my neighborhood. It happened in Sycamore Park. It's happening—Winding Way—going on there for years and it's probably gonna be expanding to other ... It's like the final assault on city of Malibu and it's getting bad and it's gonna get worse. There's not much playing nice with these guys. And I think it's unfortunate and I, I believe in civil discourse. You know, I don't like to badmouth people at all. And I'm not really saying anything that's out of the ordinary. It's very difficult to deal with this organization. And my feeling—said this a number of times—is that, really, Joe Edmiston should be the most popular guy in Malibu. And his agency should be the thing that's beloved by all, because he shares the same objectives that we all do, which is preserving Mother Nature and our beautiful natural world. And unfortunately, he seems to be hell bent on introducing large amounts of public visitors into the neighborhoods themselves. And it causes a lot of friction. I think, you know, the interesting thing about Malibu is kind of, like I said earlier, we're different from other towns. We have a massive amount of humanity that comes out here to visit. And nobody really has a problem with that. Even though it causes a lot of traffic and that sort of thing, people welcome visitors and they successfully come out here and interact with the beaches, the mountains, the trails, et cetera, and don't negatively impact neighborhoods with some notable exceptions. You know, I'd say Winding Way East is probably the most glaring one. And that's a legacy easement that was sort of extracted by the coastal commission, I believe, and they put the water pipe in. And that is a very difficult thing for those neighborhoods. And the conservancy wants to do that. They want to bring the public through the neighborhoods, and they don't care about—they don't care about the public safety. But you can see of all the people who have to be rescued off of the falls at Escondido: absolutely don't care. They don't care about the property that they're charged with maintaining. It gets trashed and

they never do anything about that. So, it's unfortunate. And that's just where we are with the conservancy. It's too bad, because I think that everybody in Malibu should be joining hands with the MRCA and working on achieving long term objectives. But that doesn't seem to be the case. I mean, I like playing nice. I just said earlier that that's what it's all about. But it doesn't really work with those guys.

**Do you have any ideas looking forward to the next four years, assuming that you're reelected? For how that situation might improve? For residents in Malibu?**

I do.

**Would you like to elaborate?**

No.

**Fair enough. I want to touch on the park swap reversal.**

Sure.

**I just read the story that I wrote about it at the time. And I wrote that you and Karen Farrer eventually requested more time to look into the issue and were outvoted by the other council members who asked staff to draw up a letter reverse in the swap. How do you feel about Bluffs Park going back to the MRCA? And what options are left for youth sports and other community amenities at this point?**

I was very disappointed with that. I think that, I think Lou La Monte did Malibu a good service when he did that swap. And it was actually a good thing for the conservancy, too. The conservancy was all about, you know, preserving large amounts of acreage and I think they—I know! Because I was actually at the MRCA meeting when they announced it. I was the only guy from Malibu that was there. I think Olivia Damavandi was there as a Malibu Times writer.

**Probably. That's the right era.**

But yeah, I was the only one that was there. And they were very excited about that. And I, I think it was a better thing for the 80 acres to be in the hands of the City of Malibu right there. I didn't agree with making baseball fields, etcetera there, because I thought that was kind of trying to shoehorn a little too much into some land that really wasn't as usable. And I thought it was better. So I disagreed with him on that. But I did agree that it was a good thing for us to have that 80 as opposed to the 500 acres or whatever, and it's very disappointing. I know why Jefferson and Skylar did it, but I was very disappointed in Mike Pierson because he ... actually said in the meeting that he didn't know that much about it. And we pretty much begged him to not make a decision when he didn't know that much about it and he just shot from the hip, then.

**Why are you disappointed with the way it happened?**

Why am I disappointed—why—

**Yeah.**

I'm disappointed that the swap was ending.

**Why?**

Because I think that that land—I just got finished telling you that Joe Edmiston inside the city of Malibu can create a lot of problems.

**So the second part of my question was about recreation opportunities. You mentioned that you don't think that would have been an inappropriate place for baseball diamonds, but—**

Yeah, I think it's a little small for it.

**Is there a necessity in your eyes for having more youth recreation in the center of town?**

Sure.

**And any vision of where that might go?**

Probably go on some of those properties that we acquired.

**OK. So we've asked every other candidate so far—**

Mmhmm.

**—if they were ready to handle the level of scrutiny from the public, including some hate mail. And obviously, you've been on council for four years, you've seen your share of hate mail, including threats—calls and letters. How have you handled that pressure? And are you ready to go out for four more years of it?**

That's an excellent question. It's nice that you actually asked that of the poor, the candidates who have no idea what they're getting themselves in for. [Laughs] It doesn't bother me as much, strangely enough. I'm surprised that it doesn't bother me. I'm able to sort of not take it personally, put it that way. It's very revealing, too. It's the great revealer for the way people communicate with you. And there are some people that I kind of think, "Oh, if that person is bad mouthing me, then I'm doing something right." OK. There's a little bit of that. I think it was ... So your question is, am I ready? For more? Yeah, sure. I've had about as much as you can have, you know, and it doesn't bother me. You know, I've had recall petitions, I've had investigations, I've had multiple investigations, they've done investigations through my other job, you know, initiate investigations through the fire department. All sorts of stuff. My attitude is, bring it on. The deeper they dig, the cleaner I get. So I don't really have anything to hide. You wanna badmouth me? I got no problem with that. Everyone's got their right to their views and it's interesting. I guess this may be kind of a reflection of our times in the whole social media thing. But it is pretty interesting to see how some people communicate.

**Are you concerned with, um, falling enrollment at Malibu schools? I know that schools aren't necessarily—and you know, what, I don't want to phrase it that way. Are Malibu schools something that you are concerned with as a council member? Malibu's school-age community?**

Very much so.

**OK.**

Very much. You know, when, as a result of the whole, um, you know, COVID thing and all that, we established three priorities: public safety, rebuilding from Woolsey, school separation, which on the scale of resources to be deployed, the number three is, is actually pretty small in terms of what the city is doing. But it's big. It's really a big issue. And that, I think, should lead to—being successful. And I believe it's going to be, I believe it's going to be. And I could talk about that for a long time, because that's a, that's been a very, very big challenge. But the light seems to be getting a lot brighter in terms of a positive solution. But once we get that done, I think the enrollment will increase, I believe. Because we'll have a lot more local control and we can make the whole school situation much better. But I am very concerned. And I think that's, that was part of the reason, part of—one of the reasons why the whole short term rental issue, getting that under control was a big issue. It's, you know, Malibu for some people, is just a gold mine and they come here to make money. And every house that gets purchased by some corporation as a short term rental is one house that a family doesn't live in and send kids to school. So yeah, that's a big concern. And I think that whole, um, gets back to the mission statement, really, which is to avoid commercialization of our cultural—natural and cultural resources. I consider neighborhoods and schools to be part of our cultural resources. And when you introduce all these little, you know, golden corporate golden geese into neighborhoods where there once were families, it's a big problem. Yes, I'm very concerned about that. You know, I'm a person who, in my own life, went to public school, private school, Catholic school, did online school. My kids have done—went Juan Cabrillo, both of them did periods of time where they were homeschooled. My daughter wound up graduating from Malibu High. And I'm a big believer in us getting control of our schools, and making them absolutely world class in many ways. And I think that we have a great opportunity to do that. And that's—I really appreciate Karen's depth of knowledge on this because she's been at this fight for a long time as part of—long before she got on council. And she and I are on the little subcommittee that deals with school separation. When we first got involved, it was frustrating dealing with Santa Monica school—Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District Board. And I'm not going to talk too much about everything that's going on involved with that, because I don't think it's appropriate at this time. But I'm much more positive about having a good outcome with that. And I'll tell you what, that's one of the biggest challenges that we've had. That's dealing with another agency that holds most of the cards and they don't want to make a deal. But I think in the end, the deal will be had.

**All right, last question.**

Sure.

**Last two questions. What do you think is the No. 1 issue facing Malibu today? And what will you do in your next year in office to tackle that issue?**

Well, you know, it's funny: the No. 1 source of all our issues—public safety, overdevelopment, trashing the environment, homelessness, everything, traffic on PCH—has to do with population increase. I mean, and that graph is going this way. So, it's a grim direction, that the forces acting on Malibu, which are mostly population based, that's really a function of how close we live to Los Angeles. It's, it's very daunting. The strange thing is, we are a town of 13,000. And we've not grown in 30 years. We've got a lot more visitors than we've ever had, and the COVID thing kind of supercharged that. Really, I mean, all of a sudden beaches were closed, then we opened up our beaches, or the county did, and Santa Monica didn't. And so a lot of people came out here, and it's daunting, the challenges that lay ahead. So what do I think are the most—I'm not sure what words you used—but I think the most challenging thing that we have in front of us is the homeless situation-slash-RV parking on PCH. And I think those are kind of two different things. Because I think a lot of those quote unquote homeless guys are Malibu on \$5 a day guys. And their bluff needs to be called. At the same time, there are legitimately homeless people or people actually living in their cars that don't have another alternative. And that I think is ... something we have to deal with deliberately. It's interesting because we did a pretty good job, I think. When I first came in, when I first was elected, I was lobbied by the Malibu Task Force on Homelessness, or whatever. It was a citizen organization, they wanted the city to pick up the ball. And we did. And, and we did a pretty good job, that's a great example of the citizens sort of taking action and then turn the ball over to the city and then us running with it. As is the school separation thing, by the way. And we did a pretty good methodology of establishing rapport with homeless people and getting them on the pipeline to getting housing. And then the court case came down from the Idaho thing and just completely threw a wrench into everything, and, and changed the equation. So that's, I think, our biggest challenge. It's not, it's not the most important, necessarily, but it's probably the most difficult one, and everyone can see it. And it's not unique to Malibu at all. It's California-wide. So I do think there are solutions. And I'm not gonna go into specifics of my ideas at this point. But I do think there are solutions. And again, you know, some of the ways to deal with it are—like Mikke and Karen went down to San Clemente to see how they deal with things. I think it was San Clemente. And they have a place, you know, in their, quote unquote, industrial area where it's like a safe parking lot, you know, and we've fielded those ideas about maybe doing one on Zuma Beach or City Hall. The problem with Malibu is it's too skinny, kind of. Nowhere in Malibu is a position where it calls those, the bluff on those \$5 a day, guys, you know what I mean? So I think we have to have a different approach. But that I think is probably the most difficult challenge in front of us. And I think it's solvable. But we're gonna have to get our thinking caps on and work with our other agencies and figure out the solution. Getting back to the thing I said before, everything that we deal with is population-based. And it's a little unnerving for graphs to be going in one direction. I just had a conversation with a friend of mine from high school, who called me up the other day just to kind of catch up on things. And he lives in New York, and he said, "Hey, I'm on my way out to my house on Cape Cod." And we were talking, I said, "Cape Cod, do you guys get like a lot of visitors on the weekend?" He goes, "Not really. It's too far from everything." You know? That's our problem, we're too close to Los Angeles. And a lot of the things that we have to deal with

that are challenges for us are a function of that. So I'd like to say we're gonna be able to wave the magic wand and solve our problems, but I think that they're just going to increase with time. Unfortunately, that's the sad reality. But I don't want to end on a downward note, I want to end on an upbeat note. It's definitely worth doing. And we have a wonderful town and I intend to continue upholding the mission statement.