

Interview from the preparation of

Fell's Point Out of Time



Dan Rodricks Interview, January 20, 2004

Kraig Greff, interviewer. Jacquie Greff, camera.

[Kraig]

First thing, describe yourself, your background, and just a little bit about yourself to get kinda warmed up here.

[Dan]

I'm a newspaper columnist with The Baltimore Sun. I've been in that job for 24 years now, no 25! Just passed my silver anniversary as a columnist with the Sun. And I was a very young man when they gave me a column to write in the old Evening Sun. And I've been just a very, very local columnist writing about the local scene as much as possible, and often it would take me down to Fells Point, because when you're looking for instant color, you want to absorb atmosphere, you want to come back to the office with good story for The Baltimore Sun, you just walk down to Fells Point.

[Kraig]

Where are you originally from?

[Dan]

Boston. Boston area. I grew up in Massachusetts.

[Kraig]

The Boston accent is still there.

[Dan]

It's still there! I've been trying to shake myself, after 25!

[Kraig]

You remind me of Emeril Lagasse.

[Dan]

Yeah, people say that.

[Kraig]

You still got that thing.

[Dan]

I get that Emeril comparison.

[Kraig]

Give me some experiences with Fells Point, just off the top of your head.

[Dan]

Well, not so much as a journalist as a drinker, a bar hanger-outer in Fells Point. That's the way I started. I'd just come down here with friends after work. And, as a newspaper columnist, you're always looking for a story. Always, no matter what conversation you get into with whom, if this can lead to a material for a column, you stick with it. So I would hang around the bars – Turkey Joe's was where I first hung out, and The Horse You Came In On, places like that. And I'd bump into cops. I'd bump into people who had interesting jobs. Just funny, strange things would happen. You know, I'd be in Turkey Joe's and Johnny, the Tambourine Man, would walk in, and he'd play his tambourine, and you'd put some money in his tambourine, and he'd go sit in a corner and have a drink. And, this led to a whole story about Johnny, the Tambourine Man. Or, I'd be in the bar one day having a drink and I'd meet Hans Kramm, who had a beautiful German accent and lived in Fells Point and was an actor. He could do TV commercials. He wanted to be in films, he wanted to be in major motion pictures. But he was a bon vivant raconteur. And he had a role in Polyester, a John Waters film. So that led to a story. So, I ended up writing a story about Hans Kramm's career. So, so many characters would spill out of just hanging out in the bars in Fells Point. So this is what kind of drew me down here. 'Cause you write a column three days a week, and you're always looking for the next story.

[Kraig]

So it was like where you go to get your material...

[Dan]

You know, I would take a walk around Fells Point, and see what would happen. **Stosh**, the old retired sailor would be full of stories. I remember just being in The Waterfront Hotel, when the Orioles won the World Series, and you'd describe this scene. You know, it's a great place to meet people. Halloween in Fells Point - fabulous time! Fabulous! It's like a mini Mardi Gras. It's just wonderful! So you want to be in a place where there is a great cross-section of people: young and old, the old neighborhood people, the new neighborhood people, the college kids. All of that kind of mixes together down here... the hurly-burly of life can be out there on Thames Street.

[Kraig]

...You still come down here, right?...

[Dan]

Yes. Yeah. I came down at Christmas and hung out in a hardware store, and there was an African-American Santa Claus standing there looking for a faucet. You know, how many times...? I suppose that could happen in any city in America: Cleveland, Cincinnati; I suppose you could walk

into a hardware store and find a Black Santa Claus buying a new faucet for a sink, but it's more likely to happen in Fells Point, and it did.

[01:04:00;16]

[Kraig]

How has Fells Point changed during your experiences with it? I mean, you mentioned you've been a journalist for 25 years with The Sun... When you first started coming down here to now, what's happening?

[Dan]

I would say, 25 years ago, well, we were all tourists in a way, if you didn't live in the neighborhood, you came down to hang out in these bars that had reopened, been renovated, sort of reopened for business for the next generation. They were no longer just neighborhood bars. OK? So you had new people coming in and exploring this part of town.

It was at a time when Baltimore was kind of on the slide. The urban renaissance at the Inner Harbor hadn't quite started yet. And, it kind of happened here first. The whole idea of people coming to visit Baltimore, to check out the sights, to get in touch with the gritty, urban environment, you know? It's kind of an adventure for somebody who lives in the suburbs. I would say that happened in the '70s, mid-70's.

[Cut for lighting adjustment.]

The Fells Point that I remember in the mid-70's to late-70's was the place where the Baltimore renaissance started. It's where people from the suburbs would come and visit and get in touch with the urban environment again. It was kind of a safe place to go. The bars had been renovated, opened for business to a new generation of customers. They weren't just neighborhood joints anymore. They were kind of opening up as a tourist area. Some restaurants opened.

[Kraig]

Before that it was actually neighborhood bars. Did you feel welcome?

[Dan]

Oh yeah, very much!

You asked me how it has changed over the years. I would say, it went from being kind of quaint and quiet with a few new bars that had reopened, been renovated, to a whole assortment of bars, to places to go now.

I mean, it's a for-real tourist destination, Fells Point. And I think people want to come here to get in touch with the old waterfront, to feel like they are close to, they are in a remnant of Baltimore's industrial past. They can imagine sailors in the maritime history of Baltimore when they come down here. And, it's just a great place! So, you do see a whole cross-section of people coming and exploring Fells Point. And, people who live here, I think have been a little aghast at all this over the years. They feel like there's too many customers coming. There's too many tourists, too much noise, too much urine in the alley, you know, from all the drinking and what-not and the noise. But,

that's kind of the price you are pay for being in a place that people want to gravitate to. Easy for me to say, because I don't live here.

[01:07:20;06]

[Kraig]

So Emeril... describe Baltimore for people who don't know it well: for example, the economy, culture, geography...

[Dan]

Oh, really, that kind of overview?

[Kraig]

Dan's perspective on it.

[Dan]

It's almost cliché-ed now, but it's true. It's a big city, but it's really a small town. Everybody kind of knows everybody and everybody else's business. And I'm not sure why it's this way, and if it can be said about Philadelphia, I'm not sure, but that's very much the case here in Baltimore. And, you have a lot of people who no longer live in the city who still feel part of it. They live way out in the suburbs. Their family moved out a generation ago, because they were worried about urban decay and the loss of jobs in the inner city and down at Bethlehem Steel mill, but they still feel very connected to Baltimore; some in just a nostalgic way, but others in a very real way. They come in and use the city. They visit the city. They go to the restaurants. They go to the Orioles' games. If they can afford it, they go to a Raven's game. So, even though people have spread out to the outer 'burbs, they still feel connected.

And one of the places where they gravitate to, those people seem to gravitate to, is Fells Point, because it reminds them I think of the old Baltimore. Downtown and the Inner Harbor, that's the new Baltimore. That's the new Baltimore renaissance that families can go to. But, the old Baltimore: neighborhood bars and sitting around having a beer, talking to people, meeting new people... It's so easy to start a conversation here. I think people who live out in the suburbs want that. They kind of desire that kind of interaction, to come to a great, good place like The Warf Rat, a place like this, sit around for an hour or so, have a beer, see who comes by.

This is what I've always liked to do no matter where I go in Baltimore, partly because it serves my work writing a newspaper column, but you sit somewhere for a little while, and you're going to here a story. You're going to meet somebody interesting. There's going to be something in this neighborhood that reminds them of something else, or something you say. And you end up with a nice little slice of what life was like here, you know, when they were here growing up, in the 60's, in the 50's. If you meet an old-timer, they take you way back. So, it's very rich. I don't know why people are more conversant here, like they know everybody else, but it is a pretty friendly town.

You wanted more of an overview of the last 20 or so?

[Kraig]

Nah, you're doing fine. You could always go back, go anywhere with it, because once it gets to the editing, you know.

[01:10:15;29]

[Kraig]

What's the importance of Fells Point?

[Dan]

I think I said it. I think this is kind of the real deal of a Baltimore neighborhood that has survived over the years. It didn't really fall too far off like some other neighborhoods did. It remained strong. Yeah, there are barrooms and stuff like that, OK, but they're there, and they've been there forever, for a long time. And people still feel like they can come back here and feel comfortable. And, it's the real deal. It's not a kind of invented, contrived tourist attraction, like the Inner Harbor is.

[Kraig]

Or it's not a Damon's or and Outback Steakhouse...

[Dan]

Absolutely not! No.

[Kraig]

A bar like this one has been here since 1760-something.

[Dan]

Right. You go to the Inner Harbor because ... you're with family. You want something comfortable, familiar, clean, efficient, bright. It looks like a tourist attraction. You come to Fells Point because you want to get in touch with the real city. I believe that. This is where people gravitate to for a reason.

[Kraig]

When we moved here...

[Dan]

Well, it's really what city life gives you, doesn't it? I mean, it has a negative side, like everywhere you live has a negative side, but the opportunity to meet people in an informal way, casually, every day, at a regular meeting place, that's a social construct that is very old in America.

[Cut irrelevant conversation. Time?]

[Dan]

This is like an awakening to some people. When you live far out in the suburbs, and you have to drive everywhere, and you have to bring all your friends to a chain restaurant to have a friendly gathering, then it's foreign to them that you can just walk down the street, walk into a bar, and see three people. No one talks at first, then pretty soon they are all engaged in a conversation. That's

the whole way of doing things. That's how people used to do it in coffee shops and inns, the corner taverns. And that's what you still have here. [Background sounds.] If you live here, you can just walk down the street and it kind of happens.

[Kraig]

One of the reasons I moved here is because I didn't want to drive...

[Dan]

Exactly. That's what I mean.

Or, you have to organize an event at a place. "Oh, we're meeting here tonight." So, everybody drives there and meets there. Whereas here, you know, you're likely to see people you know. You're likely to see people you know when you open the door.

[01:14:30;01]

[Kraig]

... Ok, now we're going to get to the serious side. As a writer for years, have you noticed any major Fells Point issues? You can be general or specific as you want.... What have you seen, a ways back or now?

[Dan]

Throughout my time in Baltimore, there has always been a struggle between people who own row houses here and live here and the commercial establishments, bars and restaurants, that bring in the tourists, a lot of young kids, college students who drink too much in view the residents and make too much noise and ... urinate. I hate to tell you that, but that's what I've heard over the years.

Now it seems to have quieted down some, and I don't know why or how, because there are more bars and restaurants than ever before. Maybe there is a cut-off. But, that's one thing I've heard over the years. What you also have in Fells Point are people very conscious of the character of the neighborhood, and they want to preserve it. They don't want to see a mega-store open up down here, or a chain restaurant, or a happy meeting chain bar or something like that, a TGI Fridays or something. And, that's become a struggle, but I think the developers have learned that this isn't the place for it, that this is a corner of the waterfront in Baltimore where things are going to stay pretty much as they are, because you have the strong preservationist attitude down here. And, I think it's great. I just don't see the kind of overnight, revolutionizing change in this neighborhood that appalls people, and it just hasn't happened.

[Kraig]

They try to connect Canton with Fells Point, and Canton, although, is allowing... They've got the new Outback Steakhouse. That's less than a mile drive. Fells Point doesn't want that. I don't even know how they grandfathered the Subway in. ... But as far as any issues that you've seen...

[Dan]

Except for a real parochial issue like urination or truck traffic?

[01:17:01;10]

[Kraig]

Anything. You know a lot of stuff that I don't, as far as like education, schooling, projects being located so close over by Little Italy ... anything that you've seen.

[Dan]

You know, it's amazing about Baltimore – you have such separate neighborhoods that are right near each other. And it's kind of a paradox. We have terribly violent crime in some sections of the city, but it's not everywhere. So, you can come to Fells Point and feel safe, drive a few blocks – only a few blocks – and drive through an area that feels totally desolate, bleak, and scary, where the drug dealers roam. I'm not saying that doesn't happen at all in Fells Point, but you just don't have that feeling of despair that you do just a few blocks away.

And that goes on throughout this city. It's really kind of a paradox. You have some really beautiful places, real beautiful neighborhoods just a few blocks away from utter despair, still, I mean urban recovery that has not happened.

[Kraig]

Look where the Mayor lives, right close to his house, it just goes downhill quick.

[Dan]

You mean Belair-Edison? When you get south of there? Yeah, that's one of those marginal border communities that's fighting. You know, they're fighting. Those are the ones you want to survive, because if they survive then maybe the next neighborhood can survive. Govans is like that, too.

[Kraig]

Can you take any of that knowledge in Fells Point. Do you see anything like that?

[01:18:27;15]

[Dan]

The Latino community that's moved into upper Fells Point is a really significant development, because not far away is Johns Hopkins up the road where things are going like crazy with development, redevelopment, urban revitalization. And between, you have the Latino community that seems to be coming here and claiming their part of this little dream here. And it's kind of a neat thing to see. The Mayor says it's very important. I agree with him.

It's a new wave of immigrants. I mean, originally it was Germans and the Polish community that set up base here and stabilized this area for decades. And some have moved out to the suburbs because it was time to go, or their kids didn't want to live here.

[Kraig]

Ah, there you go: time to go or forced out?

[Dan]

Well, the gentrification, you mean?

[Kraig]

That's where we're going.

[Dan]

You mean the house prices? Yeah, that's another issue that I have heard over the years.

[Kraig]

Yeah, that's where I'm going with it. They've got the Polish community, they ran things for so long, and now they're kind of ...

[Dan]

Yeah, well they are getting older.

[01:19:41;29]

[Kraig]

That's \$400, 000 and up for these houses. What do you think about all that?

[Dan]

Well, as a city taxpayer, I think it's great that the tax base is spreading in the city, that there are new homeowners who can pay higher property taxes and, you know, take the burden off those of us who have been here for a long time. We have the highest concentration of poverty in the state of Maryland in Baltimore that we are all supporting with our tax dollars. And you can create more jobs, bring more people into the city, the prices ... maybe you get pushed out because of the high prices of property, older people, but I assume they are getting their value of a house they held onto for a long time.

[Kraig]

Oh, you know it.

[Dan]

Yeah. What I wonder about, is when new people come in, "yuppies" or whatever you want to call them, come in, buy a house, fix it up, and stay. If they're not already "empty-nesters," if they are in the early part of their lives where they're thinking about having a family...

[Kraig]

Like you and me.

[Dan]

Yeah, we're kind of in the middle, but the ones who are on the early side haven't had children yet. I think it's great that the young people move here, buy rowhouses, set up their lives in Baltimore, Falls

Point, or Canton, wherever, but then when it comes time to have kids and put them in a school, then they scratch their head, and they think, "Well, maybe this is something we could only do when we were young and in love. Maybe now it's time we have to move out of the city." So, what I want to see is a city... those folks who come into the city and invest in places like Fells Point, stay. They have a descent school to put their kids in. That's the next obstacle in Baltimore, the next big challenge.

[Kraig]

Elaborate, what you see with education...

[Dan]

Oh, so you want me to talk about the whole city scene?

[Cut irrelevant conversation.]

[01:21:39;21]

[Kraig]

This is a working waterfront. What is it? Does it still exist? For how long?

[Dan]

Yeah, I don't know. Is it a working waterfront? It kind of is, on the other side, you know, Domino Sugar across the way. Ships come in. There's tugboat action, but it's been greatly reduced. I mean, let's face it, Baltimore's waterfront used to be all industrial from the Inner Harbor all the way around to Locust Point, Fells Point. McCormick Spice Company used to be downtown. One of the great experiences of Baltimore was that you could smell the cinnamon and the spices of McCormick, because it was right downtown. Well, that's all gone, and I don't think it's coming back.

[Kraig]

When did it go?

[Dan]

Oh, that all started to disappear in the 60's. And by the '70's, you lost that industrial base in Baltimore. Manufacturing jobs, jobs related to the waterfront all disappeared. And people wonder why is there such a high concentration of poverty in Baltimore. You know, it's partly because, I'm not saying solely because, it's partly because the jobs that were lost in the city, good jobs, union jobs that someone could count on, that they could get with just a high school education or even less, are gone. And, they haven't come back. What's come back is the service jobs, service industry related jobs that pay very modest to moderate wages and the white collar sector.

So you have the professional class that moves into Baltimore that can pay the higher and higher house prices, and that's the transition you see. Then you have the under class that kind of remains, the working core, that kind of remains in Baltimore. Those two exist side by side within a few blocks of each other. And, I don't know how that would change, unless the job picture improved or wages improved... unions came back. You know, this used to be a big union town. It's greatly reduced. That's kind of a seismic change in the last 40 years city-wide.

Yeah, when you look at the waterfront., you see a waterfront that's sort of semi-still working. Right? A few tugboats... But, it's really a tourist attraction. You see the Water Taxi. You see the hotel. You see a new restaurant. You see waiters and waitresses, and people running the Water Taxi. So that's kind of symbolic/emblematic of what's happened over the years.
[Kraig comments about Dan being right.]

What you can do is stand at the water's edge and look across to Locust Point and Domino's Sugar plant and kind of imagine what it was like – the ships moving in and out carrying produce.

But that's gone from here, really, the real thing. The can companies, canneries, and manufacturing plants around here, the making tin-can company... Allied Chemical Company, that used to be on the waterfront is been replaced by a hotel.

[01:25:13;17]

[Kraig]

Do you know anything about Allied Chemical Company, what they did?

[Dan]

Yeah, they made kepone. K E P O N E. Yeah, bad stuff. Agent orange. No, why? Are you working on Allied Chemical?

[Kraig]

No, I want your perspective.

[Dan]

Well, I tell you, you know it was a Superfund site and supposedly they've sealed it, right, with some special clay. But I always wondered, how are they going to build anything on that site without breaking the seal. If all that poison is down in the ground sealed by that special clay, what's going to happen when they build on it? That's all I have to say about it. I have a rhetorical question. I'm sorry, I can't add much to that.

[Kraig]

Have you got any Dan Rodgers predictions for the future? What's going to happen? You've seen a lot happen, you've written a lot about what's happened.

[Dan]

About Fells Point?

[01:26:17;24]

[Kraig]

That, Baltimore, either one.

[Dan]

Well, as for Fells Point, I wonder about this neighborhood the same thing I wonder about Little Italy, where every row house that empties out ... the old folks move out ... their kids don't want to live there ... the house goes up for sale ... and someone who wants to open a new restaurant buys it, or, buys three of them and opens another new restaurant. It becomes more and more commercial. So, one thing I do wonder about Fells Point is the residential versus commercial balance. And they seem to work very hard at keeping it mostly residential still, with commercial and tourist attractions that they live with. I think there's a pretty good balance.

[Kraig]

It seems to be right now.

[Dan]

It seems to be.

As for Baltimore generally, I remain optimistic, partly because I have this theory that kids who are now growing up in the suburbs, that's the generation that's going to realize they are missing something; that their parents spent way too much time in the car or the minivan driving around from mall, to work, to school, to mall, to soccer field, to mall... And they're going to want a piece of the action, where people are kind of on top of each other, and there is this great mingling and this great music of different kinds of people. And I think you only get that one place still in America. You get it in the city.

So, I think that's what Baltimore has going for it. It's been 20 or 30 years now, urban pioneers coming back, restoring old places, and saying, "Yeah, this is where we want to live. We're gonna hang it out. We're gonna stick with this." And, I think more of them are going to come. And there's going to be more integration. I believe there will be more racial integration in neighborhoods, more socio-economic integration in Baltimore neighborhoods. So, I'm an optimist. I'm an idealist, against my doctor's instructions. But, I remain convinced that that's going to happen, because humans want to be with each other. You know, they want to sit around and talk. The great experiences of your life have to do with sitting around a table talking to somebody. And that can happen here.

[Kraig]

Do you know Phil Woods, are you familiar with Phil Woods? You know he told me, he says, "Man, it's all about the hang."

[Dan]

The Hang?

[Kraig]

The hanging out afterwards. Let's sit and talk. We can do our jobs, but when we get together and have a beer, that's when all this stuff makes sense.

[Dan]

Right. That's very true.

[Kraig]

You know, all this music you play and all the recording you do, but until you're sitting there having a beer, that's when I tell you what I did and you tell me what you did.

[Dan]

Right. Where you share something in common or share a problem with life. That's what goes on here more easily than it can happen in places where people live on cul-de-sacs, separated, on places without sidewalks and where you have to drive everywhere.

And, you know, I keep going back to the energy crisis. I think that there's going to be one, and people are going to realize we can't keep driving SUV's 40 miles one way to work, and there must be an easier way to get through life and enjoy it more. That's why I think cities have a lot going for them.

[Kraig]

I mean, I hate to drive, and I love being able to just walk to get a sandwich...

[Dan]

Yeah, I can do some of that in my neighborhood. Not as much as you can do here. Well, that's what I think a place like Fells Point has going for it. You get the waterfront on the other side...
[01:29:48;22]

[Kraig]

Here's the next thing, too, I guess you can tie this together. In your experience, what do you see are your biggest concerns? I guess this would be the downside. Fells Point ... concern, we have to watch out for....

[Dan]

The main thing to watch out for is overdevelopment that would actually change to character of the neighborhood. And I think the neighborhood is in pretty good hands when it comes to that. I mean, someone's always going to be looking to make a buck if they think a neighborhood is hot, obviously. But if more of that is residential than commercial, and it becomes more of a stable, solid neighborhood, not just a tourist attraction, that's what will make Fells Point survive forever as a great place. If the balance shifts and it becomes too much of one... You know, I don't think you can base a whole city's economy on the tourist industry. I mean, Baltimore is a nice place to visit, but it's not Disney World. You know, it's a real neighborhood. People have to have real jobs.

[Kraig]

There are a few people that dress up as Goofy around here ...

[Dan]

Or just act that way.

And then for the city, generally, we've got to do something about the poor underclass that's really disconnected, still, from the mainstream. We can... and the drug addiction. That's a very serious problem. It's very depressing. But, there's been a lot of progress made. You have one of the best health commissioners in America, probably, in Peter Beilenson, who has fought very hard to get more treatment for drug addicts. We spend a lot of time just putting them in jail, and they come out, and they're still on drugs, and they feed the commerce of drugs, and that feeds the violence associated with drugs. And we're getting now, starting to get more people into treatment off drugs onto some kind of maintenance program so that they are not out robbing, and sometimes killing, over drugs. That remains one of the fierce problems.

The mayor kind of made a mistake in putting so much, investing so much in reducing the homicide rate. I'm not saying it wasn't a worthy goal, it's just that it seems almost impossible to go in and stop homicides from occurring. What you need to do is stop the reasons, what leads to all that, and most often it's the drug commerce, the illegal drug commerce of Baltimore. So, if we keep working on that, that's the hard sweat of human progress in Baltimore is getting people off drugs, you know, one out of ten of our citizens.

[Kraig]

Do you think that goes across the board? I mean, I know there's a lot of drug problems out in the suburbs, too...

[Dan]

Well, yeah... Folks in the suburbs don't like to hear that, but a lot of the customers of Baltimore drug dealers are suburban. So they come here and buy what they need and take it back out there. Maybe 50% of the customer base, or more now. That's where the money is, that comes in the city to purchase drugs....

A little recognition of that... Actually... those folks get arrested here, and, you know, we're getting them into treatment now instead of just putting them in jail. So, that remains the biggest problem, I think.

[Cut discussion re interview approach.]

[01:33:26;24]

[Kraig]

You're known throughout the town... it's a staple... You're giving advice... What kind of advice do you have, whether it be for Fells Point, whether it be for Baltimore in general?

[Dan]

Well, my advice would be... I could give you a whole list of "What you want to do is..."

What you want to do is, come down to Fells Point at Halloween. You want to come down to Fells Point any Saturday night and stand on a corner and see what happens. Something's gonna happen. You're going to be there and you're going to meet a strange person, or your going to meet a very beautiful woman or a very, extremely handsome man. Or your going to see something that you haven't seen before, like a guy talking to a man-hole cover, maybe. Or, someone's going to walk up to you and ask you for the time and something strange is going to happen.

So, that's why I like to come down here. I bring my kids down here for the sightseeing and the window shopping. 'Cause there's all kinds of little weird things that can happen around here. Come on! It's so true! You know what I'm talking about! You just show up. You show up, you gotta show up, and something's going to happen. I don' know what yet. That could be my next story. That's why I come down here and hang out. Yeah, that's what you want to do.

You don't have any Halloween film, do you?

[Jacquie]

Yeah, I do.

[Dan]

Oh, it's so good! All those Maryland Institute students who do their thing. [Kraig, Jacquie & Dan all talking over each other.] One year I was down here, and the costumes were fabulous!

[Jacquie]

And then I got a shot off the roof of the BOP, you know the whole place swamped with people...

[Dan]

So you were shooting in October, then.

[Jacquie]

Yeah. I started, I mean, Ed Kane was one of my first people. Right before he died.

[Dan]

Oh, good.

[Kraig]

She got him the day before he died.

[Dan]

Really? He had a heart attack?

[Jacquie]

No, he had lung cancer. He knew he was dying, but he thought he had a few more months.

[Kraig]

She interviewed him at 2 o'clock in the afternoon 'til 3, next day, 7 in the morning, dead.
[01:36:17;19]

Any brief stories or anecdotes about Fells Point or its characters, in your 25 years of experience?

[Dan]

Well, there was Edith Massey, who was Edith, the egg lady, in John Waters' films, Pink Flamingoes, for one. She lived down here. She had a shop down here. And, she had a roommate, I can't remember her name now, and they had cats. They loved cats. And the roommate had a habit of putting water on the Tender Vittles. Now, Tender Vittles are cat food that is already soft, so you don't have to put water in the Tender Vittles. So, I'll just never forget, Edith Massey yelling at this other woman, "No water on the Tender Vittles! No water on the Tender Vittles!" And she would just kind of go nuts when the other woman, I think her name was Rose, I can't remember, would put water on the Tender Vittles to soften them further for the cat. That was my Edith, the egg lady, story.

Johnny, the tambourine man, you know, he walked into Turkey Joe's one day. We were sitting there having some beers. And someone says, "Johnny!" He had a big nose and an overcoat and a stocking cap and he carried a tambourine. He was kind of a street guy, you know, but everybody loved him. Someone said, "Johnny! You're alive!" And someone else said, "You call that livin'?"
[01:38:08;11]

Anyway, there was a kind of sad story that happened in Fells Point, about a young guy who was an artist, a guitar player. Remember him? He got beat up one night, and his hands were broken. What was his name?

[Kraig]

Matt Rocks. I did the benefit for him.

[Dan]

You called me about it. It was at Fletcher's, wasn't it?

[Kraig]

Yeah.

[Dan]

OK. There's a sad story about a young man who was a pretty good guitar player, right?

[Kraig]

Yeah.

[Dan]

And he got his hands messed up because of an ugly, violent street crime. Well, this community kind of came together for him pretty good. There was a benefit for him to raise money. He got a lot of support from his friends. At least that's what I remember. I mean, people rallied, and they all knew the guy, because he lived down here.

[Kraig]

He was best friends, actually with my neighbor Andy... It's his college roommate's brother.

[Dan]

What was his last name?

[Kraig]

Rocks.

[Dan]

Right, right, right, how could I forget that last name, given what he did! But, I guess that could happen anywhere, where people rally around a guy who's been victimized, like that. But the phone calls, the letters we received over that story were, it was kind of amazing, really. So that's something very memorable for Fells Point that people will rally around someone like that.

[Kraig]

That's right! You did an article about him.
[Jacquie reminds them almost out of tape.]

[Dan]

I think we're done, don't you?