

# OUR FUTURE NATURE PODCAST

## SEASON 1

### EPISODE 6: MAKING THE MOST IMPORTANT FILM OF OUR TIME

#### SPEAKERS

Sean Lee Davies, Malcom Wood

#### **Sean Lee Davies** 00:03

Welcome back to change makers. I'm your host, as always show me Davis. On change makers. I talk with some of the best minds and thought leaders in the field of sustainability, conservation and social entrepreneurship. I aim to separate the real deal from the greenwash, and document the transformative technologies that can actually make a difference to our lives and our world. Our guest today is restaurant filmmaker and entrepreneur Malcolm wood. His latest film, the last glaciers came out last year. Hope you enjoy Malga. High, you move spot. That's awesome. Better.

#### **Malcom Wood** 00:41

I've literally ran like 200 metres down the mountain. So let's see if this works a little bit better.

#### **Sean Lee Davies** 00:48

Yeah, if it cuts out again, don't worry. Let's reschedule. I don't want to put too much pressure on you. I know you're in high altitude. But anyway, so just going back to you. You embarked on filming this documentary with crudely spray, listen, with the challenges and getting a mix. I know you had a rough time, making this documentary wasn't as easy as it was meant to be. Not that it's so easy.

#### **Malcom Wood** 01:13

Yeah, I'd have to say that, you know, out of all of the businesses that I've set up in the last 20 years of being an entrepreneur, that fundraising a climate change movie has probably been one of the toughest things I've had to do. And after about a year of trying, we basically decided that we've got to do this ourselves. Because everyone was interested in the content, they thought it was a really unique way to, you know, explain climate change with adventure aimed at sort of a younger audience that could understand the problem and not be scared away by all the scientific facts. But when they brought it up to the board level, they're like, you know, we can't invest in this, because we're part of the problem. And pretty much everyone is part of the problem, and it makes it quite a difficult thing to raise money for. So yeah, it's, it was a huge, it was a huge problem. But the fact that we self funded, it means that we kept creative control. And now where we, you know, we can distribute it however we want, and we have not locked into it a specific distribution partner.

**Sean Lee Davies** 02:18

So when is this movie gonna come out this documentary going to be released,

**Malcom Wood** 02:22

as you know, COVID is, is posing a little bit of an issue. And you no one in the film industry would think that with COVID, there would be a lack of content. But actually, the reverse has happened. Everyone who had content has decided that they want to hold back on the release, to wait for the theatrical release to be able to go forward. So there's actually a backlog of content that's making it a little bit difficult to work out the release that the aim for us is to have a q1 release next year. And to do it on a, you know, on multi platforms, and not just to go with one specific platform, but we're still working, working that process out at the moment.

**Sean Lee Davies** 03:05

So tell us about them apart from the fundraiser. What are the sort of main filming challenges because you're an adventurer, extreme sports adventurer? You actually took Craig listen up some big mountains, and he's never really been up these kinds of allergies before. So tell us a little bit about that.

**Malcom Wood** 03:22

Yeah, I mean, I mean, it was it was a very interesting experience. We, you know, Craig Gleason's is an oceans guy. He's scared of heights. And he really wanted to see this firsthand himself. And we also wanted to do it as carbon light as possible. You know, so it was unavoidable having to fly film crews to a location, but we didn't want to use helicopters. We were filming in certain national parks where you can film with drones. And as a paragliding pilot, it was the natural thing to suggest that we use paragliders a little crazy idea to fly from 6000 metres with him strapped to the front of me with professional cameras to try to get really interesting perspectives of the of the glacier and to also engage in the to get engaged the audience in in trying to do that with a guy who is fundamentally scared of the mountains.

**Sean Lee Davies** 04:18

And basically, that's what he did. You strapped him in front of you, and got him to fill the journey down.

**Malcom Wood** 04:25

Yeah, yeah. So there was some there was some hairy moments there for sure.

**Sean Lee Davies** 04:29

And tell us a little bit about the risks of speed riding, which I believe is that the terminology for this kind of sports or paragliding, right speed riding,

**Malcom Wood** 04:37

I do speed riding and speed flying, which is when you skis in and you fly, you know, 90 to 100 kilometres an hour and use tiny little wings that are 13 metres and less, but we use big paragliders tandem paragliders to do the filming, we do use some speed wings. to film some of the shots in the Alps, we had to use several different disciplines mountaineering, multi pitch climbing, albinism, speed flying paragliding. So it was a mixed bag of things that Craig basically had to had to learn from scratch,

**Sean Lee Davies** 05:10

kind of and is it dangerous? Is there a high death rate to the sport and

**Malcom Wood** 05:14

the parent power albinism, which is a combination of all those sports to get yourself to high mountains and to fly off, you know, there's really only 50 active people doing it around the world. So it's and I mean, I wouldn't say it was, it's dangerous, if you do not assess the situation correctly. And you don't, you don't back down at the right time. It's, it's, it can be fatal. And the issue with Peronism is, is that you have to be good at all five disciplines have a good knowledge of all five of those things to keep yourself safe. So in that respect, yes, it's very dangerous, but it can be practised extremely safely with the correct knowledge and time and effort, which is the part of the sport I enjoy. It's the it's the problem solving. It's very much like doing business. Whereas people look at it just like you're a crazy Nutter, it actually takes a lot of planning, a lot of, you know, a lot of education and a lot of learning to do safely.

**Sean Lee Davies** 06:09

Since we got cut off earlier, maybe you can just kind of reiterate what you discovered on your journey of making this documentary. What were the key takeaways from making it?

**Malcom Wood** 06:19

Yeah, so I mean, the key takeaways for me was the fact that glaciers aren't just pretty bits of ice on the top of mountains. I mean, it is the life support system for a third of the world's planet, they are essentially locked up water reserves, I was talking about Peru, Peru, 90% of the population is dependent on the glaciers in the Peruvian Andes. And the worst case, models that we were looking at, you know, just the, the models that they're trying to be accurate on, are saying that within 40 years, we're going to lose those glaciers. And that means 90% of the population is going to be without water. Peru is actually one of the driest places on earth. And I didn't know that till I went to Peru, to think that that many million people are going to be without home, food, agriculture and water within 40 years. It's just, it's something we're gonna have to deal with, you know, and the title of this talk is past the tipping point, you know, is it are we beyond the point of rescue? Well, the damage, you know, 10 years ago, five years ago, we were talking about tipping points. Well, we're past the tipping points, the damage is being done, and it's irreversible, and we will have to deal with it. That's my biggest takeaway from this. And we can slow it down. And we can stop it. But the those cogs are in motion, and we will deal with it, we will see mass migration, we will see people go

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without water, we will see people homeless. And this is going to happen because of a result of inaction over the last 10 years. And that means that we the next 10 years, is even more important to slow or stop this type of damage happening from around the world.

**Sean Lee Davies** 07:56

Yeah, a recent UN report came out that we essentially have to cut out production of fossil fuels by 6%, every year until 2030, to reach the one point to keep the heating within 1.5 degrees centigrade that was agreed in the Paris treaty. But in fact, with COVID, and all the government funding, we're actually increasing the fossil fuel production, they reckon by 2%. So, I mean, you have children, and there's that quote that, you know, we don't inherit the the planet from the answer our ancestors, we borrow it from our children's future. I mean, are you concerned for your children and their generation?

**Malcom Wood** 08:29

I'm 100%. concerned, I mean, you everyone who has kids should be concerned about climate change. Anyone without kids should be concerned about climate change. It's, it's not something that is for, you know, going to be a consequence in their generation. It's a consequence that we're gonna have to now deal with in our generation. But I'm optimistic. I think, four years ago, when I started this faith, you know, there's a statistic that 50% of North Americans thought climate change was a hoax or a political agenda. Now, 90% of people believe it's, it's true, but there's a there's a wave of change. And we're at that tipping point of people believing seeing the consequences happening and going, What can I do today? And that's kind of what we try to address in the third part of our film is okay, right, we've, we've unanimously shown you a very simple example of why this is important. And it's one of the biggest fallouts of climate change, that we're going to have to deal with it, you know, we're not going to get these glaciers back. They're going, we can stop them from melting if we can, if we can keep to the Paris Agreement in certain areas of the world. We're gonna have to deal with it. And that's, that's the reality. But, you know, people are willing to make the change. Now they need the information. And that's what we tried to do in the third. The third part of the film is give you that give you that information to be able to make the change.

**Sean Lee Davies** 09:53

Now, of course, we kind of think of ice melting and glacial change happening lazily like over centuries but have used Seeing and your time up in the mountains, changes in the ice.

**Malcom Wood** 10:04

I mean, I mean, just there's a, there's a glazier right there, which is one of my favourite glaciers, which is the boss on glaciers, which comes off Mont Blanc. And I've, I've been flown down there three times. Now this is one of my homes in the world, I love the mountains, and you can see it every year it's it gets shorter and shorter. That particular place here behind me is a steep place here. So it's retreat is less apparent to the eye. Whereas a lot of the glaciers like the murder glass, or the fish place here in Switzerland, they're very horizontal. And so there's a tipping point where one year it

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gets too warm, and that layer of the atmosphere gets too warm. And the whole glacier just sort of gets devastated in one go. And that's and that's the problem in the Alps is there's a lot of those big glaciers like that that are just disappearing rapidly. And you know, you mentioned the Himalayas, they have a huge problem, you know that there's water, there's gonna be water shortages in the Himalayas, they're losing a third of their glaciers already up to now. And they're going to lose another third over the next 2030 years. And, you know, that's some of the poorest parts of the world having to deal with what the richest part of the world is doing to the atmosphere in the climate.

**Sean Lee Davies** 11:20

Yeah, it's very, very scary. I mean, I have a question here from Sean Fitzpatrick. Are there any technologies that humans can employ in order to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere that are effective? Carbon? Yeah,

**Malcom Wood** 11:32

I mean, yeah, carbon capture is actually quite an interesting business to be in now. And it's really in the last 12 months, that you're seeing people be innovative in this space. I saw a new diamond Company, which was collecting carbon from the atmosphere and creating diamonds for sale, there are machines being generated in Switzerland that farm out the carbon, the carbon monoxide and dioxide from the atmosphere with big fan ventilators, and pumps those through aquaponic and polytunnel farms, to help them vegetables grow even quicker. So I mean, there's, unfortunately, I don't think that's the answer, I think it really, we really have to address the output, we do have to address the issue of sequestering carbon out of the atmosphere, the best way to do that is to plant trees. So if we could plant 4 billion trees, and slow down the carbon emissions and changeover to sustainable energy sources, that's what we need to be doing over the next 10 years. And I think with enough pressure, we're going to get there but that everyone cannot be relaxed about this issue, we all need to apply as much pressure as possible.

**Sean Lee Davies** 12:41

I think I mentioned earlier, like, we're all part of the problem, because even though we can do a few things to be more sustainable, we all still travel, we all still emit carbon. And are we doing enough individually? Or should we put more pressure on corporations on governments to do more? His responsibility? Is this.

**Malcom Wood** 13:01

There's three angles here? Yeah, the individual, what can you do at home? What can a student do? What can a 12 year old do? What can a 25 year old university student do? Change, change your diet, travel, you know, less, use a bicycle, don't fly as much as you do fly, offset your carbon, you know, invest back into your carbon footprint to reduce it. So that's the individual, everyone who has the knowledge, who is educated, who has seen movies like ours, or inconvenient sequel, or before the flood, or any of these things, please act. That's the first thing. The next two things are corporations, anyone who runs a corporation should try to get the corporation to change. I know, it's difficult. I

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mean, it's difficult for us, as business owners to swap over. And it costs money and it hits your p&l. So you know, but try your best to at least, and then there's the policymakers. And they need the most pressure, because they can incite the biggest change. And we're seeing that, you know, in Europe, you know, that's a lot of countries by 2030, or are going to ban carbon emitting cars. And it's all happening now. But it has to happen quicker.

**Sean Lee Davies** 14:13

Now, one of the reasons it's really fascinating to hear your stories, because you're first and foremost an entrepreneur, right? And we just talked about how capitalism these become more conscious and more sustainable. It does make it harder to do business. If you're being more sustainable. Can you be profitable and be sustainable? For example, in your business, you're in the food, restaurant business? I mean, is that actually an achievable target?

**Malcom Wood** 14:37

Yeah. So I mean, it's an interesting question. Again, at the beginning of this four year process, I would have said, it's actually incredibly difficult to eliminate plastic out of your business. There's not enough alternative products. You know, just taking clingfilm, for example. It's 40 times more expensive to use, you know, sustainable clean from two years ago, then to just use the normal stuff. And so businesses that are struggling to survive, don't have the liberty of making those decisions. That's changed. Now, there's been innovation in products in, in, in, in, in, in plastics in plastic alternatives and the price points are coming down, and it doesn't hurt your p&l that much. And actually, the consumer is educated now that they will they will pay slightly higher prices to feel good about the products they're consuming. And so I think, yeah, maybe two years ago, you had more of a valid excuse for not trying. But I think now, there's enough innovation out there. And if there isn't then been tried to be the business that makes that innovation, you know, because there's, there's people that want to do the change. Absolutely.

**Sean Lee Davies** 15:42

What was the most dangerous moments in the filming of last laces? And would you recommend to anyone out there to go and make a documentary about the environment? Or do you recommend people to just stay at home?

**Malcom Wood** 15:54

It's a it's an interesting question, Sean. Someone asked me what if I wanted to make a difference? And I was an individual with a low budget? What should I do? And there's so many different forms of media now, that it's, it's incredibly easy to put your story online, you know, we're on. I mean, this is my first Instagram Live on top of the mountain. On top of mountain I've accidentally switched off twice, and I'm learning how to get my head around the IT problem. But I mean, there's so many different media sources, there's, you know, like, anyone can create a story with a phone right now. And just, if you find something or you, you've got a story to tell just Yeah, put it out there. Don't be don't be scared. In terms of what was the most dangerous thing that we did, it was flying Craig off

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Vianna Rahu in the Cordia blanc arranged in Peru at 6000 metres. And I was not a very experienced tandem paragliding pilot. I've done a lot of speed flying a lot of soloing, flying. And the guy that was actually supposed to fly Craig off the mountain, ripped his calf muscle open and had 40 stitches and came to Basecamp and got me on the radio. And I just remember turning to Craig, and just saying to him, Look, buddy, you run now, like your life depends on it. And if you trip up, we're gonna die. And please, like, stay focused, and he was tired and, and you know, we'd all lost like five, five to six pounds of weight and exhausted standing up at altitude. And, and yeah, we got off. And we were so elated. When we landed, we we ended up hugging for about five minutes on the ground without moving. So I mean, that was that was the most dangerous.

**Sean Lee Davies** 17:37

Amazing. Was it? Was it filmed? Was the hugging filmed?

**Malcom Wood** 17:41

The hugging is filmed it isn't. It isn't the movie, if you'd like to see me and Craig hugging each other, that that content is available to the public.

**Sean Lee Davies** 17:50

There we go. Looking forward to that. But so you've talked about you've highlighted the issues of plastic and plastic ocean, you've tackled the issue of climate change in the last places. What's next? I mean, how, how much bigger a topic can you get?

**Malcom Wood** 18:03

Yeah, I mean, in terms of media, I think I think I want to turn my attention to not just highlighting problems now. But I think the answer is to provide shorter, easier, quicker media content over the next 12 to 24 months to support these films, and businesses to show them that the innovation is there. And that changes can be made, whether that's, you know, helping through, you know, one of our companies that we set up off the back of plastic oceans was called plastic conscious to provide plastic alternatives to the restaurant industry in Asia. And we've solved that clingfilm problem, for example, and that's one of our products. And it's been rolled out in the Mandarin Oriental group and a couple of other five star hotels, and things like that. So I, you know, I, there's a point when you've got to, you've got to turn towards helping solve the problem. And I think the film's a sort of big wake up messages and there's, there's some work to be done. Now.

**Sean Lee Davies** 19:02

You've had a pretty illustrious career spanning different industries, what industries what would you say is the most, your proudest moment or proudest achievement so far?

**Malcom Wood** 19:11

I mean, besides my kids, which I'm immensely proud of, and any, any father should definitely say that. I'd say the work that I'm doing with the United Nations has been quite humbling. During the

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process of the film, they made me their mountain hero for climate change. And I'm doing a lot of work with them in the upcoming year. You know, just talking about glaciers and mountains and keeping the environment pristine and, and highlighting some of the issues and solutions around around climate change in this in this sort of environment. So I would say that work to me is the stuff that I'm most proud of. of everything I've done in the in the recent years.

**Sean Lee Davies** 19:54

Just one question from Hopa. Loop Hong Kong. What can individuals do on a day daily basis on a daily basis to help top three things. You mentioned a few tips before but just be less top three tips.

**Malcom Wood** 20:08

Travel is one of them, you know it, everyone's gonna get in plane, most airlines have offsetting programmes, Cathay Pacific, you can actually offset your ticket online, directly with Emirates. So just invest a little bit more money, it's actually not that expensive to offset your, you know, plant a couple of trees or being part of a green project. There's a lot of debate over which foods have bigger carbon footprints, you know, they all have packaging, they're all being imported, there will be flown around and avocado out of season is from Mexico. Beef is terrible. I mean, go green, you know, and if you if you want to eat meat, eat it, eat it once a week. But you know, there's, there's no excuse with the knowledge not to make those changes today. And diet is definitely one of those things that will help people don't like being told what to eat. But it's not being it's not about eliminating things. It's about reducing things. If you can't eliminate it, if you if you don't have the willpower to do it, reduce it, and then at least you're making a difference. And then localization is a big one localise your travel, walk to work, buy things that are locally, locally sourced, and not not imported? All that sort of stuff. So that would be my top three things.

**Sean Lee Davies** 21:20

Right. Well, thank you so much for joining us, Malcolm, we won't hold you up any longer. Maybe a final message to the people out there? What can they do to make a difference?

**Malcom Wood** 21:30

Well, as I said, I think you know, anyone with a computer, Google, it's just, it's easy to find out what you can do. There's easy changes you can make today don't think the problem is beyond you are too big to deal with, at at the home level or the personal level, every little bit helps because every little bit slows down. The you know, the destruction and the pace at which things are happening. And I think that's kind of the biggest message. You know, I think we can all make a difference. And yeah, I think we owe we're gonna solve this for sure. I'm optimistic.

**Sean Lee Davies** 22:13

Thanks, Malcolm as that's really inspiring. Thank you. Maybe you can film a bit of footage and send it to us. We'll put it in the interview data. Yeah, we will have a safe flight. And thanks again. Looking forward to seeing the movie next year q1 q2, perhaps.

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**Malcom Wood** 22:27

Okay, thanks, Shawn. Cheers, bye.

**Sean Lee Davies** 22:34

If you like our show and want to support our work, we have a patron link on my website [seanleedavies.com](http://seanleedavies.com). We'll be back next week. See you then.