

Karen DeMaria: How long have you been living in the Keys?

TI: Twenty-something years, but I used to leave and go fishing in the summertime up north, tuna fishing and lobster and bass fishing. But I always came back in the fall, lobster and stuff here.

KD: What year did you first come down to the Keys?

TI: 1972.

KD: That is when you were just here for the fall and winter and then summer, and then go?

TI: Up New England.

KD: New England.

TI: Because the summer slowed up. There's no fishing down here in the summertime.

KD: When did you become a fulltime resident of the Keys?

TI: 1978.

KD: Have you always lived in this area, Marathon, Grassy Key?

TI: Marathon, Grassy Key, yes.

KD: Where do you fish?

TI: Outside mostly Florida Bay, in the [inaudible], the dead zone, is my hometown, used to be anyway. Now, I'm kind of moving away.

KD: [inaudible] Florida Bay area, outside of the park?

TI: Right. Oh, I used to fish in the park until they kicked me out. Do you know what that is, what year, when they took us away from...

KD: I want to say [19]74 or something like that. I do not know. I am still trying to get that date exactly, but it is like early [19]70s.

TI: Because I need that...

KD: Well, that is when the park came into being. When did they kick them out is what I am still trying to get.

TI: I need to get that for my little spill with the park service.

KD: I do not have that written down here. You should call [inaudible].

TI: I have to get some of that information down.

KD: Mostly Florida Bay, but you also do Oceanside.

TI: Yes.

KD: How far down in the ocean?

TI: If I go dolphin fishing, I go 30, 40 miles out.

KD: East to west?

TI: Oh, east to west, as far as, I guess, Cudjoe Key and as far as Ramrod Key.

KD: What is your occupation? What do you do?

TI: Drug dealer.

KD: [laughter] Well, they told me that. I had (Chris Chopper?) told me that.

TI: Commercial fisherman.

KD: Well, I mean, what kind of commercial fisherman?

TI: Trawl fisherman, net fisherman, hook and line fisherman.

KD: Wait. Traps, you do trawl fish?

TI: Yes.

KD: You do nets. What do you do with the nets?

TI: Pompano and mackerel.

KD: Was it all at the same time you are doing these?

TI: Yes.

KD: What else you said?

TI: Hook and line. I don't dive anymore.

KD: What do you do with hook and line?

TI: Yellowtail and dolphins.

KD: Is that in the summertime?

TI: Yes.

KD: What did you do before you became a fisherman?

TI: I can't tell you. I was into retail management. I used to sell men's clothes. [laughter]

KD: Really?

TI: Yes.

KD: I can see that. [laughter]

TI: I used to manage a men's shop. Best part of it was going to the different shows and buying. You go to New York and bought and stuff like that.

KD: Where are you from?

TI: Rhode Island.

KD: Rhode Island, [inaudible].

TI: When I get up there for a while and get with those people, yow.

KD: They all think I am a southern little thing. I guess the first way I like to start off is, what was the first thing that happened that really made you say, "Whoa, something is going wrong here, something is happening," and where was it?

TI: Basically, it was one fall. I don't know if it was maybe [19]73, [19]74, [19]75. Back then, it was a blur anyway. I don't remember a lot. Everything was fish, fish, fish, and play, play, play. We were fishing west of Sand Key from East Cape back to Sand Key and west of Sand Key there. The water started getting real, real muddy. We used to think it was the catfish because we started catching lots of catfish that year. Like I said, we really thought it was a catfish mud. Because you know how fish make mud?

KD: Oh, yes.

TI: We thought maybe, well, we would catch them. Traditionally, we used to go up in there and catch – I mean, the water used to be real clear. We used to catch a lot of snappers. On the hard bottom, there used to be a lot of gorgonian bushes and lots of trout beds in the grass, lots of trout.

KD: Trout?

TI: Trout. Trout. [laughter] Rainbow trout. No, regular trout.

KD: I know.

TI: But then it turned the shit, in plain English. The water just turned bad. Since then, it's been a gradual – the muddy water has been getting bigger and farther to the west and all the areas where we used to – that's (Cedi Cordova?).

KD: So, basically, the water is being muddy?

TI: Yes.

KD: Was it brown, like a muddy brown color?

TI: It's like it is right now. It's the same as that. Any of the fishermen, because when we started moving farther to the west and other places, there'd always be a boat that go up in there because they used to catch so many pompanos. If you make a trawl, you put a net overboard. You get it filled up. You could catch fish, but it would have to be right at the edge of that muddy water. That was just the start, I think, from the water being so muddy, Karen, because I think of the sea grass dying off. Back then, we didn't know much about algae bloom and stuff. But I looked at it now, I'm saying I think because of the sea grass starting to die off that when the water got churned up, it was just that silt coming off the bottom or maybe washing out on the...

KD: Did you see sea grass dying off back in the early [19]70s?

TI: All I remember is muddy water and catfish. That's what I remember very vividly going.

KD: Was there anything else that happened at the same time? Did you see sponges die off or extra grass floating around or anything of that sort?

TI: Just after the cold front and stuff like that.

KD: But not the same kind of cloudy?

TI: No. It was like a slap in the face that one fall. I remember going, "Man, I can't wait to go up to Sand Key and fish in the west of Sand Key and catch all pompano and mackerel and fish up in there. Then boom, there was nothing there anymore, just catfish and muddy water.

KD: That was what kind of depth of water?

TI: Anywhere from right along, say, where the park line is right now, east to that. But like I said, where the grass was, it was okay, but all the way out into sixteen feet west of Sand Key.

KD: That continually moved, and that bloom has always been around or that color?

TI: That color of water has been here for a long time, and it's gradually going to the west. See,

we were the first guys because we fished [inaudible] water, net fishing, back when we used to drift. That's how you fish because the clearer water doesn't have – and usually fish make mud in the water. They're active. You could tell there's fish feeding, or there's fish there. When we started going up in there, I said, "Oh, my God, there's a whole bunch of fish up in here." Then we said, "Man, there's got to be a million catfish." Because we figured the catfish was making the mud. But the catfish weren't making the mud. It was something else making the mud. Even back then, that's when we first started to notice. I don't know if we were just not scientifically thinking or whatever, but we just looked at it through a fisherman's point of view before we really started seeing the decline in the fisheries and the park. Everybody, all of a sudden, said, "Hey, there's something wrong out there."

KD: What else? What else threw up a red flag up there? While I am sitting here, listening to people, you hear about the big old bad algae bloom that they are mapping right now. It is going through Long Key and stuff. Then there is the dead zone bloom [inaudible] which is a different bloom up over here. Then I have heard about comments up there, a couple of other blooms that go on and off up in the bay. You tell me.

TI: I'll tell you what, from fishing down to east to west, if you get on until the middle of the bay, sometimes you would see, like I'm saying again, spots of that muddy water. You wouldn't know what it was from. Now, when I think about it, maybe it wasn't a bloom out there in the middle of the bay or sometimes down to the west. I'm not saying now. Back then, usually we ran to the west to get to the clear water or the edge of the muddy water where we could fish. We always run to the west. We used to fish east of the park. I used to fish up along Grass Key banks and [inaudible] and all places over there. We used to catch a lot of pompanos and mackerel. We used to come through the Long Key Bridge and go through the park and come through the bridges. We used to fish the Oceanside. Those fish don't go through there anymore because they don't go into that muddy water. That whole chain of fish, they don't come ashore anymore. Most of the fish are offshore. They just go to the west and head to Key West. It's like you. Do you want to walk through a mud like this, waist-deep, to get somewhere, or walk around this nice dry dock?

KD: Where do you keep your trap? Where do you put your traps up there?

TI: I don't fish there anymore. I keep my [inaudible].

KD: I know. [laughter]

TI: I used to.

KD: (Back in the time, where do you put your traps?)

TI: I used to fish from Sand Key, back this way into the west. Now, I don't fish. I used to fish off [inaudible]. All that stuff coming this way. The water quality, I don't know if it's – I think it's because of this stuff. There's so many more worms and barnacles out there. Now, I fish. I bought a smaller boat. I have a one-man operation now, and I fish all inshore in the clear where there aren't worms and barnacles.

KD: What kind of depth of water inshore?

TI: Anywhere from 6 feet to 15 feet, 16 feet.

KD: On both sides?

TI: Yes.

KD: So, you have moved. Basically, the reason you moved your traps is because of the destruction to the traps. Now, these worms and barnacles, are they happening before they stopped the (dipping?)?

TI: No. It has nothing to do even with the first – I have guys right now that they're cutting off 2-year-old nets. They're [inaudible]. Where I was fishing, I never, never ever [inaudible] – that's why a lot of guys fishing came close? You don't have to worry about the worms and the barnacles. Now, we're getting them in close, too. I have never seen that.

KD: What year did you move inshore?

TI: One, two, three, four years ago. Four years ago, four seasons ago.

KD: On these traps that you just mentioned.

TI: This year, I've got traps, brand-new traps where I replaced the whole side on them. That's from fishing and closing, which I always thought was safe water. It's not safe anymore.

KD: So, you are getting the worms and the barnacles in the near shore?

TI: In close, yes.

KD: Anything else? What else is coming up on the trap?

TI: Algae.

KD: What color?

TI: Green and brown. There's a couple of different times that I took some stuff because they wanted the samples. Like I said, we've been trying to get this stuff – whatever we could do. The water sample [inaudible] talked about it.

KD: The nature reserve is in discussion with somebody else this week regarding setting up a program where commercial fishermen will be given sample bottles and told how to do things and told where to bring them. I was sitting there in the meeting, going,[inaudible].

TI: I know. At certain times, Karen, because I fish a lot right in front of the Seven Mile Bridge,

usually after a certain weather, patterns or new moon or full moon, the tide is strong, I'd see offshore by Red Bay Bank, by the channels there, that algae would start to come through. Then from there, I could trace it to my stuff, offshore, the bridge, then coming through the bridge. Then sometimes my buoys would be sunk with all that slimy, mossy stuff, just sinking my buoys down.

KD: (Green?)

TI: Yes. It would be going through bridge. Then (Danny Idaho?) fishes out of the reef about a week later. I said, "Danny, get ready. That stuff is on its way again." Danny would say, "You are right." He said, "I got that stuff all in." We'd find it. It'd be wrapped around your traps, too. It's like that rolling moss, too. It gets in your traps.

KD: Brown?

TI: It's a brownish, almost like a brown-gold, like a (bathing suit type of color. [laughter]

KD: Men who does not have children [inaudible] color.

TI: [laughter]

KD: Rolling moss. What is gumbo? I have heard some people...

TI: Gumbo, it's real slimy. It's a form of algae. I can tell you we've had gumbo since I fished – the first year I fished [inaudible], there were beds of gumbo out there. Now, that's a form of algae. That's been around since day one that I remember. That's been anywhere in the bay.

KD: Is it like long and stringy or bushy?

TI: No, it's slimy globs. When it hardens, it hardens rock hard. You have to bleach it and kill it. Then you have to dry it off and pull it apart. Some guys I know that got it in their nets, completely cut their nets out because it's so nasty.

KD: That was always in the [19]70s? That was always in there too.

TI: No. There was gumbo this year. There's gumbo in the bay this year. As a matter of fact, I know somebody that cut a net out this year because it was loaded with gumbo.

KD: But the green slimy algae is something totally different, right?

TI: Oh, yes.

KD: Is that long and stringy or clumpy?

TI: The green is long and stringy.

KD: I think that is [inaudible] or something.

TI: Yes.

KD: I have an algae book in the car. We can look at it. What else is on the traps that is different in the years?

TI: In different areas, there's a lot more silt, like a grayish silty mud because of the bottom being so stirred up before the traps used to stay.

KD: What areas is it?

TI: Everywhere now, coming through.

KD: The near shore area?

TI: Yes. I've also noticed in the inshore areas, a lot more loss of sponges, Gorgonians, the grass beds, all places like that where I used to fish around and all that stuff, I don't see it anymore. In the holes I used to dive, dive grouper and (try to fish my traps around and stuff because we always pull the crawfish. They're all full of dead grass and dead moss. They're just dead holes, I call them. When the water was clear, we used to just dive around with jugs) and buoys and throw them on these holes. The holes would be full of them, mango snappers and groupers. We used to get them back when it was legal. We used to get a lot of jewfish in the bay. Even close by, John Sawyer all the way to the bridge, you can't find shit there anymore.

KD: A continual, gradual decline?

TI: Yes.

KD: Has there been a year...

TI: That's what scared me about this coming year. This coming year, if it's going to be any warmer, we're going to – we have a warm summer. I'm a firm believer, because of agriculture, the weather has a lot to do with. You've got all the phosphates and all that sort of stuff. It's almost like we're fertilizing these blooms with the water right now that's coming in. If we have warm weather and the way things had grown, if that bay gets any warmer and there's more barnacles, more worms, more algae, there's going to be less fish and less lobster. It scares the shit out of me of what's going to happen this year. It really does.

KD: Be prepared. I know. I have been telling the guys down at the Key West area, I said, "You might just start being –" they are starting to feel some of the effects this year. But I am like, "Yes, three more years, that is it."

TI: Well, we did a documentary with some people from Audubon. Myself and Carlo took them out into the bay. We spent the whole day with them. Then that night, we sat down and had a couple of cocktails and dinner. We shot the shit the whole time. Then we went down. We did

that meeting in Key West. They went down. I said, "Interview the fishermen at Stock Island. They're very vocal." I said, "Dale, I told Billy Niles and a few other guys." You know what they said? We don't have a problem down there. We don't know anything about algae. That night at that meeting (Nicolai?) said, he said, "We're out of here. We're going back to Marathon. We'll catch you guys tomorrow." They said we didn't have a problem. We weren't aware of what was going on and all that. That dealt with those guys up here. You didn't have that.

KD: No, we do not have a problem down there.

TI: [inaudible]

KD: They do not see it. That is something I have been trying to explain to (George Burrow?) and some of these other people. Because I realized that when I was sitting down talking to people, the divers are just starting to see. Because this past winter, it has just been – (Don?) is like, "I cannot make a living. I cannot dive." You cannot see 2 feet in front of you, 5 feet in front of you to catch anything if you are trout fishing or spearfishing. [inaudible] people are asking for their money back [inaudible].

TI: Don is aware. I've been through that. I've talked to people that are coming in [inaudible] that are going fishing here. "What did you guys pull today?" "Oh, we pulled [inaudible]." "What did the water look like? Was it muddy? Was it [inaudible]?" "You know, come to think of it, I didn't even notice." They went out there and pulled five hundred traps. They're on the water, pulled the traps off the buoy. They never once looked at the water. See if it was muddy, clear, or if there was slime in the water, or if they remembered if there was slime on their buoys or shit.

KD: That is true. That is the other thing. People notice something when it really starts to bother them or really started to impact them. Fishing is great right now in Key West.

TI: A lot of guys here...

KD: There are more birds in Key West than ever before. Conchs that I have talked to is they never have seen this many birds in Key West before.

TI: You know why?

I told (Hardy?). I said, "We used to run out here. We used to look for birds and bait to find our fish before we fished." [inaudible] I said, "You wait and see, tell me how much bait and keep track of how many birds you see in the Florida Bay. You know what we got to see, one dead cormorant floating in the water. Like I said, we're filming for Audubon. He went wild. He made six [inaudible] with the film and interviewing [inaudible]. [laughter] I said, "Yes." I said, "This used to be loaded. You'll see flocks of birds and schools of bait fish." I said, "You don't see anything anymore." A lot of fish in the bay that we catch are sight feeders. If they can't see, they're out of here.

KD: How many traps do you have?

TI: Eight hundred.

KD: Is that an increase from what you used to have ten years ago?

TI: I used to fish twelve hundred. I'm not going to put another dollar into it until I see what happens. I'm not investing. I don't owe any money. I'm not doing anything. So, let's see what happens in Florida Bay.

KD: What is the average in a year? What is an average number of maybe traps that you have to replace either through lost or damage? What is the normal percentage and has that kind of really increased a lot?

TI: It's got to really increase in the next couple of years. I'd say 15 to 20 percent.

KD: That 15 to 20 percent is always with ten, twenty years?

TI: Yes. I mean, I've had brand new traps, where the framing is like half-eaten. If it's another year like that, those two-year old traps, I'll be cutting them off, if I'm totally rebuilding them, which I might as well cut them off.

KD: So, you are looking at two years, it might be able to be 80 percent?

TI: Right. Yes, that's what everybody is looking at right now. That's why they're saying, "My God, how can you make —" if they drop the price of crawfish with all the trap reductions and all that other stuff, you don't make enough money to wire it. It's an industry that you're going to have to pay so much for certificate, Karen, so much for the boats, so much for the traps. They're talking about a \$3 pound crawfish this year. Then to replace your traps, it's not worth it. It's not going to come out in the end. The season is so short. You've got a few good runs and then boom, that's it.

KD: Well, it was pretty much mostly lobsters or cod in the fall, right?

TI: Right.

KD: Then a lot of the guys take their traps out in the water.

TI: I go net fishing. I used to go crab and tuna. I don't go crabbing.

KD: Has that always been that way?

TI: It used to be longer. Well, some of the guys still fish year-round, but it's always been [inaudible] you get the best crawfish. Now, you can't leave them in. Another reason why you take them out early now is because of the water quality. So that the longer you leave them in, if you can fish those three months and get them out of the water, boom, then you're okay. If it's okay, the traps use that sand. The barnacles and the worms start to eat the traps to get them out the water.

KD: In one trap, what is your average lobster, or used to be? Ten years ago, what was the average number of lobsters per trap?

TI: I used to do at least a pound a trap. I used to do it on a four-night set, five-night set maybe. Now, if I do a pound a trap, I jump up and down on a one-week set. If I do a half pound for a trap on a one-week set, I'm happy. This year, I think I did about two-thirds to three quarters of a pound a trap on a week set this year. A couple of times, I did a pound, but it was only at certain areas where it was a hotspot. I moved traps and stuff like that.

KD: It took longer?

TI: Yes.

KD: You moved it. Anything else about trapping before we move on to a different subject?

TI: I'm trying to think.

KD: What about netting? Tell me how you net. I mean, I know there are so many different varieties. Netting itself is [inaudible].

TI: Like I said, I look for the water color. I used to run out until I used to see birds bait fish. But now, I use a little piece of, I call it a trynet, like a shrimp, we use the trynet. I run a little piece of net overboard, depending on the mesh size. If I'm looking for pompano, it would be a bigger mesh. If I'm looking for mackerel, it would be a small mesh. I make a try until I find the kind of fish I'm looking for. A lot of my traditional areas where I fish, I don't fish anymore.

KD: You pull like a shrimp boat then? You pull the net [inaudible] and then come around?

TI: No. See this right here? This right here.

KD: Yes.

TI: That's the lead line. That's the cork line. The cork line will be up on the top. The lead line is at the bottom. We just it pull by hand – there's one in the net right there. This is a mullet net. That's what we've been using [inaudible] right here.

KD: A mullet net?

TI: Yes.

KD: So, you would set one point and then bring it around?

TI: Yes. You would make a circle on that. But usually, what I do is stab net. We just want it right down the side and start on the other side and boom, pick it up like that.

KD: You said you [inaudible] pompano and mackerel. Do you do much of any of the other fish species?

TI: No. Pompano is 350 a pound. So, I work on pompano. Mackerel, when they're migratory, you catch a lot. They come through. Say, you catch a school. You're getting lost, you look for school down.

KD: When do the pompano come through?

TI: In the fall and winter.

KD: What months?

TI: When the water temperature cools down. If it starts getting cool in November, they come through. Usually, December and January are the two best months for pompano.

KD: Anytime is mackerel?

TI: Yes.

KD: Is there anything else that maybe when you used to net, is there anything that changed and some of the other stuff that would get in the net?

TI: Yes. You get a lot more junk now.

KD: What do you mean by junk?

TI: A lot more moss, a lot more lettuce coral.

KD: Really, lettuce coral?

TI: Yes. Some of the net sit on the bottom. I don't know if lettuce coral is – some places in that bay is just loaded with lettuce coral. There are beds of it. I don't know where. I don't know if that's a slimy kind of coral or what. I don't know. Is that an algae, or it is a lettuce coral?

KD: I know lettuce coral is a coral. Now, if what you are calling lettuce coral is actually correct. Let me get that book.

TI: I mean, you can go like this and bust it up.

KD: I think it is now just brown algae out of lettuce. I do not know.

TI: [inaudible] over here.

KD: That is why [inaudible].

TI: It went up over here and get these guys done. I got this one from Billy, but I keep this inside.

KD: [laughter] Let me give you a fish list here to look at. This is a list of fish species. Just go down the list and look at it. See if it sparks a memory for you or something that you have noticed. Double column back, two sided. Just look out and see.

TI: How many I've caught or catch or whatever, tell you what I do [inaudible]?

KD: Yes. Well, just like [inaudible] and if you have any comment you like to make.

TI: Sharks, I catch a lot of bonnetheads, lemons. The nurses I catch, I throw back. I try to keep those alive. I don't catch [inaudible] and mako.

KD: What do you do with the bonnetheads?

TI: I sell them for crab bait. The bigger ones, they buy now that you can tube them up for food fish, the same thing with the lemon. Bonnethead, lemon, and black – there's no black [inaudible].

KD: I know. The others.

TI: Others. I catch a lot of those.

KD: You got in the back?

TI: Huh?

KD: On the back?

TI: Yes, all in the back, all in nets. Angelfish, I catch, Queens, blue, gray. I guess the [inaudible]. I don't know what the other one – my crawfish traps, I let those guys go through, the same thing with [inaudible] fish.

KD: Have you noticed a decline in the population at all, or a change in the population?

TI: You know what I've noticed since I moved into [inaudible] water, I'm catching a lot more angelfish. I haven't seen a decline. I've seen this year [inaudible] catching always angelfish. I said [inaudible]. I said, "Boy, I'm real smart." They're coming into the clean water also. I'm catching a lot more smaller crawfish. I never caught before because of the loss of habitat in the east. Those fish are coming down. With the good tidal flow at the bridge, a lot of stuff is starting to stay over there because the water stays – it changes a lot quicker. The same thing [inaudible]. Triggerfish, yes. [inaudible]. A lot more cowfish.

KD: Same thing because of the [inaudible] of clean water, too?

TI: I think so. I don't know. That's my own personal opinion now.

KD: This is all since you have moved inshore?

TI: Yes, I'm seeing a lot more. I figured [inaudible]. I don't catch any of these shrimps. Sawfish, I haven't caught a sawfish. Sunfish, I haven't [inaudible]. I see a lot of porpoises and a lot of stingrays [inaudible].

KD: On this time [inaudible].

TI: A lot more porpoises [inaudible] because you see the bay in here, too.

KD: [inaudible]

TI: From the Seven Mile Bridge, a couple of miles out into the bay. This year, I saw a lot more porpoises inshore than I've ever seen before only because the water is clearing. There's a lot more bait. But I used to see big schools of porpoises offshore. I don't see them anymore.

KD: So, they are pretty much [inaudible]. You do not see them anymore in Florida Bay proper?

TI: Yes, that is right.

KD: Where the blooms are?

TI: Yes. I'm seeing a lot more stuff in there, the same thing with the bait fish.

KD: I am trying to figure out the names of the bait fish because everyone has got their own little names down there, but what the hell is [inaudible] or something.

TI: [inaudible] one of these little fish [inaudible] lobsters. I'm seeing a lot more smaller crawfish. Traditionally, I didn't see it. Hardly any [inaudible].

KD: You are seeing the actual [inaudible].

TI: Yes. I told John about that.

KD: John?

TI: He's like, "Oh, my God." They want me to do research [inaudible]. Turtles, I haven't seen that many turtles [inaudible] anywhere. We see a few, but not for net fishing. We used to see a lot of turtles. I mean, a lot of turtle this year. Net fishing [inaudible]. I went dolphin fishing once this year. I was thinking that one day I saw more turtles out in the deepwater, dolphin fishing, than I did the whole season [inaudible] in Florida Bay.

KD: In the [inaudible]?

TI: Yes. [inaudible] There's places out back where you can catch a lot of mangoes [inaudible] up to the east [inaudible].

KD: Fish kills.

TI: Fish kills.

KD: Hearing those? Any fish kills?

TI: One time, I don't know how many years ago [inaudible].

KD: Where was that from do you think?

TI: They said it was [inaudible] the Everglades. It has something to do with the water.

KD: Fish kill, when was that?

TI: A long time ago, over ten years ago. I think that was due to that [inaudible] – they noticed about the decline maybe in the water or something like that. One other time, it was – I forgot what year it was, but it was real, real cold, cold, cold, cold winter. There were a lot of fish that were either dead or lethargic, like brain dead state, just kind of [inaudible].

KD: What species? Were there any particular...

TI: Pompano, mutton snapper, mullet, [inaudible]. They said up in the east, there was turtles, all kinds of other stuff.

KD: When you say to the east, you are talking about up there?

TI: Up towards Sand Key. I netted a 12-pound mutton snapper. It was still alive and sold it. It was freezing [inaudible], but it was sold.

KD: You are doing some good jobs. [laughter] [inaudible] was that. What about algae blooms besides the big muddy water? Anything else on the algae blooms in near shore or any stories? What about some things you heard from old timers or some of the other older fishermen?

TI: All I hear about the good old days, like (Ed Moore?) – I mean, you talk to Ed Moore or (Gerald Nicks?). Those are two guys you have to talk to.

KD: I have them on my list.

TI: I mean Gerald fished this bay. I mean, those guys can tell you stories about running right off the back of Carter, right out here on the Oceanside, right off the shore. He's catching 2,000 or 3,000 pounds of pompano and 20,000 pounds of mackerel or running up off of Sand Key over there and loading their boat and catching so many fish. These were the days. That's all I hear about. All I keep thinking was I was born too late. I missed out on all that stuff.

KD: How long [inaudible] that?

TI: Hey, nobody [inaudible].

KD: Anything else that they tell you?

TI: Just about the way it used to be, how pretty the water used to be.

KD: Have you ever heard the story of Big Moe?

TI: The hammerhead shark on...

KD: Bahia Honda?

TI: – Bahia Honda [inaudible].

KD: What is it now? What is the story?

TI: It's a hammerhead shark that [inaudible] fisherman make this thing [inaudible].

KD: Well, I have heard about Big Moe. I just need someone to tell me it on case. [laughter]

TI: Well, he's supposed to be one hammerhead shark that goes from Bahia Honda to Seven Mile Bridge. But I think there's a lot of big hammerhead sharks that follow the schools of tarpon. Every now and then, I think it's a selling point for tarpon charter. But there's a couple of big hammerheads that take it up. They [inaudible] while somebody [inaudible] tarpon. Then gets up and then bites their tarpon in half or takes a bite off it or they cut their tarpon off because Big Moe is lurking. They let the tarpon go before it gets bit.

KD: I was talking to a guy. He used to do a lot of diving in that channel. He was like, "Oh, Big Moe [inaudible]." I know that, but what is the story of Big Moe?

TI: Like I said, I think it's just a couple of different hammerheads in different places that these guys were all talking about.

KD: Anything else you want to tell me or let me know about?

TI: Yes. I wish somebody did this ten years ago.

KD: I know.

TI: I think it's too much too late. All this stuff with the water and all this stuff with mismanaged fisheries, the water seemed to get out of [inaudible]. They had a shark fishery down here. [inaudible]. The first boat I got on to go [inaudible]. I said, "Stop bringing them back." I said, "What? Do what?" I couldn't believe it. Some of my best friends, there were hundreds of

pounds of [inaudible] lobsters. A lot of these fisheries, they should've implemented size limit, seasons, and a lot more regulations and a lot more enforcement years ago. Florida is way behind, boy. Way behind.

KD: It is so hard when you have got councils that just have no clue.

TI: That's it. I know.

KD: It really is.

TI: That's the one point...

KD: It is so much of just us against them type. That is just like, "Wait a second guys. We do not need to be doing us against them anymore." It is really foolish.

TI: Eddie has a lot to say about the regulation and stuff, too. He gets all upset about it. We're having that meeting. We got a big meeting tonight a matter of fact with election.

KD: Who else is running for president?

TI: (Billy Nagel?). I don't know if anybody else is. It was kind of like peer pressure type of thing. You've got to do it. I said, "Okay, if I got to do it, Carl, you've got to be vice president." [laughter] He said, "Okay [inaudible]."

KD: Who else is going to go?

TI: [inaudible] state director, I believe. I'm trying to think. I wanted to try to get Pete. I want to try to get Eddie to run for vice president, too. But I want to try/ myself as president, Carl, and Pete. Maybe Billy Nagel, if he doesn't get presidency, to run for vice president. I said, "That's the way to do [inaudible]. We have no authority. We can all be equals in this. We all share the responsibilities and organizing and all of this."

KD: Your responsibility is to deal with those meetings [inaudible]. That is why you have massive coverage. You know what is going on.

TI: Everybody involved. We've got an office and all that. If anybody says, "Yes, let's do it," so, hopefully we'll do it. I hope. See, what I want to do with Eddie is – Eddie is Spanish. He's very smart and knows all these stuff that's going on. It's good to have somebody like that involved in this and [inaudible] involved. He gets frustrated with all the [inaudible].

KD: What about down here? Is there a lot of the Cubans? Do you have a large Cuban community here?

TI: Oh, yes, right on the other side.

KD: Do you have any problems with Cuban fleets? Or are there any differences how they are

doing things versus how you all are doing things?

TI: No. I don't fish around the Cubans at all. They don't net fish and they don't fish. Most of them run offshore. I don't have a problem with them. Other than if everybody sells [inaudible] here, they catch our fish. That will bother me. I mean, I hope Cuba opens up, so they can all go back. Seriously, I think we've got too many people. There's so many fisherman now, too many traps. It's got too big. It got out of hand. Most of that started with drug money when these guys started getting these big Torreses with Turbo 12s and fishing six thousand crab traps. I mean, if you fish offshore, you need a bigger boat. But these guys went from 30-foot boats to Torres with the turbos. But they didn't have those boats built to go crawfishing. They have those boats built to run [inaudible].

KD: Drug money. When you had a boat out of the water before you put it back in, it is like every day, somebody was coming in usually straight from Bahamas or something like that or Spanish type persons. They are coming up every day [inaudible] just to buy the boat in cash. They have a 43-foot Torres [inaudible] diesel in it, these boats in primo conditions. That is a lot of money if you want to put cash down. But they are like, "Oh, they are ready." We are like, "We know what they want it for."

TI: Well, right now, there is probably ten Torres in Marathon for sale. You can sell them all day long, but they want to steal them. Nobody wants to pay for what the boats are worth right now.

KD: The markets are [inaudible] to me. You look at the National Fisherman and you look at the boat trade that you got in the mail and everything. It is just loaded right now. I always told Don, I said that worse comes to worst. We will just stick the boat on a freighter and ship it out to the South Pacific [laughter] because we'd have to deal with gas, I guess, and finding diesel.

TI: It's set out to die or whatever. Boats like that, if that keeps it like that, the tourist dive industry is really coming on.

KD: Don will never ever do anything with the tourist dive industry.

TI: No. He could sell that [inaudible].

KD: He could sell the boat. I know.

TI: You can put a [inaudible] shade on it and all the tanks and have everything set up. I've heard there's a lot of people interested in the Torreses dive boats in this [inaudible].

KD: They are beautiful. They are great the way they are set up. [inaudible] They are the only thing that [inaudible].

TI: I think for the shallow water, some of the mileage.

KD: Well, that is why he does not have the keel. That is because it is a lot easier for him to maneuver around and stuff.

TI: You want me to...

[end of transcript]