

The University of Southern Mississippi
Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage

Deepwater Horizon Oil Disaster–Gulf Coast Fisheries
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Cuc Huynh

Interviewer: Linda VanZandt
Interpreter: Khai Nguyen

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Louis Kyriakoudes, Director
The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage
118 College Drive #5175
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
601-266-4574

An Oral History with Cuc Huynh, Volume 1043

Interviewer: Linda VanZandt

Interpreter: Khai Nguyen

Transcriber: Stephanie Scull-DeArmey

Editor: Linda VanZandt

Biography

Mr. Cuc Huynh was born in 1964, one of nine children, near Phu Hai in Binh Thuan Province, South Vietnam. His father's name was Tich Huynh and his mother's name was Em Thi Phan. Tich Huynh served as a soldier in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnamese Army). Mr. Huynh learned to fish from his father when he was thirteen years old. His mother bought and sold fish in town. After the Communist takeover in 1975, Mr. Huynh quit school to fish for food and survival. In 1979, he and his father escaped Vietnam by boat, leaving their family behind. After being turned away from Indonesia, they landed in Pulau Tengah, Malaysia, where Mr. Huynh's father died from high blood pressure. After fifteen months in Pulau Tengah, Mr. Huynh stayed two months in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, before finally settling in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In New Orleans, Mr. Huynh first worked as a welder and at Schwegmann's Grocery Store. In 1986 he began working as a deckhand on a tuna boat, then as captain on a friend's boat, and purchased his own boat, *Kim Thanh II*, in 1995, from which he continued to fish for tuna at the time of the interview.

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AN ORAL HISTORY

with

CUC HUYNH

This is an interview for The University of Southern Mississippi Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. The interview is with Cuc Huynh and is taking place on June 1, 2011. The interviewer is Linda VanZandt. English/Vietnamese interpretation is provided by Khai Nguyen. Also present is Mr. Huynh's young daughter.

VanZandt: OK. Today is June 1, 2011. This is Linda VanZandt with the Center for Oral History at The University of Southern Mississippi. And I'm here today in the offices of Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation in New Orleans East. And I'm here with a resident of this community. And could you please state your name, and when and where you were born?

Huynh: My name is Cuc. I born in Vietnam, Binh Thuan.

VanZandt: OK. Can you spell your name? Is it C-U-C?

Huynh: C-U-C, yeah.

VanZandt: OK. And last name?

Huynh: H-U-Y-N-H.

VanZandt: H-U-Y-N-H.

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: OK. And you were born *where* in Vietnam?

Huynh: Binh Thuan [province].

VanZandt: Binh Thuan.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Can you spell that, too?

Huynh: B-I-N-H.

VanZandt: B-I-N-H.

Huynh: Um-hm. Binh T-H-U-A-N.

VanZandt: Binh Thuan.

Huynh: Binh Thuan.

VanZandt: Where is Binh Thuan?

Huynh: Phu Hai.

VanZandt: OK, near Phu Hai.

Huynh: South(?), South Vietnam(?).

VanZandt: Is that in the south of Vietnam?

Huynh: Yeah, South Vietnam.

VanZandt: Where is it in relation to Saigon?

Huynh: Binh Thuan is the big city. And I live in the small country; they call Phu Hai, P-H-U and H-A-I.

VanZandt: A-I?

Huynh: Yeah, Phu Hai, yeah.

VanZandt: And that was in the countryside?

Huynh: Yeah. That a fishing place.

VanZandt: OK. So along the coast?

Huynh: Yeah. Along look like along the coast. Live in the—up there they got the mountains and down in the ocean.

VanZandt: Near the ocean. That's where your village was.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: OK, good. Well, can you tell me your parents' names, for the record?

Huynh: My daddy is Huynh Tich, T-I-C-H.

VanZandt: OK. So H-U-Y-N-H.

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: T-I-C-H.

Huynh: Is the first name.

VanZandt: Yes, last name first, Vietnamese name.

Huynh: My mom, Phan Thi Em, P-H-A-N and T-H-I and first name is E-M.

VanZandt: E-M.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: OK. Phan Thi Em is your mother's name. Thank you. And where were they from, Mr. Huynh? Do you know where they grew up?

Huynh: They, their whole life there. They lived their whole life there.

VanZandt: Oh, your whole life there? So your parents lived there, too, in the South?

Huynh: Uh-huh, yeah.

VanZandt: OK, good. And what year were you born?

Huynh: Nineteen sixty-four.

VanZandt: Nineteen sixty-four, OK. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: How many?

Huynh: I got, include me, seven son; seven men and two, uh—

Daughter: Sisters.

Huynh: Lady.

VanZandt: Two sisters. OK, good. Wow, so nine children all together.

Huynh: Yeah, nine.

VanZandt: And where were you in that order?

Huynh: I am older.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: You're oldest?

Huynh: Um-hm, um-hm.

Nguyen: He's the oldest.

VanZandt: First born?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Very important. (laughter) OK. And your daughter here, who is with us today, is the youngest. (Mr. Huynh chuckles) OK. Great. And anything that you can tell me about growing up in that fishing village. Any memories, favorite memories?

Huynh: Here or in Vietnam?

VanZandt: There in Vietnam. What was it like growing up there?

Huynh: When I about thirteen year old, I go fishing.

VanZandt: You started fishing at thirteen?

Huynh: I thirteen years old. Then about seventeen year old, then I left Vietnam; go to Malaysia.

VanZandt: At seventeen you left.

Huynh: Um-hm. I been to Malaysia about fifteen month, then I [go to] United States.

VanZandt: When you were thirteen, starting fishing, were you fishing with your father?

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: So he had been a fisherman?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: All his life?

Huynh: Um-hm. Uh, no. Before 1977, 1975 he in the [South Vietnamese] Army.

VanZandt: He was in the Army.

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: The South Vietnamese Army.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: What did he do in the Army?

Huynh: Just (speaking Vietnamese).

VanZandt: Infantry?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Just regular infantry.

VanZandt: Regular soldier.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Was he home very often then? Did you see him much while he was in the Army?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He was in the city. His father was in the Army, but he was in the city, so.

VanZandt: So you saw him a lot?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: OK, good.

Huynh: Every day. (chuckles)

VanZandt: Every day.

Huynh: Except morning he go to (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: It seems like he was in the Reserve.

VanZandt: OK. I see. Did he tell you any stories when he would come home?

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: About what was happening—

Huynh: Because I am young. (laughter)

VanZandt: You were too little.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: OK. And what did your mother do at home?

Huynh: My mom? She go buy fish and sell somebody.

VanZandt: OK. So she would buy fish.

Daughter: Sell.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: From the boats?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And take it into town to sell?

Huynh: Uh-huh.

VanZandt: OK. And when you started fishing with your dad, what did you fish for?
Tell me just about—

Huynh: Squid.

VanZandt: *Squid?* OK.

Huynh: Um-hm. They got a small boat.

VanZandt: OK. About how long was the boat?

Huynh: About—I don't know, forget, long time. But I think about thirty feet, something like that.

VanZandt: Thirty feet.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Was that your father's boat?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Or someone else's?

Huynh: No, my father. But you know, after 1975, I don't want to go to school no more. That's why I go to fishing with my daddy.

VanZandt: You didn't want to go to school anymore.

Huynh: Yeah. Because they teaching no good. I don't want it. (chuckles)

VanZandt: Why? You didn't learn anything?

Huynh: No. I, before 1975, I been school about (pause) long time, but after that I didn't go. No food, nothing to eat. You must walking; then find some food.

VanZandt: You needed to—

Huynh: That why we, the (inaudible) for a living, you know.

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: Was that because after the Communists took over—

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: —things were bad?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: School was bad. You needed—

Huynh: No food. That why we quit.

VanZandt: So you quit school.

Huynh: Then we left; we left Vietnam.

VanZandt: When did you leave Vietnam?

Huynh: Nineteen seventy-nine.

VanZandt: (writing) Can you tell me a little bit about what the fishing was like in Vietnam in comparison to here, fishing here? *How* did you fish for squid?

Huynh: Squid, look like it close (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said the squid, they would use some kind of bait, and then like it would attract the squid, and then once (inaudible; speaking simultaneously).

Huynh: Yeah, just then it follow the bait, and we get a net, scoop him up.

VanZandt: So just scoop it up with a net?

Huynh: Yeah. (chuckles)

VanZandt: No hook?

Huynh: No hook. Sometime. Sometime we use a hook, but they got like this (demonstrates shape)? They got round, a hook around; the squid bite(?) like that, the hook; we throw him up. (laughter)

VanZandt: They'd take the hook.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: How big of squid? How big were the squid?

Huynh: Sometime small, sometime big like that (demonstrates). Sometime small like that.

VanZandt: So sometimes two feet, he's saying, for the recording.

Huynh: Yeah. But medium right here. Yeah. Right here.

VanZandt: And sometimes two feet, big squid.

Huynh: Yeah. Sometime small, sometime big.

VanZandt: OK. Was it just you and your father fishing, or did you have other family and friends fishing with you?

Huynh: With my father, my second brother.

VanZandt: OK. So was that all day long, did you fish?

Huynh: We fishing at night.

VanZandt: At night.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: So tell me about that. You would load up your boat?

Huynh: No. We (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah, he was saying that fishing at night, they would have a light.
(speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: On one side of the boat, and the squid would be attracted to that.

VanZandt: Ah, OK! So the bait and the light would attract them.

Huynh: Yeah. The squid see the light, and they stay. (brief interruption when phone rings)

VanZandt: So you would put a light—was it like a lantern? Because I've heard some people talk about they *made* a light from fire.

Huynh: Yeah. They don't have; I don't see (inaudible) right here. Look like they got the gas in the bottom.

VanZandt: A gas light?

Huynh: In bottom. I don't know how to (laughs) explain that. (laughs) We got squid(?), then they go (demonstrates).

VanZandt: OK. He said “up in the air”?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Gas, gas light.

Huynh: Yeah, gas lights.

VanZandt: OK, got you. And when you caught the squid, then what did you do with it?

Huynh: We sell somebody.

VanZandt: You’d sell them.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: How long would you be gone out at night?

Huynh: Whole night. About two or three o’clock, we go out. Then about morning, when you see the sun come up, we going home.

VanZandt: Time to go home.

Huynh: Yeah. (laughs)

VanZandt: (laughs) So who would you sell to? Was there a market in the village?

Huynh: No. Sell somebody in the country.

VanZandt: Out in the countryside.

Huynh: Um-hm. They cut and put some of the squid will dry.

Nguyen: Dry squid.

VanZandt: Dry.

Huynh: And sell dry squid. They sell somebody out [in] the country.

VanZandt: OK. So you would dry it out in the sun.

Huynh: Uh-huh.

VanZandt: Like jerky, and then sell that.

Huynh: Uh-huh, then sell out [in] the country.

VanZandt: And was that enough to make a living for your family, to feed your family?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) My father, they do like that, my mom. Then they go to buy somebody fish, that sell out the country, sell, my father work; my mother work, [but] not enough.

VanZandt: Still not enough.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Just enough.

VanZandt: Just enough to get—

Nguyen: Tough times.

Huynh: If sometime (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: He said when the government(?) (inaudible) some families would eat better than others. When they didn't eat, it would be—

Huynh: When in Vietnam, we eat some rice, then we put some (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He was just describing some of the food, the food that they were eating, just like rice with palang(?). I'm not really sure what that is. Yeah.

Huynh: Meats for our father(?), rice, yeah.

VanZandt: OK, good. Did your family grow rice, too, in the country?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: Fishing family.

Huynh: Fishing, yeah. The rice we buy from somebody else.

VanZandt: OK. Well, Mr. Huynh, in 1975, you were still pretty young.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Fifteen years old.

Huynh: Thirteen.

VanZandt: No, thirteen years old. Tell me what you remember about April 30, 1975, when the Communists [took over]—

Huynh: I remember. At that time there, I still remember, but when I come to what I remember about it, look like when I left Vietnam, I know all that, but before I still Vietnam (speaking Vietnamese). You know, we got a boat, but after about nine—when that time we leave, 1979, the Communists—

Nguyen: Communists.

Huynh: —the Communists, they took over from us.

VanZandt: Did they take your boat?

Huynh: Yeah. That's why we left.

VanZandt: So what else—

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He was saying that, you know, they just took all their belongings. And earlier he was saying that when the Communists came in, it was very suffocating. They were very—they didn't have much freedom after that.

VanZandt: Suffocating is a good word for it. So they took your boat, and everybody—

Huynh: No, everybody. Not from us, *everybody* in Vietnam, yeah.

VanZandt: Right. So your family didn't have a way to make a living then.

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: When your family decided to leave, tell me about that, making that decision to leave Vietnam. And who was leaving? Who was planning on leaving?

Huynh: We leave Vietnam with somebody, not in my boat; my boat very small. And my daddy got some friends; they got the boat bigger than us. Then we go with them.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) We follow somebody.

Nguyen: He said that their family—

Huynh: That's why—

Nguyen: —(inaudible) leaving, so they were just going to leave. They were just going to—

Huynh: That's why all my family still in Vietnam, you know, because we are fishing; then we see some boats going out, we follow them. And my mom, my young brother, sister, they still Vietnam. That's why.

VanZandt: Still there. So your parents stayed behind in Vietnam?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And your brother and sister.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And you left with who?

Huynh: With my daddy.

VanZandt: Just you and your daddy.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Not your mother.

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: Can you tell me about that day or night that you left? If you could just kind of describe for people—

Huynh: We left at daytime.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese) OK. He said that him and his dad had heard some people with bigger boats had been trying to get people to come with them, and they were [said] OK. His family didn't even know that they were leaving.

Huynh: My mom, my young brother, they don't know I left. (laughs)

VanZandt: So you just left without telling them?

Huynh: Yeah. No, no tell them. (laughs)

Nguyen: They were afraid that—

Huynh: You know, Vietnam, if you left, you say somebody, somebody say with them, they kept you in the jail. That's why can say [to] nobody. Don't tell nobody. (laughs)

VanZandt: So there was a fear—

Huynh: *Yeah.*

VanZandt: —if you told *anyone*, even family, that somebody—

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: People in Vietnam were scared that there might have been spies, Communists, trying to find out who was leaving, you know, so they were scared to trust anyone. (phone ringing)

VanZandt: So you and your father—

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: —left on a friend's boat.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: In the daytime.

Huynh: Daytime.

VanZandt: How did you leave without anyone knowing?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. He said, (inaudible) went out to sea.

VanZandt: They thought you were fishing? Pretended like—

Huynh: Yeah, like go fishing. Then we go. That way they don't know. (laughs)

VanZandt: OK. Well, what did you feel when you were leaving?

Huynh: Too sad.

VanZandt: What were you thinking, feeling?

Huynh: Man! No good. (laughs) For family, my family in Vietnam, but we feel no good, but we *must* go. Go to find some new life; make money to send to Vietnam to family.

VanZandt: So you felt like you needed to go.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: No other choice.

Huynh: No other choice. We feel sad, but we must to go. If we don't go, our family die soon. (laughs) No choice. I got nine, eleven people in the family; we got no food, no nothing.

VanZandt: So a lot of people to take care of.

Huynh: Yeah, um-hm.

VanZandt: Tell me about that journey when you left Vietnam. You went to Malaysia, you said.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: How long was that trip? And if he can, just describe what happened on that journey.

Huynh: Thirteen day.

VanZandt: Thirteen *days* before you got to Malaysia?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: What did you take with you, Mr. Huynh, on the boat?

Huynh: No, nothing.

VanZandt: Nothing.

Huynh: Nothing. Just clothes, that's it. (laughs)

VanZandt: No water, food?

Huynh: We got the food and water, but when we go out about a week, out of food, out of water. And the ship, big ship, they give us to eat it, and when the rain come in, (laughs)—

VanZandt: So rain came in? Collect the water?

Huynh: We got, you know, in Vietnam the water? We put in there. They saving for drinking.

VanZandt: Saving it to drink.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And you said you saw a ship.

Huynh: Yeah, a lot!

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: Were these American ships?

Huynh: A lot of countries. (chuckles)

VanZandt: Other boats.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) Some ship, they stop; sometime they go. They didn't stop.

VanZandt: They didn't stop to help. So thirteen days (office workers talking in the background) to Malaysia. And you finally landed. And did Malaysia accept—

Huynh: We don't know what the country. Just see the land and go. (laughs)

VanZandt: Good to see that land.

Huynh: Yeah. We go to the south, (chuckles) and go to the Indonesia—

VanZandt: Indonesia.

Daughter: Indonesia.

Huynh: —and that time, they don't receive nobody. (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said that they got to Indonesia, but at that time, they weren't taking anyone in. So they told them to go to Malaysia.

Huynh: And we go Malaysia. Then some (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: When they got to Malaysia, they weren't taking them in; they actually got back out to sea, but at night they just went in.

VanZandt: Went back anyway.

Huynh: Yeah, in the midnight. (laughs)

VanZandt: So Indonesia turned you away, said, "No."

Huynh: "No."

VanZandt: Malaysia said, "No."

Huynh: "No."

VanZandt: Turned you away?

Huynh: Every country at that time, they don't want to take somebody.

VanZandt: Yes. So many people had left.

Huynh: And if your boat is sinking, you can't (laughs) no boat.

VanZandt: Right. So you made it back to Malaysia.

Huynh: Yeah. Back to Malaysia. I don't know where; they put the boat in the land, and we go out. (laughs)

VanZandt: Did you stay in a refugee camp there?

Huynh: I don't know where it at. (laughs)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah, he said that they were walking (speaking Vietnamese).

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Once they got on land, they would just be walking and, you know, soldiers were tracking them, saw them and (inaudible; speaking simultaneously).

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. So the soldiers helped you. Took you to the camp.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: How long did you stay in the camp?

Huynh: About a week, then they sent me to the island.

VanZandt: Which island after that? To another island?

Huynh: Pulau Tengah. Pulau Tengah.

VanZandt: Do you know how to spell that?

Huynh: Yeah. P-A-U-L-A [Pulau]—I can write.

VanZandt: Write? OK, sure.

Huynh: (Mr. Huynh writes it down) Pulau Tengah, yeah.

VanZandt: OK. So then you went to Pulau Tengah.

Huynh: Yeah, and that—

VanZandt: Was there a camp there?

Huynh: I be there about fifteen month. Then go to Kuala Lumpur, about two month. Then we go to United States.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur.

VanZandt: I can look—do you know how to spell that? Write that?

Daughter: Kuala Lumpur.

Huynh: K-U-L-A [Kuala], L-U-M-B-U [Lumpur], Kuala Lumpur.

VanZandt: Thank you. I wish I had a map. So now I will look this up and make sure we know your—

Huynh: That a big country from Malaysia.

VanZandt: In Malaysia. So you went to four different islands on the way.

Huynh: Yeah, yeah.

VanZandt: My goodness. And did they—

Huynh: No, no. This the land, not the island. That the land.

VanZandt: And how long did you stay there?

Huynh: Two month.

VanZandt: Two months?

Huynh: That at the time when (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: He said by the time he got to this one, he had already found his name on the list to go to America. That's where they sent the—

Huynh: Sent (inaudible) island to coming here. Then wait, yeah. That where we go to the airport. (laughs)

VanZandt: Did you have a choice about coming to America? Could you have gone to France or Australia, other countries?

Huynh: Yeah. But my daddy, the Army, they put number 3B(?), 3B, the Army. Just the United States people with(?) my daddy, no—

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Uh-huh.

Nguyen: He said every military person went to America.

VanZandt: OK. So because your father had fought and was in the [South Vietnamese] Army, he came to America.

Huynh: No country go accept (laughs) my daddy.

VanZandt: And how did you feel when you found out you were coming to America? What did you know about America?

Huynh: We don't know it. (laughs)

VanZandt: Nothing about America. What did you think in your mind it would be—

Huynh: When (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: Pulau Tengah?

Huynh: Yeah. My daddy dead in that island.

Nguyen: Yeah. His father died in this one, this island.

VanZandt: In Pulau Tengah.

Huynh: Um-hm.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: So after that, he [Cuc Huynh] was put into this group of people that, the younger people, I guess, without parents.

VanZandt: Do you mind telling—how did your father die? How did your daddy die?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: High blood pressure.

VanZandt: OK, OK. So then you were on your own and sent to Kuala Lumpur.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: With others.

Huynh: He dead about a month. My father dead about a month, and I got the name to go to United States. He be here about fourteen months, and he dead. Thirteen months, something like that.

VanZandt: OK. So when you came to America, where did you come?

Huynh: In Marrero.

VanZandt: Marrero?

Nguyen: It's uh—

Huynh: The West Bank [of New Orleans].

VanZandt: Oh, West Bank! OK. So you did not come to Fort Chaffee or Fort Pendleton, any of the other camps?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: Straight to New Orleans.

Huynh: Yeah. (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Marrero (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: He said he was in (speaking Vietnamese).

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese) He said he was in, I guess you would call it an orphanage, not an orphanage, but a—I mean, I think that's—I don't know the exact word for it, but it's—

VanZandt: For youth?

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: Without parents.

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: But that was—

Nguyen: For a year, I think. That was here. And then —

Huynh: Under eighteen year old, live like that.

VanZandt: Until you turned eighteen.

Huynh: Um-hm. When I turn eighteen, I go (inaudible).

VanZandt: So you came first to Marrero, here.

Huynh: Uh-huh.

VanZandt: What did you think about New Orleans and Marrero?

Huynh: I don't have no car. I just live in there. Nobody took me (inaudible). About two week later, then they put me to go to school.

VanZandt: And you were eighteen then?

Huynh: No. That time about sixteen and a half, something like that.

VanZandt: Sixteen and a half. So you went to high school here?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: What was that like? Did you know any English?

Huynh: No. (laughs)

VanZandt: No English.

Huynh: They put me ninth grade. (laughs) I don't know nothing. (laughs)

VanZandt: Right. And tell me about what—

Huynh: We—

VanZandt: That must have been—

Huynh: We learn for ESL [English as a second language]. ESL, they say about second language. Right?

VanZandt: Yes. So you took classes.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: You learned English a little bit? A lot?

Huynh: Just to hear the (inaudible). (laughs) Just you put the (inaudible) on; look for hear. (laughs)

VanZandt: Put the headphones on? Yes. (laughter)

Huynh: About two months, something like that.

VanZandt: That's it, huh?! That was your English lesson. OK. Were there other Vietnamese with you in school?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Did you know anyone else here from Vietnam?

Huynh: Yeah. They got some neighborhood from Vietnam. They live around here, that we call. About sometime, about two weeks or months, they pick me up from right

here. Then I be about one day, two days, and after we came, (inaudible) back over there.

VanZandt: That must have been nice to see people you knew from home?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. Did Catholic Charities or any other organization help you along the way? Did you have sponsorship?

Huynh: I don't know [understand the question].

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) Catholic sponsor.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Oh. So he was living in the Catholic Charities. That's what he was talking about. And so yeah, they would feed him and everything.

VanZandt: They took care of you.

Huynh: Yeah. They take care of everything.

VanZandt: They have an Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program.

Huynh: I don't know how, about money [misunderstood "minor" for "money"].

VanZandt: Yeah.

Huynh: Just we eat some food and then go to sleep. (laughs)

VanZandt: What was your first job here, then, Mr. Huynh? You had to support yourself.

Huynh: When I eighteen, then I go to try the welder.

VanZandt: Welding?

Huynh: After that, everybody got no job. Then I go to Schwegmann [Grocery Store].

VanZandt: Schwegmann's?

Huynh: I go to stocks.

VanZandt: Stocks? Stocking [groceries].

Huynh: Yeah. The first time I do, that year, stock.

VanZandt: How'd you like that?

Huynh: No good.

VanZandt: No good? Why?

Huynh: They pay you no good.

VanZandt: No money.

Huynh: No money. But work hard.

VanZandt: Work too hard for little money.

Huynh: Too hard for no money. That why I go fishing.

VanZandt: That's why you started fishing.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: OK. You knew how to fish. So tell me—

Huynh: Yeah, because my daddy, [it's in] my blood, fishing; (laughs) follow my daddy.

VanZandt: It's in your blood. (Mr. Huynh laughs) So tell me about starting to fish here. How did you do that? Did you know someone who had a boat? Tell me about it.

Huynh: Yeah. I got some Vietnamese; they got the boat. Then I go to the deckhand. Then we went and go fishing the first time; we go shrimp boat.

VanZandt: OK. So you started shrimping?

Huynh: A lot of boat, yes. Sometime they go that boat; sometime go another boat.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. He just said he knew people in the community that needed deckhands.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Better job than Schwegmann's, shrimping? Better?

Huynh: Um-hm.

Nguyen: Schwegmann. (laughs)

Huynh: Yeah, better. (laughs) You know, we work about—when we work with Schwegmann, about one week about sixty-five hour, they pay me about a hundred fifty [dollars], something like that.

VanZandt: Hm. Too much [work].

Huynh: Too much working but no overtime, no nothing.

VanZandt: Different from the fishing life.

Huynh: I work about three year, about, Schwegmann.

VanZandt: Three years?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Oh, OK. So when did you start shrimping? Do you remember what year?

Huynh: About 1983.

VanZandt: About 1983.

Huynh: From 1986, I go to the shrimp boat. And after 1986, I go to tuna boat.

VanZandt: Then to tuna. So tell me first about shrimping, because you had fished for squid in Vietnam.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: So now you had to learn shrimping. How was that, learning shrimping?

Huynh: Different, but you go to see somebody do it, you follow. Learn from somebody.

VanZandt: Learn by watching and doing.

Huynh: Watching somebody do it and go see like that.

VanZandt: Did you like that?

Huynh: Yeah. We got good money, too.

VanZandt: Good money then.

Huynh: Um-hm. That why, that how I got money to send my mom.

VanZandt: So you were sending money back home then?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And tell me when you first communicated with your mother. She didn't know that you left.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: When along your journey were you able to contact her and let her know that you were OK?

Huynh: When we go to United States. Send a letter.

VanZandt: So not until you arrived here.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: You sent a letter to her.

Huynh: Um-hm. No phone. That time we had no cell phone, no phone, nothing. Just send a letter.

VanZandt: Right. Write a real, old-fashioned letter. Did you hear back from her by letter?

Huynh: Yeah. But long time, you know. About one month or two months, I got one letter sending.

VanZandt: So she didn't know about your father then?

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: Until you got here to America.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: And how was your family doing? Did she tell you what things were like, after you left, at home?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) That time, my mom got nothing.

Nguyen: He said that she said it was very—they were suffering a lot.

VanZandt: So it was very good that you could help and send money to your family.

Huynh: That time when I still under eighteen, I got no money, too, when I go to United States. But I still got no money because I didn't want(?) nothing for. When I still—

VanZandt: Schwegmann's didn't pay.

Huynh: No. After I'm over eighteen, I work for Schwegmann, but not enough money. I just spend—I don't spend nothing (inaudible).

VanZandt: Not enough left over.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: When you started shrimping, though, then you had money to send home?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Good. And you shrimped. And then tell me about changing to tuna. Why did you leave shrimping and start fishing for tuna?

(End of digital track one of two. Beginning of digital track two of two.)

VanZandt: Testing, testing, testing. OK, good. So you said there was more opportunity to fish for tuna than shrimp at that time.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: And what year did you start fishing for tuna?

Huynh: Nineteen eighty-six.

VanZandt: Eighty-six you did.

Huynh: Um-hm. I change to the tuna boat.

VanZandt: And were you a deckhand?

Huynh: Yeah, a deckhand, and I work about two years, then my neighbor from Vietnam, they got a boat. They call me for coming to captain.

VanZandt: To go help them.

Huynh: Captain.

VanZandt: Oh, to be captain, OK. Wow! So you became the captain, after two years, of that boat.

Huynh: Yeah, um-hm.

VanZandt: What was the name of the boat?

Huynh: Kim Thanh, K-I-M, T-H-A-N-H.

Nguyen: A-N-H.

VanZandt: (writing) A-N-H. *Kim Thanh* was the name of your boat.

Huynh: My boat name, *Kim Thanh II*.

VanZandt: Two.

Huynh: It's my boat name. This the name for—

VanZandt: The boat you used to—

Huynh: For other people.

VanZandt: And now the boat that you fish from is *Kim Thanh II*.

Huynh: Yes.

VanZandt: OK. And that's your own boat, that you own.

Huynh: Um-hm. I own that boat about 1995.

VanZandt: Ninety-five, OK.

Nguyen: I think at that time he was just a captain, and then in 1995—

Huynh: Then I work the *Kim Thanh* about eight year. Then I got money to buy this boat.

VanZandt: So you saved hard to buy your own boat?

Huynh: Um-hm. Gave somebody money and buy the boat.

VanZandt: That must have felt good. (both laugh) To be your own boss. So how many people work for you now on your—

Huynh: Four.

VanZandt: Four people, OK. Vietnamese?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Friends?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Have you worked with them a long time?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: They know what they're doing.

Huynh: Yeah. They work with me from the *Kim Thanh* to now. (laughs)

VanZandt: Wow. That's great. Well, tell me—1995 until now. Tell me about how the tuna and the industry has been from 1995 to now. We had [Hurricane] Katrina along the way, if you want to talk about what happened during Katrina to you and your business. You owned your own boat. And just how the industry's been, good or bad.

Huynh: Good or bad, right?

VanZandt: Making money, not making money.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: From 1995, the fish were very cheap.

VanZandt: Very cheap.

Huynh: Yeah, very cheap. They cost about, if you have no (inaudible), they cost about three dollars, fifty-cent for number one. At that time. For number one, and

number two about half price, something like that. Um-hm. And right now the price better because fuel, everything coming up. And before the [BP Deepwater Horizon] oil spill, they pay about six dollar for number one and three dollar for number two. (phone ringing)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: And fuel's going up.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Price to sell is going down.

Huynh: It's a good day, go cheap boat, not my boat. (laughs)

VanZandt: Well, tell me about [Hurricane] Katrina. What happened to you, just briefly, during Katrina? How did that affect your business?

Huynh: About two month, after they rebuild his business, then we go fishing, but that time it not so good.

VanZandt: Not so good.

Huynh: Everybody left, and no homes around here, and the deckhand, they go, too many, can't find nobody to go fishing for that time.

VanZandt: So you couldn't find anyone to help.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: When you were ready to go back. Did you lose your home in Katrina?

Huynh: Yes. I live in New Orleans, right here.

VanZandt: Right. And were you able to repair—

Huynh: And I live in Houma. It my place for the boat.

VanZandt: That's where your boat is, in Houma.

Huynh: Yeah. Houma (inaudible). Then about one-half year, over one year, then I rebuild my house.

VanZandt: So you lived in Houma while you were rebuilding your house.

Huynh: Um-hm. That time, my child, he go to school. In this place, got no school.

VanZandt: No school. (asking daughter) Did you go to school in Houma?

Huynh: No. That time she small.

VanZandt: Too little then, that's right. That's right because you're eight now. OK.

Huynh: Yeah. (laughs)

VanZandt: Too little, you don't remember that. Well, it will be six years this summer, since Katrina.

Huynh: Yes, um-hm.

VanZandt: And so you were not able to fish for two months, and then the fishing wasn't so good after Katrina. Did it get better before the oil spill, or it's still been pretty bad since Katrina?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said it was, you know, some slim summers before Katrina. (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He's, a little bit less.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said he made a lot less money that year.

VanZandt: Right. Did you receive any help after Hurricane Katrina from the government or anyone else, any help?

Huynh: Yeah. They give me the mobile home, put in my home, but I don't live there because my child stay in Houma.

VanZandt: Houma. So you didn't stay in a FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] trailer?

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: And tell me, coming up to the oil spill, Mr. Huynh, what happened since April 20 last year, [2010]? The Deepwater Horizon exploded, BP oil spill. Tell me, since then, how did that affect your business?

Huynh: I don't know, but right now, the government said they test the water. Then I didn't go out. I don't know yet, but I heard somebody said sometime you fishing in not right place, they catch you, give you the ticket. (laughs) Something like that. I don't know what going on because I'm not going out yet. I don't know.

VanZandt: So you haven't been out *at all* in one year?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: No. We wait for, they—I got a call [to] check from [with] BP for cleanup, but they didn't call my boat.

VanZandt: So you thought you might be able to help with the cleanup in the Vessels of Opportunity [program]?

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Was that part of that?

Huynh: But they didn't call.

VanZandt: You never got a call.

Huynh: No. They said I got no pump for—when you caught tuna and a shrimp boat, I got a pump. Tuna boat, I got no pump, and I try to make the pump, about five thousand dollar for making the new pump, but they didn't call.

VanZandt: So a pump, he saying, that's on the boat?

Nguyen: Yeah.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. It's certain equipment to catch shrimp, I think.

Huynh: Um-hm. Yeah, the pump.

VanZandt: And they said that's what they needed, a boat with a pump.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. Since you didn't have a pump, they didn't call.

Nguyen: But he said he spent five thousand [dollars] to get it, but they still never called.

VanZandt: Oh, he *did* spend it? Oh, my goodness. OK. So you bought the equipment thinking you would get called.

Huynh: Yeah. I buy equipment, then call the welder to weld it, the pump, but they didn't call.

VanZandt: So tell me what you have received, if anything, from BP or the Gulf Coast Claims Fund. Have you received any kind of help, filed a claim?

Huynh: Yes.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Twenty-three.

Nguyen: Twenty-three? (speaking Vietnamese).

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Twenty-three thousand [dollars] so far.

VanZandt: From BP? That was before the Gulf Coast Claims Fund?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. Yeah.

VanZandt: OK, but nothing after that?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Um-hm.

Nguyen: About seventy thousand from GCCF.

VanZandt: So you said that next week you're finally going back out fishing for tuna. Next week?

Huynh: Yes. That why I got to spend a lot for my boat, our money. Then we go. (laughs) One year we go to shipyard and rebuild the engine.

VanZandt: Ah, so you've had the engine rebuilt?

Huynh: Um-hm. That's true. We be a long time in automotive rebuilding machine and clean up and go to the shipyard, (inaudible) spend lots for our motor, everything ready go out.

Nguyen: He had to spend a lot.

VanZandt: So you're spending a lot to get it ready.

Huynh: About eighty thousand dollar.

VanZandt: Wow. And that's not even fuel? OK. So why now? Why are you deciding to go out now? Have you heard that there are some tuna out there? That it's a good time now?

Huynh: No. I try to go out. I don't know about tuna.

VanZandt: So you don't know.

Huynh: I don't know.

VanZandt: But you're going to take the risk and go out and see.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: Do you know other fishermen who've been out lately?

Huynh: No. Nobody. The first time I go; they wait for me. (laughs)

VanZandt: I was just going to say. You're going to blaze the trail.

Huynh: Everybody say [they] wait for me.

VanZandt: They wait for you and see what happens.

Huynh: Yeah. The first trip we go, [see] what happen.

VanZandt: What do you like about fishing for tuna, about being out on the ocean? Just tell me about what the fishing life means to you.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: It is my life. We like it. (laughs)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Because when I go to the land, I don't know what I doing.

VanZandt: You don't know what else you would do.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: You've done it all your life.

Huynh: Um-hm.

VanZandt: It's in your blood. (laughs)

Huynh: I do it for all my life, then when I retire. (laughs)

VanZandt: Well, are you thinking about any other kind of work?

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: Or you just want to stick it out?

Huynh: Because I own the boat, I can't leave it.

VanZandt: And what about your children? Is your son—does he go with you?

Huynh: No.

VanZandt: Would you like to teach him how to fish, or no?

Huynh: One time I ask him about, “What you do?” And, “When you go to college?” He say, “Go to help Daddy.” I say, “No, man. Don’t do my job.” (laughs)

VanZandt: (laughs) So he wanted to help.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: You said no?

Huynh: I said no.

VanZandt: What do you hope for your children? What would you like to see them doing?

Huynh: I don’t know what they do after they go college, but no fishing. (laughs)

VanZandt: Anything but fishing. Why?

Huynh: No fishing.

VanZandt: Why?

Huynh: Because it too rough. I still young when I go fish. I know. What they can do later. You know when I go about two hundred mile from—not in here. About one day. Sometime thirty-six hour from go to the place for fishing. Sometime go from (inaudible). Sometime they can’t get it.

VanZandt: It’s a hard, hard way to make a living.

Huynh: Yeah, hard work. Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. What have you seen out there? Did you go out at all after the spill?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: So you haven’t (phone ringing) seen any oil? (brief interruption) OK. Can you tell me just a little bit—for people who don’t know what it’s like to go fishing for tuna—how do you go about finding where the tuna are? When you go out next week, how will you know where to go?

Huynh: I try to go to the west, but I don’t know.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Better go to the west, but before the spill, I go to the west, [and] they got no fish. That the first time when they tried it, yeah.

VanZandt: So even before the spill, no fish?

Huynh: I don't know whether it's oil spill. I go to the west in Texas. Then when the way I go, coming home, my wife say the platform blow up. I said, "No. I don't know." (laughs)

VanZandt: She heard.

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: When you came back from Texas.

Huynh: She say she heard the news.

VanZandt: And you didn't know.

Huynh: I don't know. (laughs) When I get home, I call my wife, say, the platform, they blow up. I didn't know.

VanZandt: What did you think, right then? What did you think?

Huynh: Far away from me. The platform from south of Louisiana. And I go to the west.

VanZandt: So you were far away from where it happened.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Good.

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) When we come to the land and heard somebody say. That why I can't go out.

VanZandt: What did you think when you first heard the news?

Huynh: Everybody, that time, we don't know what going on after that.

Nguyen: He said that he didn't know how big it would be.

Huynh: Then that time, the Coast Guard, they stop everybody; don't let them go out, you know. Then BP, they said they pay emergency [money].

VanZandt: Emergency fund?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: So you got some emergency money?

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: But it sounds like a very confusing time.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: You didn't know *when* you would be able to go back out.

Huynh: Yeah because nobody know about when we go back out. And after that, I heard somebody say they test the water; they test everything. We can go out. If we go out—I don't know what they close. Sometime they close that place. And next day they close that place. If we end up there, we get a big ticket.

VanZandt: Explain the ticket, would you? Khai, do you know much about that? If he could, explain for people who don't know what—I assume he means a trip ticket? Or is he talking about he would be fined?

Nguyen: No. He's talking about a fine.

VanZandt: A ticket for going out, yeah.

Nguyen: A fine, yeah, by Coast Guard.

Huynh: Coast Guard.

Nguyen: Yeah, Coast Guard.

VanZandt: So there was confusion because they would close waters here. The next day maybe close waters over here.

Huynh: Yeah. They move. The oil spill, the oil, they move it. When they get the North wind, they move out. (laughs) We have the South wind, they move in. (laughs)

VanZandt: So you would risk getting a ticket, going in.

Huynh: Yeah, if you don't know when they close. The Coast Guard still give you a ticket.

VanZandt: And after they turned off, they finally shut down the spill, and the oil stopped, then what?

Huynh: Then they (inaudible) they test the water, they test the fish, can't nobody work. They don't let nobody go now.

VanZandt: They still wouldn't let—they were testing the fish, testing the waters to see. And after a while, they reopened the waters. The waters have been opened, but still fishermen aren't going out.

Huynh: Yeah.

VanZandt: Why is that?

Huynh: Well, when we go, start out, we spend a lot of money, you know. When they catch the fish, come in the land [to] sell, somebody say, "Oh, the fish no good." We throw all away. (laughs) Whole payday(?). (laughs)

VanZandt: OK. So not worth going out, taking the risk.

Huynh: Yeah. We worry.

VanZandt: You worry. Well, what—

Huynh: But I go this time, I go (inaudible) they said (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Oh. He said—

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said this time the government will send someone to test the fish on the boat. (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Um-hm.

Nguyen: On the boat with him. (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He said, this is regular. This is normal.

Huynh: Normal.

Nguyen: It's not just because of the oil spill.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese) the fishery.

Nguyen: Some fishery would send someone. (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: Um-hm.

Nguyen: Just to check on the fish.

Huynh: They go every year. When I go fishing, they go. One year they pick up on the boat, one people(?). But on tuna, bluefin season, about on March through June, they go straight three months.

VanZandt: March to June. And what is your season, fishing for tuna? When do you go?

Huynh: We go whole year.

VanZandt: All year round.

Huynh: Yeah, all year.

VanZandt: So a chance to make more money than shrimping.

Huynh: No, not now. Before. Now, shrimping better.

VanZandt: Ah. Why is shrimping better now?

Huynh: Before got nobody fishing, not too much people fishing, you know. That why a lot of fish. But right now hard to find fish.

VanZandt: It's hard to find the fish.

Huynh: Before, you put one set, you can get about a hundred fish. Right now, two, three fish. (laughs)

VanZandt: Well, I hope you get a hundred next week. (laughter)

Huynh: I hope so.

VanZandt: I hope so. Well, is there anything that you wish had been done differently after the spill? Is there any way that they could have, the government, BP, Ken Feinberg could have done things better, differently?

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. He was just saying that he was just (inaudible; Mr. Huynh begins speaking).

Huynh: Three month—

Nguyen: —that a response (inaudible; speaking simultaneously).

Huynh: [Kenneth] Feinberg say three month, pay for three month, a quarter, but I do about four, six month already, and they send for nothing.

Nguyen: Yeah. He said the time, the waiting time on interim payments, he's frustrated with that.

VanZandt: Takes too long. And what about the future?

Huynh: Well, I don't know about future. Who know the future? (laughs) We don't know.

VanZandt: So it's hard to plan.

Huynh: That why I try to get the first time I go fishing, [to see] how going on.

VanZandt: Well, is there anything else that you would like for people to know about what's happened, or the fishing community, the pain that they're going through, challenges? Anything else that I haven't asked that you would like to share?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: He's saying this whole year, their boats have been not—they haven't been able to fish, but they still had to pay for maintenance and repairs and everything. And the money that BP and GCCF has given them, it's all gone to doing that, what they normally have done anyway and for feeding the family. And now, they don't have any money anymore. And they have to risk it now, pretty much. And so it's hard.

VanZandt: So you've already been through the money you've received. And now you don't know—

Huynh: I spend all that, yeah.

VanZandt: —what will happen in the future.

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, he's saying they're waiting on the interim payment, (phone ringing) but it's not coming, so they had to at least try to go and maybe—(brief interruption)

VanZandt: OK, Khai. Can you just tell me what he just said?

Nguyen: He was just saying that they've been waiting on, these fishermen have been waiting on interim payments, but none of them have been receiving anything. So in order to survive, they have to at least try, even though sometimes, they would be risking a lot because, you know, if you don't find any fish, the expenses are still there.

VanZandt: And why are people not receiving interim payments?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: What reasoning is he given?

Huynh: We don't know. We call (speaking Vietnamese).

Nguyen: He saying every time they call, they always say just wait for it.

Huynh: Wait, wait. (chuckles)

VanZandt: Like, "It's coming"?

Huynh: (frustrated laugh)

VanZandt: Is that what you-all [Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation] have experienced here, trying to help?

Nguyen: Yeah. Well, my experience is their calculations are saying that they've given enough for the—you know, in the previous year. And so like the first three months I haven't seen anyone get any money. And so most of them are getting zero. And so like it's forcing a lot of hands.

VanZandt: The first three months of this year [2011]?

Nguyen: Yeah.

VanZandt: So January, February, March.

Nguyen: Um-hm.

VanZandt: So last year they received money, but now—

Nguyen: Yeah. Last year's money, I'm assuming, people used it to take care of their expenses and their family, which was for last year. But for this year, I haven't seen anyone receive any interim payments for the few months of this—like five months so far, already, so.

VanZandt: OK. Well, is there any other training that you've received for any other kind of occupation? Is that of interest to you to do anything else?

Nguyen: (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: No.

Nguyen: No. (speaking Vietnamese)

Huynh: (speaking Vietnamese)

Nguyen: Yeah. Because he's saying he can't—

Huynh: I got the boat. Can't do nothing for else.

Nguyen: (inaudible; speaking simultaneously) the boat.

Huynh: Can't leave it.

VanZandt: Well, you're very good at what you do, obviously. So I wish for you the best next week. I'll be curious to hear what happens.

Huynh: Thank you. (laughs)

VanZandt: Thank you so much for sharing your story.

Huynh: All right.

(end of interview)