

**ROCKY MAGWOOD**  
**Magwood Shrimp, Shem Creek, Mt. Pleasant, SC**

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Location: Magwood Boat, Mt. Pleasant, SC  
Interviewer: Sara Wood  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: One hour, seven minutes  
Project: Lowcountry Maritime

**[Begin Rocky Magwood Interview]**

**00:00:00**

**Sara Wood:** So it is Sunday, September 14, 2014. I'm sitting out here with Mr. Rocky Magwood. We're on Shem Creek in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina and we're on the Winds of Fortune. I'm so sorry, I saw it and you told me that on the phone and I keep—sorry, the Winds of Fortune. So Rocky I'm wondering if you'd be so kind as to say hello, introduce yourself, tell me who you are and—and where we are right now.

**00:00:27**

**Rocky Magwood:** Hello, my name is Rocky Magwood. We're at the Winds of Fortune on the back deck in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina on Shem Creek. And we're just going to do some stories I guess.

**00:00:40**

**Sara Wood:** Can you start Rocky by telling me where you grew up and what it was like?

**00:00:44**

**Rocky Magwood:** I grew up in Mount Pleasant when it was a small town. **[Laughs]** It was always fun, it was a great, great learning experience. I've always been in the water ever since I was a little kid. I've been riding on a boat since I was six weeks old. I've been riding on a shrimp boat with my dad and everybody tells me stories about it. They said whenever I'd go shrimping some of these guys, like the guy that owns the boat on the outside he worked for my dad and he'd tell me a story and they'd always kid me talking about me growing up in a shrimp box

‘cause my dad took me and put me in a shrimp box on the bunk of the shrimp boat and made sure I wouldn’t crawl out. That was my crib. I mean that’s—I grew up in a shrimp box and it was—I guess that’s where I fell in love with shrimping because I don’t have no choice. I’m—I’ve been here my whole life. And I don’t—I don’t regret it all. I just miss the good times. And all my friends that’s been around for years, you see all your friends leave, it’s bad. You know you used to—whenever I was growing up when I first started dragging in Dynamite Hole I can remember I was about thirteen years old, thirteen or fourteen in the summer time, you know summer break. I’d take my dad’s boat and go run the boat. And you’d go dragging in Dynamite Hole, well dragging around in a spot right now you can go dragging and it’s not—it’s not complicated to me no more.

**00:02:02**

But whenever you’re standing behind a wheel of a seventy-three-foot shrimp boat and you’re only about 125 to 140 pounds standing behind that wheel and you’re just a kid and you got people back there working for you that’s older and you look around and everywhere you look there’s boats seventy, eighty boats around you dragging. And sometimes it would be more than that in these spots. And they’re tight little spots and dragging in little cubbies, anybody that’s ever drug that they’ll tell you that back in the day it was a dangerous spot to drag ‘cause people would run over each other.

**00:02:34**

And nowadays it’s sad, you go out there and you might see one boat dragging. And it’s crazy to think that places like my granddad said that’s how it was when he was growing up. But it’s crazy how things go back to the way they were before shrimping ever was you know and my

granddad would tell stories about the old days and not seeing anybody ever around and how nervous it was but you didn't care 'cause you didn't know no different. Now you got boats all around. When somebody breaks down somebody comes and gets you.

**00:03:03**

Well when I was growing up that was no problem 'cause I was one of them ones that always didn't know really what I was doing but I towed people in and people towed me in, you know that's the brotherhood of shrimping you know. It's fishermen, we all take care of each other, we don't need no Sea Tow or Boat US even though they're great people and they will help you but you got fellow fishermen and they help each other. And it's just a cool thing that you grew up doing. And I've had an outboard since I was about six years old and my mom always told my dad that I couldn't go getting a boat. I had to stay in front of the bridge on Shem Creek. I grew up on it and it's about a half a mile down the river from where we're at right now. And my grandparents' house and my dad bought me a little boat and my mom—mom and dad were divorced and dad told me he said just keep the life jacket in the boat. You didn't have to wear it. It didn't look cool. Dad knew what he was talking about. But I never needed it, but looking back on it I probably should have been wearing it as crazy as I was 'cause I never listened to mom. Who listens to mom, and dad telling you don't go past the bridge? I'd always come down here and see what the guys was doing working on the shrimp boats, you know see who comes in.

**00:04:10**

I can remember just being a young kid you know everybody wanting to know what you doing for after school you know on Friday? I said I'm going to go see my dad. He's coming in from shrimping and hope to God I get to go shrimping on the weekends, you know. Every day

off I was down here, skipped school to go shrimping. I mean people—people skip schools for a lot of crazy things. Who in the world wants to go do a hard job? Go skip school to go hang out with guys on a boat but I was making more money. I can remember when I was in the sixth grade my teacher told me, I came to school with a paycheck off the boat. It was the first time my dad ever paid me and I had to beat a guy picking shrimp up. He told me he's an experienced guy—six years old. I'm on the back deck and I'm picking up shrimp faster than he was and in sixth grade—excuse me—and I was back there picking up shrimp with him and I was beating him. And that was the motto, I come to school that next week. We got paid on Thursdays. I come to school on a Thursday afternoon—well Friday morning I came to school and I told the teacher I couldn't stick around for after school. I had to get to—go to the bank to cash my check. And she's like you don't have no check—sixth grade. My check was \$750 for two days when I was in sixth grade.

**00:05:22**

I worked two days and my teacher told me I made more than she makes all week and I only worked two days. It didn't take me long to figure out where I was going. I was going on a shrimp boat and career day in school I can still remember telling my guidance counselor on career day. He said well what are you—what do you want to do when you grow up? I said I'm going to be a shrimp boat captain. I'm going to be just like my dad. And that's where I went you know and I ain't never looked back. Nowadays I am a licensed captain, I got my 100-ton license and you look back on it and you know I never thought I'd ever need it, but this past year—year I just started using it. And it's crazy to think that I'm doing that instead of what I love to do. I love to shrimp. I mean shrimping is in my blood, it's no different. It's just crazy.

**00:06:11**

And like a—like my girlfriend and my friend were telling me yesterday and I told them I was going to be talking to you and I said, “I got to go do these stories.” And she said, “Well you’re not a shrimper no more.” I said, “I’ll always be a shrimper. It don’t matter.” I said, “I’ll always be.” It’s something that you don’t forget, something you can’t walk away from. If it’s really in your blood you can’t walk away. And a lot of people say I’m cursed. I’m not cursed. It’s just the way of life. I don’t care. What’s money? **[Laughs]** It’s just a fun thing.

**00:06:44**

But it’s crazy, you know I don’t ever want anybody to think that I’ve deserted anybody that’s tried to help me or taught me anything. I don’t want them to think that I’ve lost respect on where I came from ‘cause I’m not. I’m a good fishermen, always will be and I’ll be back shrimping one day. I just got to back up and start over. I lost my boat. We’ll go back together and I don’t know how many people has ever worked with family but family is hard to work for ‘cause they expect so much more out of you. **[Laughs]**

**00:07:17**

**Sara Wood:** I’m going to have you pause just for a second and let that boat go by but I wanted to ask you—have some questions or just ask you about that, but before I forget Rocky will you tell me the name of your parents—your parents’ names for the record?

**00:07:28**

**Rocky Magwood:** Clarence Magwood is my dad and his nickname was Skipper, like my real name is Clarence. I'm the fourth generation commercial fisherman. And my mom's name is Joan. And they—my mom I think she regrets letting me grow up on a shrimp boat sometimes because I always come back to it and she can't stand it you know. No matter how long I leave—I've left for a year and went dredging and as soon as I find me a boat I go buy it or do whatever I got to do to get back on the boat. But I've always had a short change because I've got on wore out boats 'cause I never had enough money to own a—a boat that was in real good shape you know. And those are real hard to come by, a boat that's in good shape anyway. You got to have money from somewhere else before you can have you a real nice boat unless you, you know you're fortunate and made a lot of money one day in shrimping and didn't have a big family like our family. We just had to hold onto our—taxes killed us but when you—you take everything that you do family-wise and you fight—like this boat that we're sitting on I spent, one year I spent every holiday on this boat. I never got off. I stayed sixty-some days. We did turtling. We did back-to-back, we went and did sixty days back-to-back in the ocean and we'd come in ten days and get fuel and go back—right back out. I never stepped off the boat. As close as I got to the dock was the man handed me the fuel hose and we'd put fuel on and we'd go right back and water and groceries. My uncle would go get the groceries and I'd turn the boat around. By the time he got back with the groceries, we'd put the groceries on and we'd get—we'd leave. And we were saving turtles for the dredge.

**00:09:12**

And when you can leave everything that you know and somebody says well—the other day I got a question one day, the lady asked me. She said you know they were telling us about

you know new captains and all that on the boat, on the tour boat that I run and they said well you're a new captain. I don't feel very safe with that. I said well you should feel very safe because I spent more time on the ocean than I have on land. I've been on the water more than I ever have on land. And that's not—I'm not putting no wives' tale to that, I'd rather be in the ocean than be on land any day.

**00:09:49**

Whenever we were growing up in Mount Pleasant everybody said oh, well think about being a redneck. You know people say you're from the country or this or that or you're from the City of Mount Pleasant you know. That was the big thing around where we'd grow up. And you go to [Inaudible] that was the country or go to McClellanville and that's—that's country. Well I grew up in the city, the heart of Mount Pleasant. One block dead center in the middle of it but I was just as redneck as the rest of them because I grew up on the boat with a bunch of guys, I didn't grow up in the city. I grew up—my play time was on the water. I never got to play—it was like being in the field out in the country, so—. **[Laughs]** It—it was a fun life to grow up. I don't regret it at all. I wish my kids could grow up that way and have all of what I had. I feel like I was so rich and blessed. You know anything I wanted to do when I was a kid I got to do it—anything. But all I ever wanted to do was go shrimping so it didn't bother me. And it's—it's something, it's crazy when you go shrimping and it's something when shrimp land back here on this deck. It excites you. You can't explain it. When you know you're doing—you know you're doing good and you're making money there's nothing like it. When everything is working the way it's supposed to it's no better feeling in the world. There's no—there's no alcohol, there's no—nobody or nothing that can make you feel that way.



**00:11:16**

And I mean then when you know that you drag in places that a lot of people don't drag like the ship channel and things like that a lot of people don't like to drag around the ships and stuff. They say they don't—you know I don't really know why they don't 'cause that's all—I love dragging there. That's one of my favorite places to drag, but it gives me—it gives me an—I don't sit in a chair. I call it—I'm not an up and down dragger, I drag in dangerous bottoms.

*[Laughs]* And that's—I love it.

**00:11:41**

**Sara Wood:** Can you explain that because I really don't know—I've never been out on a shrimp boat and worked a shrimp boat. I don't know how it works so when you're talking about dragging dangerous bottoms what do you mean by that?

**00:11:50**

**Rocky Magwood:** When you're dragging in dangerous spots it's where there's a lot of hangs and stuff, rocks, stuff that will tear your nets up and you don't—you can't sit down much in your chair. It keeps you up on your toes and you got to drag and when you're passing ships a ship might be 50-feet away from you and you got the nets in the water. And it's—that's a—you wish they'd hurry up and get by you sometimes if the weather don't—if it's rough or whatever. You don't want nothing to break while they're going by you, 'cause you can all of the sudden be in their way and they're not going to stop. And I've—I've had a boat run out of fuel in front of one. I've—with the fuel filter stopped up and shut the motor off right in front of them. I had to get my uncle to come put a line on me. We had about fifteen minutes. I was in the engine room while the ship passed. I never even heard the ship go by but we're talking about a 1,000 to 1,200-foot ship

go by you. And I'm talking about why I'm in the engine room he—all he could have done is just—he could have run into it and I'd have never known.

**00:12:48**

But I didn't come out of the engine room. I stayed down there to get the boat to run. And a buddy of mine told me that day that worked with me, he said there's not many people that would have been doing that. I said what do you mean? He said I'd have been worried about something else. I said nah, you got to get the motor to run before you can move, so it's okay. **[Laughs]** But it's just crazy things that I've done in my life. I've been in bad situations and when you get in bad situations you just can't let the bad situations sweat. You got to just work through it.

**00:13:16**

**Sara Wood:** Can you tell me about a couple of those bad times that you remember most vividly?

**00:13:21**

**Rocky Magwood:** The most recent thing bad thing I've had was when I lost my boat. I got a phone call, been oystering all day 'cause it was a bad—bad season and I went oystering. And when I went oystering we went out there and come home and oystering is hard work around Charleston. You got to get out of the boat and pick them and walk through mud and you got to rinse them and you got to wash them and it's a long process of work.

**00:13:50**

So I was doing all that and when I was doing all the working on the boat and everything, when I went down that morning it was supposed to be one of the coldest days we had and I went down there and cranked the boat up that—early that morning and had a guy living on the boat. And I put the boat in gear and got in the engine room to get hot so it would stay—stay warm ‘cause you don’t put antifreeze in our boats. We just let the temperature or whatever and you don’t want to lose—you know you don’t want to hurt your motors or anything. So we shut everything off and I went to go to work. When I got home about eight o’clock that night from oystering and selling my oysters and everything, well I’m sitting there with my girlfriend and the next thing I know I get a phone call at eleven o’clock at night. And I just got in bed. “Well, Rocky you need to get down here. Your boat looks like it’s taking on water, the high water alarm is on.” Well it takes me fifteen minutes to drive from my house to here. And in fifteen minutes by the time I got here the water was halfway up my motor.

**00:14:50**

She was sitting at the dock and that was about the heartbreaking(est) thing ‘cause I struggled all year that year to keep my boat going and keep everything afloat and just trying to keep it all afloat you know and just floating your house bills and everything else. So I called 911 and I didn’t know what else to do. I called 911. I got a couple pumps that were going to get them going and then I got the Coast Guard on the phone. They said they couldn’t come, you know they don’t bring pumps to a boat tied to a dock. I got to call a commercial salvage company. I said okay, I said well I said I don’t think there’s going to be much need in calling anybody here shortly if somebody don’t come. I was like this—it’s midnight now. I’m just trying to get help,

you know please help me. And I don't think anybody should go through that feeling of you felt—I felt so helpless in my life that nobody at that time could help me.

**00:15:48**

The guy that owned the dock came down and another buddy of mine came down. Sea Tow I got ahold—finally got ahold of Sea Tow. They brought me some pumps. They donated the pumps to me. The guy that owned Sea Tow in Charleston I couldn't—I got to take my hat off to him and the guy that owns the Boat US Company here in Charleston. They're really—they're great, it's a great community to live in 'cause everybody will help you if they know. But you got to get in contact with the right people.

**00:16:20**

Well my boat was sinking. They got there, by the time the Sea Tow people got there he give me the pumps. By this time it's three o'clock in the morning. The water is over—over my head in the engine room and this is a seventy-eight-foot boat. This is not a sixty-foot boat.

*[Laughs]* It's twice the size of this boat. And I stood on the back deck right here with the pumps running and I watched water come up over a rail just to give you an instinct, the boat was on the bottom and water came over that while I was still standing on it. And the Coast Guard guys came down and told me that there wasn't nothing that they could do to help me. So that's a pretty bad situation and I have some pictures I'll show you of that. But it was horrifying to deal with that.

**00:17:06**

And then just some other things I've had happen. I've been behind another shrimp boat coming in here when I was young. I might have been—I'm trying to think how old I was. I was

about fifteen I guess, fifteen or sixteen. By then I quit school and started going to night school and running my dad's boat 'cause my dad passed away and I was running my dad's boat and keeping the family business going. And I was behind a guy, it was late in the evening and we was coming in and the guy's raincoat got called in the winch and it took—when he took the rope off, the outrigger was halfway up. They might not look real heavy but that's the most dangerous thing on the boat is these things, the arms. They're called outriggers. Well that little rope right there once you take that loose, if you're not prepared and holding onto that like you should sometimes people put—their feet get stuck in the—you see how it's coiled up? You—it's laying on the deck and you put your feet in that and we always—even when you take your license they tell you to stand out of the rope. Don't ever stand—put your feet in the rope. Well a lot of these guys that work on these boats are older and they think they—they—career fishermen. I've seen some of the best people die because of mistakes they've made 'cause they've been on boats their whole life 'cause they get careless. They forget. You know why do you know that? Why do you stay out of the lines? And people call me a hard captain because I—I preach that. I make people realize you've got to stay out of the ropes 'cause I seen that guy die. It took him all the way to the block up there and he hung there and it actually hung him and couldn't get him down.

**00:18:45**

And I had to be a witness when the Coast Guard come in to what happened 'cause I was behind him like right here and I could see the whole thing when it happened. And then that came about.

**00:18:59**

**Sara Wood:** And you were fifteen when that happened?

**00:19:01**

**Rocky Magwood:** Uh-hm. Then I'm trying to think of some other things. I've seen boats burn. I've went up and got people off of boats burning. You pull up and get somebody off a boat that's burning. Fire is a scary thing on a boat 'cause you don't have much time. They go—these boats go faster than anything you can imagine. Then one night talking about a fire, I just left my wife and I was going through divorce and separation anyway. And I was staying on a boat, me and a friend of mine, and we were tied up just like this. And the boat was about this size. It was the Miss Karen. It was the first fire that ever happened that I've ever seen at a dock. Well the guy was staying on this boat, my best friend's boat, come down and I worked on that boat for four years before I got my own boat. And when you get there and you smell smoke, you go looking, well the person that was with me was right behind me. I'm running around in my boxers trying to figure out what's going on and where is the smoke coming from? And I don't know what woke me up, what made me think 'cause smoke, you don't wake up for smoke, but if I wouldn't have woke up that day there would have been three of us dead, the guy that was on this boat and my boat because our boats both would have burned 'cause the smoke was going towards up there. There's a golf course across from that dock. And the smoke was going directly to the golf course and nobody was going to smell it. And then nobody would have seen the fire 'til after it was so big that they wouldn't have known that we were even on the boats 'til after they you know found out that we were on there.

**00:20:46**

And somebody tells me I saved two people's lives I said, "Nah, that's not what you call saving people's lives." I just did—just did what you had to do you know. And I—I wish there was more I could have done. I wish I could have saved my friend's boat but it was a total loss.

They had to dock it. That's a pretty bad thing when you—you're running down the dock and you're the only person. You call the fire department and they come down and they don't know nothing about fighting a fire on a shrimp boat. They don't want to give you a hose so they're just putting water on the topside and about to sink the boat. And that's the problem is the Fire Departments you got boats everywhere, we need—we need firemen to learn on these kinds of boats and on other boats, yachts just to get a basic—all the engine rooms on these boats are about basically laid out the same but they're a bomb 'cause like this boat right here holds 10,000 gallons of fuel if it's loaded. But the bad thing is to make the bomb is when the tanks are empty. If they were full all it would be is a big fire. When a tank is empty it's a bomb. **[Laughs]** So I've—I've seen some pretty bad things, but you got to think I've been fishing twenty—twenty-some years now. I've been running—I've been running a boat twenty years.

**00:22:00**

On my—whenever I did my sea school test the man said it should be times in people that should be grandfathered in to get your license. I said well I been running a boat all my life and the people at school knew that. And said I don't understand why you got to come in here. I said well it's rules is rules, you got to come in here and take this test. So after almost eighteen years of—I went back and did eighteen years—it was nineteen years with the research to be figure out how long I been running boats legally on paper. I was in the state of Charleston in Mount Pleasant and the whole state of South Carolina I was the youngest captain that's ever been licensed to have a license in the state of South Carolina. And I still hold that I think. That's a pretty cool thing to say that my granddad made sure I could get my license when I was running a boat. My granddad was kind of like the—I don't know, when you look back at it and you look at some of the records and things of my grandfather, my grandfather was a big person in this town.

I mean you could do—you can go a lot of places—I've been all over, I've went to—over on the Gulf Coast before, tied up at a dock with—our color scheme is orange, green, and white, and when these boats come in there and they tie up there there's nobody else that has the same paint scheme as us and they know it's the Magwood fleet.

**00:23:15**

Whenever I was growing up I couldn't get away from nobody, everybody knew us. It didn't matter where we tied a boat up. I been to Key West, go and walk up the dock. Hey how you doing, you must be a Magwood, you know. It was just [*Laughs*]*—*it was like almost being a curse but you didn't know back then that it was a great thing to be known like that and be known because I can say honestly I've never been told that I couldn't tie up at somebody's dock when I was growing up. Anybody's dock that I've ever wanted to go to or tie up at all I had to do was walk out there and tell them who I am and tell them who I know and I could tie my boat up at their place.

**00:23:46**

**Sara Wood:** Rocky do you know why the Magwood family, your family chose the orange, green, and white scheme? Do you know where that came from?

**00:23:53**

**Rocky Magwood:** Some of it has to do with our—the—what is it called, the—the shield.



**00:24:01**

**Sara Wood:** Oh like the coat of arms?

**00:24:02**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah, the coat of armor, yeah. It's from our family's shield, so—. And it comes off—off of that. And my grandparents were very old-school.

**00:24:16**

**Sara Wood:** What are their names?

**00:24:16**

**Rocky Magwood:** Junior Magwood was my granddad and his name was Clarence but everybody called him Junior Magwood and Iva was my grandmother. And she had a boat named after her. It was the *Miss Iva* and my granddad named all our boats—was named after one of us, after somebody in the family when he was buying the boats. And the first—my granddad was the only person to ever build a shrimp boat on Shem Creek. And he built the *Skipper Wayne* and that was named after my dad and Wayne and he built that boat right up the creek here. And I have some pictures I'll show you inside, but she was this big and she's still floating. She's in the Gulf right now. She got sold off. We're trying to get her back. Maybe one day we can but it's a cool thing.

**00:25:04**

**Sara Wood:** Rocky can you talk and I don't know if we're getting—are we going to get rained on do you think or—?

**00:25:09**

**Rocky Magwood:** No, if we—

**00:25:10**

**Sara Wood:** ‘Cause I don’t really feel it yet but—

**00:25:13**

**Rocky Magwood:** It’s just kind of moving around. It’s only supposed to be a slight chance, but the boat is open to where we can go inside.

**00:25:18**

**Sara Wood:** Are you good right now?

**00:25:20**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah, I’m fine.

**00:25:20**

**Sara Wood:** If it starts pouring we can probably—

**00:25:22**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah, yeah.

**00:25:23**

**Sara Wood:** Can you tell me about the Magwood family and just y'all are so well known here for—?

**00:25:31**

**Rocky Magwood:** Because we—I guess it’s because of who my grandfather was and how well—you know my granddad went to school at Murray and Murray was a vocational school down in Charleston and everybody that was anybody went to school there. I mean there’s some big name people that went to school there. My granddad knew—my grandmother and grandfather ate at the White House back in the ‘80s. I can't remember the year, you know the dates but I know my uncle has got it somewhere written down or something. You know but there’s—there’s actually where they ate at the table. My granddad went to school with the Governor of the State of South Carolina at one time, Jim Edwards. They were great friends. And when you got pull like that and you—my granddad was very like how we’re doing right now. My granddad and my uncle they’ve all—we’ve all had to fill these shoes of—not many people want to talk politics you know. Everybody wants something to change but don’t want to do nothing about it. You know you want help but you—you’re scared to ask for it.

**00:26:34**

You know you’re scared of what the people are going to do. Well you got to take the good and the bad. You just got to run with it and go with it and see where it goes. And my granddad instilled a lot of that in me and my uncle, you know I’ve met a lot of great people and there’s a lot of trade—everybody loves to eat shrimp. If people don’t even eat seafood will tell you oh, well they smell good cooking. You know oh well my mom eats shrimp or something like that, somewhere down the line you can still get into them even if they don’t eat shrimp. You can still pass it onto them and say hey, well let’s do some bartering you know. And it’s still a lot of town—things in this town that you can still—you wouldn’t believe that you can get done with shrimp.

**00:27:13**

I mean you can go get you a few pounds of shrimp and you can go—you can go get about anything you want. I had a friend of mine tell me one time, he owns the junkyard here in town, one of the biggest ones in Charleston and it's Charleston Steel. And he told me, he said we'd love to see your granddad come, but we'd hate to see him leave. When he'd leave he'd take more—he'd bring 100 pounds of shrimp over there to give to everybody but he would leave with five times worth what the shrimp was worth in metal 'cause he had—at one time he had nine boats. So he'd go over there and get all the metal but he'd take the shrimp over there and give the shrimp to them and just keep getting metal or whatever he wanted. And any time he needed something that's how he did it.

**00:27:51**

The man that owns Southern Lumber here in Charleston, that's a big ole family here in Charleston, the Albright(s), if you need anything for these old houses or anything that's who you go to, you know special woods. Well you can go there, still today I can go there and give them shrimp and I can still do that but my granddad went to school with that man. And his son is running it now and it's crazy that I can still go over there and we can still do the barter system. And they know that things is tight and when things is tight—John Royal at our hardware store, they know what shrimping means to this community. I mean there's a lot of people that know it's not just—it's not just the shrimp or it's not just the money. It's—it's the people that we are.

**00:28:33**

Whenever you meet a fisherman, fisherman has gotten a bad rap for many a years of drugs and whatever you want to call it. Of course there's drugs around it. But it's drugs at every

job. And everybody has been blind to the fact ‘til now you know because you used to just see fishermen are always dirty, this and that. This is a dirty job, this is not a clean place to work. So and I mean why are you going to wear good clothes down here because right now I got good clothes on but I’ve been on this boat and you can look at my shorts. I’ve been on this boat an hour and I got dirt on me. But hey that’s part of coming here. My granddad would always tell my mom [Laughs] and the funny thing is—is like going to the store and stuff, my granddad would always tell my grandmama, she’d buy me clothes for school or whatever and I can still remember this. I’d come home dirty with good clothes and come home—‘cause I wouldn’t go home first. I went to [Maltry] Middle School. It’s three blocks from here. And my house was only a block from the school, right here on the creek at my grandparents.

**00:29:32**

Well I’m supposed to go home and change before I come here. Oh well something ran late or I found out that my dad was in ‘cause I seen the truck go by or something. You know somehow I knew. Well or I’d see a crewman go down—down the road and I’d know all our family trucks ‘cause this town wasn’t that big back then. Well, you’d see somebody and they’d say oh yeah, your dad is in. Well, I’d run down to the boat and ride my bike to the boat. I would never—it wasn’t going home and changing first. I wanted to come down here and see how good he did shrimping or see what everybody is doing and hang out on the boat, do what the grownups is doing. I didn’t want to be a kid. You know and now I want to be a kid, so it’s crazy. The older I get I don’t want to grow out of that stage I was then, you know ‘cause it was so much fun. I mean you got to think at one time in that parking lot my grandmother and my granddad would have 50—60 people down here working. That was my family, they were all—these people were close to me. And that’s what shrimping and what my granddad did. He fed all these people’s

families through the winter. Yeah, he might have not given them much but he gave them enough to get by—\$150 a week you know and they could come down here and work, but my granddad would get you the work but he would feed you a lunch and it would be my grandmother's cooking. My grandma had big ole pots cooking on the stove, a wood burning stove, some of the best food I've ever eaten was on a wood burning stove. I mean I can remember all those—going—my family owns Little Bulls Island. We go to Little—Little Bulls Island and we go there and pick oysters and do all that and I mean you—you just come back to—we weren't never scared of hard work. We always worked hard. And that's—I think that's the main thing the Magwood(s) stand for. No matter how or whatever gets us, nobody can ever say that we don't work hard. Nobody can ever say that we don't—we don't put 110-percent into whatever we're doing.

**00:31:23**

Right or wrong we're going to do it 100 percent. We're going to try hard and we're going—we're stubborn I guess and that's who we've gotten to meet good people and I mean it's great people in this state. I mean it's—all the people just like you coming down, I mean it's—you meet great people 'cause you're—when you're a great person you meet great people. And that's just a thing my granddad always said. And the funny thing is when I had *The Carolina* my granddad always told me when I was a kid to always keep the boat clean. Well my crew never figured—never could figure out why I was so particular, like this boat is trashed right now 'cause it's been sitting here for almost two weeks by—with nobody touching it. But whenever you grow up the way I did you don't ever—know who is going to walk down the dock. You don't know if you're going to meet a newscaster that day, you don't even know—the President might come walk down here and want to talk.

**00:32:14**

I mean I've had senators here in our parking lot and so when I had my boat we scrubbed it twice a day and people said why do we keep it so clean? I said when people come up here my boat is me. I'm a clean person and I want people to know that they can buy shrimp and I want them to come down here and get on my boat and they're welcome to come on this boat and do anything they want—hang out and chill out. That's how I made so many great friends. I mean I got people that I've met years ago that will come down and tell you just from buying shrimp from me. And they call me still to today when you going back shrimping? They know me. They know what I'm going to do. You know where—where is your next boat coming from? I mean I got on Facebook right now, my sister says I ain't got but 500 friends on Facebook. I got about 1,500. You know on Magwood, Team Magwood there's 10,000. That's our—you know that's people following us you know and you get this and people are like wow. You know and to me it's just we got a great name and great people and you meet great people in between from everywhere. I mean I've met people that walk down the dock and say hey I want to look at a shrimp boat. You don't know where them people are from when they get here, I do when they leave. They could be from wherever but they're my friend when they leave here. I've never took one person shrimping with me that did not want to go back again.

**00:33:33**

**Sara Wood:** Why do you—why is that? And I know that you've really—you've been talking a lot about this but I've never been on a shrimp boat and I feel like there's something that happens out there that makes you not want to give it up or it's the one thing that you want to do.

**00:33:49**

**Rocky Magwood:** It's—it's so—it's hard to explain but if I took you, you'd understand. You know what I mean? If I cranked this boat up at 4 o'clock in the morning you'd say oh my god. I got to be here at 3:30? Then when you get here and you get out there you see the sun come up over the water and everything is going good. You got crew inside making your breakfast and you're riding out of there and it don't matter if it's a rough or a calm day, you know. The thing is—is—one reason is you don't never know where you're going to be that next day. You never know what you're going to be doing the next day. That's why I can't—like right now it's hard for me to hold a regular job down 'cause I don't want a job to where I got to walk in on a boat that I know where I'm going to go every day. The guide I work for thank God I do sunset tours, I can carry the boat wherever I want to go on the sunset in Charleston Harbor. For two hours I can carry that boat anywhere I want to go and it's mine. And that gives me my little bit of relief back to this. But whenever I do a ghost tour it's on a set pattern and it does the same thing. That's boring to me 'cause I'm going on the exact same trip and I'm going to see the exact same thing. Nothing that major is going to change in Charleston. And when you get on a shrimp boat and you ride out there into them jetties, everything changes. You don't know what's on the bottom of that ocean. You can't see it.

**00:35:18**

You pull that little net over there, there's a little test net and you pull that and then you're going to know a little about what's down there. Then when you dump them bags out you got a basket of shrimp or you got 10,000 pounds. I've done it. And I mean that's—it's the wondering if you're going to make it, you're going to hit the lottery that day. I mean I've had years to where



you haul back—and the thing is I guess is what gets you is you get to the top. I made up to \$280,000 a year, it's been one of my best years I ever had. And if you ever get to that it's hard to say—I mean and that sounds like a lot of money but it's not, because you got to put—take fuel and everything out of it. I probably made \$60,000 out of that. But the thing is it was fun making all that money and keeping your boat going you know and just keeping everybody going. And when you can—when you can make a boat make that kind of money, and you can put that much money back into your community it makes you feel good 'cause it's not all about you. It's never about just you. It's about helping everybody in the community and when you can become a community and you can help people in the community somewhere if you can just give somebody five dollars out of your pocket that day doesn't that make you feel good?

**00:36:33**

So just imagine when you can make \$10,000 in a day and you go and give it—you might go to Royal and he might have had a bad day. He might have not—something huge might have broke at his store. But I—I could afford to go in there and spend \$1,000 or something and that \$1,000 could help my friend. And I needed the stuff, so it all washes its hands. And when you get in a community and you realize that you do that much helping the community and then your community knows that you do that much that's why we're all so close and why fishermen are so close 'cause if you get in a real good community in a good area like my—right in this area, I mean this is a great community to grow up in but it's changed now. I mean the sad thing is—is you got big huge buildings and everybody has forgotten about the small people that started and done it.

**00:37:21**

And there's—there's a few people that don't—you know haven't forgotten it. **[Laughs]** It's just funny things that you see going on that—that you think that people are—rich people think poor people aren't as smart as they are. But we're not all poor for one reason, because I'm as rich in life as he is. I just don't have the headache. So I mean that's the funny thing, it depends on how much of a headache you want. I mean I got a job offer yesterday to go leave here and go down to Florida and work and make money on a boat that I'm going to be doing the same exact thing every day in and out, in and out and probably make about four grand a week. I don't want to leave home. This is home. When I can ride over here, no matter what. I haven't been over here in a week and stepped foot on this boat in a week but I know I can. When you lose that—the feeling that you can come and sit on a boat and do what you've done your whole life 'til I lose that feeling and I've lost the feeling of our family's place 'cause we lost it this spring—

**00:38:27**

**Sara Wood:** I'm going to have you hold on a second—. I'm going to let that—I want to hear this but I don't want to have—

**00:38:34**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah.

**00:38:35**

**Sara Wood:** But there is something I wanted to ask you. I ask everyone their birth date and I didn't. Can you just tell me your birth date for the record?

**00:38:41**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah my birth date is August 8, 1976.

**00:38:44**

**Sara Wood:** I'm just going to let the music—. And your boat, the boat that—that you recently—the boat that you lost was called *The Carolina*?

**00:38:52**

**Rocky Magwood:** No. It was the *Lady Eva*.

**00:38:53**

**Sara Wood:** *The Lady Eva*, okay. *The Carolina* was before that?

**00:38:56**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah, and I sold it before. I sold that boat back when the fuel crunch came. That was the hardest thing I ever did was sell that boat. That was a great boat. I just didn't have the money to take care of it and put it to where it needed to go and I knew it. And I had somebody wanted it, so—. The best thing was to do is to let the boat be gone and do what you got to do sometimes, you know. You got to—sometimes you got to look at the best for your company and best for your things. And then when you look back a lot of reasons I did it, I don't think I should have done it. But it's here and there now because it's gone and all that's hearsay but when you—when your back is against the wall you start looking at other ways of getting out

of things. Sometimes the decisions you make when you start backing your—back against the wall is not good.

**00:39:50**

When a man is down and out and everything is against him a man will do some weird things to survive. And when you—when you start wondering about your family and you got to figure out what you're going to do, I got an eleven-year-old daughter that I don't live with. I pay child support on her and I love her to death and me and her mom don't see eye-to-eye on a lot of things, but we're finally getting to where we—you know eleven years has went by now that where we can halfway deal with each other. But it's been hard. And her mom has been real adamant about getting her child support, so—. There's issues of where it was time to get rid of the boat or go to jail for child support. And it was things I had to do to get ahead you know. And when you start looking at where you sell something that you have to sell it to get ahead and then everything is paid for and gone, then you look back and you're like, "What if I had just held on?" You know but you can't worry about that. What's in the past is in the past. That's the thing.

**00:40:55**

I've lived in the past—that's why I went and got this license to do what I've done but it—I feel like I don't want my friends and family to think that I've deserted what I've grown up and done because I don't want to say well, my family's fourth generation fisherman doesn't want to do it no more. I don't want to say I don't want to do it no more, I'd love to get on a shrimp boat and go tomorrow. You—it's just you got to weigh the odds. It's harder to get crew now 'cause they know that the money is not there because if the money is not there you know it's—it's bad.

**00:41:30**

This has been a good year for people because the price of shrimp were up but now it's back down again a little bit and hopefully it gets back up for these guys because I'm hoping that one day that I can get back into it and do it and be successful at it. But the problem is with shrimping every time that you—you get a good year, something comes along and knocks the wind out of it, so it's like it's always you're fighting a—fighting a losing battle. But you know you just got to keep fighting if you want to go back to shrimping. You just got to fight hard. And anybody that owns a shrimp boat or anybody that's ever shrimped for a living knows how hard it is to own a shrimp boat. It's one of the toughest things you can ever do and the toughest thing is—to do is once you got it in your blood to get it out 'cause it's not getting out. It's like—it's like oxygen, you got to have it. And it's crazy though to say that. Whenever I'm a fourth generation fisherman sitting here looking at my uncle's boat and I don't have one. And I can't say that I don't want to buy one and don't want to have another headache 'cause that's what they are—all boats are headaches. I don't care what anybody says. Any fisherman I don't care if they got a brand new boat, something is going to break on it. It's a headache.

**00:42:50**

And if you—if you get around a fisherman that's fished long enough he'll tell you the same thing I'm telling you. Shrimping is in your blood, you're going to do it, commercial fishing is anybody's blood, if they're a commercial fisherman of any kind we all fight the same battle. We fight the government. We fight the fuel man. And it's just when it all comes around some way or another we're fighting the government on prices of something or in the way they've got us. And when you—when you learn that you got—I've never been in politics, never, never liked it—I didn't like to argue—I don't like to argue. I don't want to argue. If I got to argue over

something I feel like it's time to move on and find something different to do if you got to sit there and argue about it.

**00:43:37**

And the problem is with shrimping, you can put your back against the wall and you take on the world because it's—it's somewhere—somewhere down the line somebody says oh. The craziest thing is—is you'll get these great people. You'll get some customers that love—love fishermen, love us to death and will pay anything for shrimp. Then you got these people when they walk up here, what's the price? Well that boat over there is selling them for \$3.50. Well we're not on that boat, we're on this boat. He don't have no shrimp. I got shrimp today. You want to buy these shrimp? I'm selling them for fifty cent(s) higher than he is. Oh well I'll just wait 'til tomorrow. And I mean that's what you deal with.

**00:44:18**

And you got to sell the shrimp 'cause you got to get rid of them. Then you just put them—if you got a place to hold them like my uncles had for years, you can—you can hold on. You ain't got that cooler to put your shrimp in and hold on, you ain't got nothing. And that's the sad thing to say. A lot of fishermen, this creek here, if you ask me, if the town doesn't do something about putting a fish house here or something to help us fishermen what's left here, you come back here in two years you won't see a shrimp boat here, not in this creek, nah. There's no way 'cause once this place here gets finished whatever they're going to do with it in two years and whatever they do with that place over there in two years, and Fred Scott is nice enough that we pay rent and tie up here at this place here, but whenever he gets tired of having a shrimp boat

out or he sells his place all these places go and they put houses here, the shrimp boat ain't going to be here no more.

**00:45:16**

**Sara Wood:** Is that what they're planning to do is put houses around here or is—?

**00:45:19**

**Rocky Magwood:** Um—

**00:45:20**

**Sara Wood:** Do you think that's what's going to happen?

**00:45:21**

**Rocky Magwood:** I mean you got—you got all these people here and they're building houses up and down the road. You're on some—you're on deep water lots. People can put yachts here. It's—you're fighting—that's a huge battle we're fighting is that's all up and down the coast. If you go any—any fishing docks anywhere on the East Coast—I don't know how it's going in the Gulf because I don't think the Gulf has gotten as—as much exposure as we have yet—it's coming though. And anybody that thinks that it's not coming it's coming 'cause when I seen the change in Charleston was after Hugo in '89 [1989]. Shem Creek was still a huge creek then. There was still plenty of boats. Yeah, the creek was slowing down but there was still a lot of boats here. There might have been sixty boats still in here.

**00:46:11**

Then everybody came here, the boom, it was all over the big news, “Oh Charleston this and that,” how much of a beautiful place it is. And then people started wanting to come here. And then I—I don’t mind people coming here but don’t change where I grew up. I mean yeah, you can expand some places, but let’s don’t—let’s don’t get crazy. Let’s don’t take out people’s livelihoods you know unless they’re ready to leave. **[Laughs]** There’s a lot of people that wasn’t ready to leave this that had to leave. And I’m one of them unfortunate few of the people that did. I mean times and places came and when you start paying—when you start having to pay for where you tie up twice as much as you used to and don’t have no place to pack your shrimp and truck buyers and stuff like that—that’s your problem, you know. And imported shrimp and I don’t really touch into much of that because it’s not as big an issue as it used to be I don’t feel. That’s not your number one issue no more.

**00:47:09**

Our issue is now is we don’t have no new guys **[Laughs]**. We don’t have younger people wanting to do this and the older guys don’t really want to teach younger guys to do it no more. That’s the problem you got. Nobody—they’re not even building new boats over here on this side no more. There used to be boats being built everywhere. It’s—it’s sad that you know you used to be able to—all in the ‘90s [1990s] you’d still see new boats come around. And now you don’t see new boats. Like this boat we’re sitting on here was built in 1979. I mean that boat over there was built in—I think she was built in ’80 [1980] so I mean everything you’re looking at is way old. Amazing they’re still here. **[Laughs]** You know and work as hard as these things work **[Laughs]**. They—they go out there and they earn their money. I mean we put these boats through some stuff that you wouldn’t even imagine. I’ve been on this boat right here 210 miles off of Charleston before. But not shrimping, we were running somebody out to an oil rig where they



were test drilling for something. I don't even remember what it was but it was back in the early '90s [1990s]. And we were in twenty-foot seas—we got caught in.

**00:48:19**

I've been in twenty, thirty-foot seas on this boat. **[Laughs]** And it's just amazing that you know you trust your boat. It's crazy, you know, you get to where you trust the boat 'cause you think it's living 'cause I had a guy one time tell me I'll get back with you in a couple of days because he said I got to go over there and hang out—. He was running a new boat on the creek for another guy, a friend of mine, and he said I got to go get to where I know my boat. I said what are you talking about? He said, "The boat is living. You got to go talk to them. You got to go get close to her to know what she wants and what she expects out of you. I said—I looked at that man like he was crazy. But you know today and times I wouldn't think he's so crazy 'cause the boat is going to work for you or it's not going to work for you and it's going to make you money or it's not going to make you money. There's boats that catch shrimp and boats that don't catch shrimp and that's crazy. That's just like sporties, the people got that same feeling about sport fishers. That got boats that catch fish and boats that don't catch fish. I mean it's crazy that you could say that it's one type of hull. The boats could be identical. One boat will out-catch the other one and it happens and it's not the captain. You can put anybody on them. I done seen that happen with my granddad.

**00:49:35**

Some boats you got to work harder. You got to fight everything on the boat to make it catch shrimp. But if you can force it to catch shrimp it will do good. But if you get somebody who don't know how to fight that battle, he's not going to catch shrimp. You just put a regular

captain on there and he's going to walk on there and say oh, well I can go sit out and do everything on the boat but that doesn't mean anything. You got the battle of the boat. And somebody who has been fishing a long time will tell you that too. I don't know what kinds of stories you've gotten from people but I can guarantee you they're in these same lines of you can talk to one fisherman and they're all about the same. It's—it's crazy that we all—a true fisherman, we can all—the craziest thing is you take us all off a boat, we talk to each other on the radio every day. But seeing each other in person you might not even see that person. I can remember when I was growing up when I was young when there was eighty boats in here that there would be times that I wouldn't even see one of these people unless we went to a shrimpers meeting or to a function you know. And it's crazy that—to think that that's the only way you would run into your friends twice a year. You'd have a meeting and that's where we'd see each other. *[Laughs]*

**00:50:47**

But it was just that crazy but you talk to them in the ocean every day like they're your best friend. And some people—I went to a car show a couple weeks ago and a friend of mine told me, he said I want to go look at this car over here. I said okay. And it just happens to be—I didn't know that my buddy owned a car. But I heard the guy talking and it was a shrimper. And I said I know who he is. My buddy looked at me and he said who's that? And it was just another fisherman and I said—he goes, “How do you know that's a shrimper?” I said, “I heard his voice from a long ways away.” But he was a towboat captain and he knew exactly what I was talking about 'cause you know a tugboat captain you talk to people all the time on the radio but you don't never see them in person you know. And it's crazy when you catch somebody's voice but you don't know what they really look like. *[Laughs]*

**00:51:30**

And around here you got Rockville, there's a lot of boats in Rockville. Folly Beach used to have a lot of boats, McClellanville, you know Georgetown and our radios talk all these distances so you could talk to all of these guys but you wouldn't never see them unless we were all in a meeting—pretty cool.

**00:51:51**

**Sara Wood:** Rocky I just—I have a couple more questions, are you okay with that?

**00:51:55**

**Rocky Magwood:** Yeah.

**00:51:55**

**Sara Wood:** And I'm wondering if we could just pause the tape for a second and I could take some photographs just in case it does start raining. I'd like to take—

**00:52:03**

I wanted to have you talk about 'cause we—we—you started to talk about it and then the boat went by with music but about the—what—what's happened to the Magwood business here.

**00:52:14**

**Rocky Magwood:** The Magwood business is just it's gone down. Well we lost my granddad in 2001 and when he passed away it kind of—he was the glue that held the family together. And I guess all of us you know when you got a big family everybody kind of thought he was never—he

was like our—I guess in like people say like in NASCAR, Dale Earnhardt was the glue that held—held it together and made it what it was, and like Michael Jordan was basketball, you know it's just that you know, a legend. You know you don't think legends don't never die but they do.

**00:52:55**

And my granddad was one of those people that—thought he would be here forever. Nobody ever thought he would go anywhere. And when we lost him that was a big—it was a shock to everybody, not just to us, not to our family, it was to everybody. And after that you know more and more people's boats were going out of the creek and we sold a couple of our boats. But right before that 'cause my granddad's health was bad and we couldn't go nobody to work and just over the years just having different things. And when you got—when you got people that don't want to work and you got just a lot of different things fighting you, you know and the price of fuel went through the roof again and you—we sold all the boats off and we ended up with just two and me and my uncle were the only two that were left fishing. My Uncle Andrew [Magwood] that you're actually going to get to talk to, he retired from shrimping. He shrimped his whole life but he got out in time.

**00:53:50**

Everybody says he was one of the lucky ones. You know he got out when boats were still worth money. A boat like you're sitting on right now when my uncle bought this boat he paid \$180,000 for it. She might be worth \$50,000 today. And a few years—well about fifteen years ago she was still worth almost \$200,000, now she's worth \$50,000. You know and some people wouldn't even give that you know. And it's sad to think that people don't want to pay that much

money when you got that much—it's not—I guess it's a more pride thing that you got than you got you know what your boat is really worth because whenever you—you start losing the pride of what your business is you know.

**00:54:30**

And you can't make enough money to support your family it makes it hard. And with us losing our family dock and our business and everything it's been real hard on all of us because it was the main thing that held us all together is we still had the dock. And we didn't know how we were going to hold onto it or how we would keep it. But we were trying you know. And everybody was holding in there. But when you got—when you get there and you lose a place and you can't—you can't keep onto what—what your family has done your whole life it hurts to even come over here. It hurts to hang out here. I can honestly say since I've quit the boat I haven't been over here much, since all the changes has happened. I think I've been over here three times in the last three months. And that's unusual for me. Shem Creek is where I've always wanted to be and now I'm thinking about moving away. I mean when you think about moving away from a home place that you grew up your whole life, but I want to move into a—I want to go back to a place that was like home. I want to go to a small fishing community. I want to go back into where fishermen are still the main source of income to the town. I want to go back to that. And I don't know if I'll ever be able to find it somewhere, but I want to find somewhere just like home, the home that I've lost 'cause that's what I feel like I've done. I've lost my home. And when you lose your home you lose where—your focus, you know and you got to back up and look around and see what your surroundings are and see what you're fighting and all. When you—when you're fighting things that's bigger than you are and got more than you got you're never going to win. And that's what a lot of people has realized. And I mean other people may have different

thoughts on it and things like that but to me everybody is like oh yeah, you need to get your license and you need to go do something better with your life and I'm like why do I need to do something better with my life? I love what I do.

**00:56:27**

You know fishing has always been what I wanted to do. It's not a lot of money in it but I've been able to hang in there and do what I wanted to do my whole life. I mean I'm thirty-eight years old and I've never had to beg or steal from anybody. And when you can get up and say anything that you own or anything you have is yours and you've worked for it—yeah I've lost a lot. I've been to the mountaintop and seen the top of it. It wasn't that high. I can always go back you know. You don't worry about it 'cause I got a good friend of mine right now. He—he tells me, "It's like football." He says, "Sometimes you got to back up and punt." He said, "Don't—don't catch the ball, don't fumble it. Kick it and get rid of it before somebody knocks you off the saddle again, before while you're going up the hill." He said, "Just back up and look at it again." And he said, "When you come back you'll come back better."

**00:57:14**

Life is learning. You got to always got to learn. You forget to learn you're not going to lean. And I think that's what me and my uncle have got to do. We just got to back up and look at it a different way and come ahead at it and my granddad started this. He was one man. He ended up nine boats and he owned them all you know. You know his brothers and—him and his brothers and his sons you know and if he could do it back then whenever money—whenever shrimp wasn't worth anything and a lot of things were worth a lot and he did it back then he can—we can do it again. It just might not be in this creek. It might not be in this state. It might

not be in the town. That's sad to say but you know sometimes you got to back up and look around. When somebody thinks what you got is worth a lot you just got to let them have that and just move on.

**00:58:02**

And it's sad to say that you got to do that but as long as I move on and keep shrimping I'm not losing what I really—my main focus was. I'm just relocating. And I mean it's great people all over the world. I've met people from all over, so—. [*Laughs*] It's—it's not like you're not going to meet great people. You know anywhere you go, so I mean I've had plenty of people move in on me so I might go move—I might be moving in on somebody else's turf one day, so—.

**00:58:34**

**Sara Wood:** Well Rocky I don't have any other questions. You've been very kind and generous with your time, but I'm wondering if there is anything else or any other stories you want to share or maybe something—you want to mention something that I didn't know to ask and I should have asked you about.

**00:58:48**

**Rocky Magwood:** Well the main thing is just to get everybody to always ask about you know fresh local seafood. And make sure to follow-up into it, you know. There's a lot of restaurants around here in Charleston. I can't remember exactly. It's a crazy amount of number of restaurants. And they all say that they're seafood restaurants. Well what boat do you buy from? What—I mean when you go into a restaurant just be kind of—you know and ask them. And if

you ever want to come down and meet your local fishermen you know you're more than welcome. Anybody can come down here and talk to us. Every one of us captains feel the exact same way. Come down and meet us. You might meet a good one. You might like us you know, you never know.

**00:59:27**

Because we'll do anything we—I've done anything you can imagine with a shrimp boat that most people you couldn't imagine. I've—I've carried funerals out. I've carried people to spread ashes. I've done wedding receptions. I've done bachelorette parties, bachelor parties, I mean birthday parties, and it's just little things that we do for our friends, you know. And we want—we want the community to get to know us you know 'cause that's all you got left is to get to know your community that you live in. And it doesn't matter where you're from, go meet your local commercial fishermen. Support them because that's all—all they're wanting to do is support their families. And they would love to meet you—anybody. I mean you go to any commercial fishermen they'd love to meet you 'cause they like meeting new people. And they hope that you'd like to come buy their fresh seafood of whatever it is. It could be fish, it could be oysters, it could be one thing or another but if you support them they'll support you some way or another and they will help give back to the community.

**01:00:30**

That's basically all I want to do is let people known just to come—come meet—come meet us all. We're a great bunch of people. We help out in the community any way we can and the community helps us a lot, so—. We don't mind helping.



**01:00:44**

**Sara Wood:** There's one other thing I wanted to mention that I brought this up to a couple of other folks but I can't think of any—many other jobs where you're literally putting your life on the line for—for other people basically you know.

**01:00:58**

**Rocky Magwood:** Um, I don't look at it that way. When you—people will tell you like—just like driving people around in the harbor, you know people say, “Oh, well you got a lot of people's lives in your hands.” Nah, I really don't if you think about it. Everybody—that's just like when you're driving down the road. You're driving down the road and you got everybody around you's life in your hands. And when you're driving a shrimp boat or driving a commercial boat period, they're very dangerous. But we do it as second nature. It—it's not dangerous, it's not scary to us 'cause if you get scared that's when people get hurt. It's just like when you're driving a car. You get in your car and you crank it up and you drive down the road you get a flat tire and you know to pull over on side of the road and fix it. We get something that breaks on the boat we can't pull over on the side of the road but we do fix it. And we try to make sure it's in the safest places, you know to fix it. And as long as you're responsible and take care of your friends and whoever is on the boat with you, they're usually your friend and they come—most people that's worked for me, I've had people that has worked for me that's went and—lawyers now. I mean they were working through law school. I've even got a friend of mine that's one of the big house builders here in Charleston and he worked for me for a while when the housing building companies were down.

**01:02:14**

It's amazing who all gets on the boat with you but whoever steps up and signs to give their life on a—work on a shrimp boat they learn a lot more than just working on a shrimp boat. They learn how to look out for each other and your fellow person on the boat. And as long as you learn that and you know you got to look out for each other the boat is not scary, it's not a harmful place to be because everybody on the boat is looking out for each other. And I've been in some bad situations like where you would think somebody would get hurt and it just turns out to where it's nothing and nobody gets hurt. It's just slow down and let's back up and let's look at it and figure out how we can do it.

**01:02:49**

And then my motto it's not that we can't do something, but let's figure out how we're going to have to do it. There's not a can't in my book. I've very stubborn that way. I've never met anything—any challenge that I didn't want to do that I haven't done. It's—it's crazy whenever you get a challenge in front of you and anybody that knows me knows that I don't—I don't give up. I'm stubborn headed and I'm going to go through it and we're going to figure it out. And you—you'll get to meet another stubborn person tomorrow, so—. My uncle is a great—great one. He's got good stories. He'll tell you about growing up on the island and stuff. I didn't get to—I didn't get to—unfortunately I didn't get to grow up on our island the way that the rest of my family did, you know as much.

**01:03:36**

I love going there. I mean it's—it's heaven and it's a great thing that we still have it and that's home. You know that's our home-base for all of us. And no matter where we go or who roams or—who roams away but we all come back and that's the main home, you know. And I

guess I fought so hard to help my uncle and my granddad with this place that—with our dock you know that—in keeping the boats—the shrimp boats going that I didn't—I never seen the island as a—a threat that we would lose it you know 'cause I knew my Uncle Andrew and my granddad and all them would always take care of that. Somebody is going to always—we're always going to—somehow we'll all come together and be able to keep it.

**01:04:20**

And but I never thought we'd ever lose this either but I hope to God we don't never lose our island 'cause that's our last—that's the last little piece of heaven that we got you know.

**01:04:31**

When you—that's like when you come to Mount Pleasant and you talk about fresh seafood, Magwood Seafood has been here since 1974. And when people ask you know, do you know where Magwood's is everybody around here that grew up here and knows anything about it, oh yeah, Magwood Seafood is right down the road. They got fresh seafood. Go see them. It's the best—the best prices and the best at taking care of shrimp. And that's a great thing that I've gotten to put my name with is that we've gotten that reputation, so it's a great thing.

**01:05:02**

**Sara Wood:** Is there anything else you want to add Rocky before I turn the tape off?

**01:05:07**

**Rocky Magwood:** No, I think that's everything.

**01:05:08**

**Sara Wood:** Well I really want to thank you for taking the time to do this—this evening. It's been really nice to listen to all your stories. I appreciate it.

**01:05:16**

**Rocky Magwood:** Well I appreciate you wanting to listen. You know some people tell you that we should write a book one day.

**01:05:20**

**Sara Wood:** You should.

**01:05:21**

**Rocky Magwood:** And if you write a book about fishing you know it's crazy. I don't know. Are you from here?

**01:05:26**

**Sara Wood:** [*Shakes head no*]

**01:05:26**

**Rocky Magwood:** Oh well you need to before you leave if you like to read books, well actually you can look it up. I know you probably got an iPad or something and you can look up *The Last Light over Carolina*. It's about a shrimping village but it's—the story is about McClellanville but my name is in it and Wayne's [Magwood] name is in it. The shrimper is actually talking about us.

**01:05:47**

**Sara Wood:** Oh wow.

**01:05:47**

**Rocky Magwood:** In the book, and it's a great—it's like a love story and why a man, he wanted to know—I think you'll find your answer in there of why a man wants to fish like he does 'cause it's—it talks about the reason why we do what we do and why we're the way we are. That's a pretty cool little thing about us, why commercial fishermen and all of us—any one commercial fisherman I don't care if it's a sport fisher, a crabber, oysterman, shrimper, long liner, we all want to go back to the ocean. Once it's in your blood you're going. You got to go. Being around saltwater, I mean my granddad told me when I was a kid—I'll put this in there, my granddad told me whenever I was a kid they told us not to drink the saltwater, like I'd ride in the boat like a little kid. They said saltwater is bad for you son. It will make you crazy like me. *[Laughs]* I guess I drank too much of that saltwater when I was growing up 'cause I definitely got it. You know but one way or another it's there. And it's crazy to think of but—oh, I'm—I guess that's it, yeah.

**01:06:58**

**Sara Wood:** Okay, I'm going to turn the tape off.

**01:06:59**

**[End Rocky Magwood Interview]**