

Name of narrator: Wynn Gale

Interviewer: Amber Gosser recorded this interview with the permission of Wynn Gale for the research project "Fishing Traditions and Fishing Futures." Primary Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Georgia Southern University.

Others present: Savannah Bell was a secondary interviewer who sometimes spoke and asked questions during the interview.

Date of interview: March 24, 2018

Place: Indoor/outdoor garage area at the Darien Telephone Company in Darien, Georgia

Duration of the interview: forty-one minutes. forty-nine seconds.

Repository for the recording: The recording will be uploaded to the website, Voices from the Fisheries ([www.voices.nmfs.noaa.gov/](http://www.voices.nmfs.noaa.gov/))

Context for the interview: The two interviewers had just met the narrator, and he came to the Darien Telephone Company with the intention of being interviewed.

General Description of Contents: The interview begins with a description of Wynn Gale's childhood growing up in Darien and starting to fish at the age of twelve. He tried to be a cop, but it did not work out, so he continued to be a shrimper. He is a fourth generation fisherman, and his family has never done anything besides fish. He has seen the number of boats fishing decrease a lot over his lifetime. He explains his fishing routine, during which he goes in and out every day. The Darien community is built upon fishing, but people are starting to do other things. People in other occupations used to buy shrimp boats for tax write-offs, but that has stopped in recent years due to drugs, and docks now have to charge a lot of rent. Wynn Gale sold his shrimp boat because he could not pay rent, did not have a crew, and he does not have time to shrimp and sell shrimp, but he must sell shrimp in his father's place, as his father recently passed away. Young people are not interested in fishing, so it is going away. He enjoys the peace and freedom that comes with shrimping, and his favorite memories are spending time with his dad while fishing. He wishes people knew that fishermen are not harming the environment, as many species like sharks are on the rise. He believes the fishing industry is going to die, but it could be revived if the price of shrimp went up. The next generation should pay attention to what they are taught. Wynn Gale would do everything over again if given the chance to change his life, with a few minor changes. He explains many terms, concepts, and his experiences with them, including: trout lines, jellyballing, working the back of the boat, the Graveyard, and black gill.

A: My name is Amber Gosser and I'm a student at Georgia Southern University. I am here with Savannah Bell conducting an oral history interview as part of the project *Fishing Traditions and Fishing Futures: Oral Histories of Commercial Fishing in Georgia*. I've already received informed consent and permission to record from Wynn Gale, but could you please just confirm this out loud?

W: Yes, I confirmed it. And you can use any of my stuff.

A: Ok, thank you. I have some questions for you, so we're just gonna go ahead and get started. We're gonna take it back a little bit for the first question. Can you just tell us a little bit about where you grew up, and what life was like when you were...

W: I've been here all my life, right here in this same town. Started commercial fishing when I was twelve years old. My granddaddy gave me a boat... an outboard boat and trailer, and I used

to run trout lines in the morning before school, and keep the fish in a pen during the day. Then I'd run the trout lines, the same lines that afternoon when I got out of school, then me and granddaddy would take all the fish and clean 'em after two or three days of collecting 'em, and we would sell 'em to the local grocery stores around here. And then in the summer time, on summer break I was on the back deck workin' for daddy, shrimpin'. And then when I graduated school I tried to be a cop for a little while. That didn't work, so, didn't figure I'd get paid enough for people to shoot at me. So I went back to shrimpin' and I worked on the back deck for my dad 'til '09, then I bought my own boat.

A: You mentioned that your dad would shrimp, was that...

W: I'm fourth generation. My granddaddy done it, my da... well my great granddaddy done catfishin'. He never done shrimpin'. Then my granddaddy done shrimpin', daddy, and now me.

A: Can you talk a little bit about your family's relationship to seafood? How did that affect...

W: That's all we've ever done. That's all my side of the family's every done, seafood. We've commercial shrimped, commercial sturgeon fished with gillnets, and commercial shad fish, commercial catfish. We done a little bit of crabbin'. Pretty much if it swims, we've caught it.

A: Did your family, were they the ones that kinda taught you everything you know? Or did you...

W: Yeah. Yeah I learned most everything from my daddy and my grandpa.

A: Okay. How has your involvement in the fishing industry kind of changed over the years?

W: Well, it hasn't gotten any better. I haven't figured out why, because there's less boats than there's ever been in the whole history. Back in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, there was twenty-five-hundred boats in Georgia, and now there ain't two hundred boats maybe, if that. I doubt there's even that. There's probably maybe a hundred left that's fishin', fishable. We're losin' 'em at a rate of attrition. I mean, three or four boats a year, hell one year we lost sixteen boats in one year. I mean they're just going down quick and, any given time back in the day when I first started commercial fishing when I was twelve with daddy, we'd come around the breakers and there'd be, you know, boats over here, boats here, boats there, you know, everywhere there'd be some boats, so you had to pick a spot and just start fishin' and hope they haven't, you know, drug the ground already. Well now you can go out, any given day, and most of the time, I've done it numerous times, and I'd be the only boat in the ocean. I mean you'd look for miles, as far as you can see there ain't another boat in site. Call out on the radio, you know that's twenty-five miles on the radio, and... nobody. So it's just... this black gill issue that we have is startin' to really hurt the shrimp and hurricanes and stuff. You know, we ain't had those in forever. It's just double whammy after double whammy gettin' us.

A: Could you tell me a little bit about your day-to-day routine on the water? Like what time you wake up...

W: Well I'm like my dad, I sell shrimp off my boat so a lot of people they'll go downriver and stay downriver and all that, but I don't stay downriver, I go in and out every day. So I get up 'bout four thirty in the morning, leave the dock about five, and then I fish 'til twelve... between twelve and three o'clock in the afternoon. And then I come home. It takes about two hours to get to the ocean from where I park right here in the Darien River, so you know, I don't usually get to the fishin' grounds 'til 'bout six thirty, seven o'clock in the mornings and I start draggin' and then once I get through, it's a couple hours to the dock. And I fish in a small area, I don't fish like up and down the whole coast and, when I jellyball I travel. I went down to Matanzas, past Matanzas this year, in Florida chasin' jellyfish. Now when I'm commercial shrimpin' I just go to the Altamaha Channel, a place called The Graveyard, which is right beside that, and then Cabretta, and Blackbeard. That's my fishin' areas that I can easily go make a livin' and not have to travel. That's where my general fishin' area is.

A: As far as the community itself, is fishing really central to that? How...

W: Yes. That's all it is. That's all this community has is fishin'. I mean there ain't nothin', there is no really other really big industry here, I mean technically. It's all commercial fishin'. There's some manufacturin' stuff out there in the county where they make dock ramps and stuff like that but, that's it. I mean, dock buildin' and commercial fishin'.

A: Have you seen that kind of change at all over the years?

W: Yeah, I've seen a bunch of people gettin' out of the commercial fishin' industry. They're all goin' to other places, you know, out of town, buildin' bridges and workin' at chemical plants and stuff like that. You know, there's one in Brunswick, a couple in Savannah, and stuff like that so they, they have to leave town, but they commute. And everybody's, back in the day the reason there was such a decline in boats was because lawyers and doctors and stuff like that would buy a shrimp boat, and it's a tax write-off. So they would use the shrimp boat to help write-off on their taxes, and they would just manage, have the docks manage the boats for 'em. They'd buy a shrimp boat and say "hey, you know, put a crew on it for me and, you know, just send me my checks". And that's what they would do. All of 'em got away from that because it's so hard for, you know, drugs came into the picture in the 80's, and today it hasn't gotten any better. You know, in fact I sold my big shrimp boat about a month ago because of the, no crew. And the dock now started chargin' rent to park your boat there. If you don't catch enough shrimp, you got to pay rent, and I can't afford five hundred dollars a month. Well, I'm not gon' pay five hundred dollars a month when I never paid it before. And then the crew, I estimated this year from lost catch, about ten thousand dollars the crew cost me. 'Cause you know you'd hand 'em money, you know every day you'd come in and hand 'em the money and all the sudden you're catchin' the shit outta shrimp and all the sudden, bam, they don't show up the next day and your buddies call you up and say "hey man, where you at?" I say "well I'm sittin' in the dock with no crew." He say "well, we killin' the shrimp". That's when you wanna kill the crew because you could be out there catchin', killin' shrimp right then too, you know? But that's just, so I just said to hell with it and sold my boat. And I lost my dad Super Bowl Sunday so, he was the reason I got into shrimpin'. And now I'm sittin' up on the corner sellin' shrimp in his absence, and I can't do both. I can't sell shrimp and I can't shrimp at the same time. So I can't [phone rings] technically... that's my messenger... but I can't shrimp and sell 'em. So I'm gon' go with a

smaller boat that I can fish by myself and come in faster, that way I can continue sellin' shrimp and catch 'em at the same time. 'Cause you can't keep a crew happy, they ain't never happy anyway but, can't keep a crew happy if they ain't fishin'.

A: What are some of the positive and negative changes in the fishery or community over your lifetime, and what are your thoughts on these changes?

W: Just... it's goin' away. It's just goin' away. I mean it's, nowadays we're startin' to see no young captains, very few young captains gettin' back into it, very few young crew wantin' to work that hard. So there's really nobody to take over what's goin' on. Like my family, my kids, they don't want nothin' to do with it. My daughter, she's gon' do somethin' else. My son's doin' somethin' else. My brother's kid, now he's gonna be all gung ho in it but, other than that, that's it. My sister, she's in Carolina. She don't want nothin' to do with it, so... it's up to my brother's son to keep it up.

A: What do you think are the causes of those changes? Of all those people kind of getting out of it?

W: Money. Money. It's hard work, it's really hard work, it ain't easy. I mean, we make it look easy when we're out there and all, but it's not. It's really stressful, really hard. It kills the crew. They work, you know, 'til your fingers bleed and everything else, and you gotta be tough. And there just ain't a lot of that around anymore.

A: Can you tell me a little bit about the rewarding parts of your career?

W: I'm my own boss, I can do what I want to when the crew lets me. If I wanna go fishin' and they show up, I can go fishin, but I'm changin' that. And it's a nice occupation for me, I like it 'cause it's really peaceful out there, you're master of your own fate, and you don't have to really answer to nobody. So you're kind of free to do what you feel. Now if you make the wrong decision and you don't make no damn money that day, and everybody goes lookin' at you kinda funny. But, most of the time, I make money, so. But yep, that's about it for that. Let's see... yeah.

A: What are some of your favorite memories of going out?

W: Fishin' with my dad. And my grandad, I went out with my grandad a couple times. But my dad, fishin' with my dad and us havin' a lot of time together just to sit there and bullshit and talk, be relivin' all the memories and... we coonhunted and stuff in the river there, went ridin' in the river shootin' coons and I'd go get 'em and stuff like that. And we would, we just spent a lot of time together. Family thing, you know?

S: Is there one of those memories that sticks out to you?

W: So many... Daddy was...

S: One you can share with us.

W: My daddy was a screamer, so he would scream lots of profanities. Stupid, you know, mf'in, crazy... but we had some good times. We had, one particular trip we was goin' down the river, black gill was really bad that year. And we went down the river down there and my bud... my brother, and my other buddy Captain Reggie was over there in the Graveyard where I was tellin' y'all about, well we was in Wolf Island, well we made a pass out of Wolf Island. It's in one of those little spots you just drag down, it takes fifteen to twenty minutes. When we made that pass, took up, had twenty-five baskets of shrimp. Eighty pound baskets. Nets were like this, it was like that, big ole' shrimp. I was by myself 'cause the other crew done quit, and daddy was like "well, we gon' try it today. We don't catch nothin', we gon' tie it up for a while, you can go find you a job or somethin' 'cause this ain't lookin' good." Well we just happened to bebop down there one day, make a little water on a Sunday and bam, there they were so, we made that little water first thing in the mornin'. Six o'clock, seven o'clock. We was back at the dock eatin' BJ's at twelve o'clock, the buffet. And then the next day, we went and did the same thing on a Monday. Went down there, made the same pass, did the same thing, twenty-five, thirty baskets of shrimp, and we came in with two binfulls of shrimp to unload that day. Everybody was like, "where the hell did you get that?", you know? So we had fifty boxes. Then the next day we went in there, and there was like five boats in there with us. And everybody was like "hey, we in one this game too, you know?" But we ended up catchin', in five days, we caught a hundred boxes of shrimp. A box of shrimp's a hundred pounds, so. We caught a pretty good bit of shrimp. And I was on the boat by myself, so I made a big fat check. But that was a really good memory, 'cause me and my dad was ecstatic. It was awesome.

A: What are some things that you wish people who didn't live on the coast knew about this area and the fishing industry?

W: I wish that we didn't have such a bad rap. They makin' it sound like we killin' turtles, we killin' this, we killin' that. We're really not. We're not doin' any damage, that I can foresee, because we fish every day. We see it every day. There's no decline in the fish whatsoever, no decline in the sharks, turtles are more than I've ever seen on the planet, everywhere. So I mean they're trying to blame us for things that other, you know, either other fisheries or other causes, and they're sayin' it's our fault. 'Cause naturally, you know, a turtle washes up on the beach, if there's a shrimp boat out there, it's his fault. Even though a turtle don't, you know, when a turtle dies, they sink. And they stay on the bottom for three or four days, then they pop up like a [could not understand] or whatever and land on the beach or whatever. So you don't know where he was caught, where he came from, he coulda been hit by a ship way offshore, you know, nobody knows. Until you do the autopsy on him and all that, find all the plastic in him. Imagine that. Hmm. But it's stuff like that. We get the bad rap, and they make it sound like we're just public enemy number one and we're not. We're just out there tryin' to make a livin'. All we're tryin' to do is provide for the families and do what we've been taught to do all of our life. And the sharks, I don't know but they gon' have to do somethin' shortly. The sharks are just atrocious. I ain't never seen 'em like this. It's bad. And people gonna start gettin' eat up, I mean, 'cause it's fixin' to get... I mean y'all don't know yet. Y'all don't even have a clue. It's bad. I've never seen it this bad. I mean, I would say in the past ten years, well I wouldn't say ten years, I'd say past five years, oh my God. The population exploded. And we was keepin' the population in check for a long time, we had so many boats out there catchin' shrimp. We had so many boats out there catchin' shrimp and stuff, you know, we was killin' little pup sharks, little baby sharks. You'd

catch twenty or thirty of them a drag, each boat was doin' that. So I mean it was keepin' the population kinda in check, and now we don't have all the boats out there killin' all the babies so all the babies get to grow up. And they gonna find out shortly. You won't be able to go swimmin'. 'Cause eventually there'll be enough of 'em out there where there won't be anything for them to eat, and they gon' be hungry. 'Cause I know. They eatin' our nets to pieces. Like the nets that I had on my shrimp boat were the high dollar, Dyneema spectra nets, made outta that high tech fabric, and they cost me about three thousand dollars a piece to have 'em built. Well you know, you go out there and the sharks chew them sons-a-bitches to pieces in two drags, so you're out of three thousand dollars. I mean I've seen my buddies put some brand new nets on the boat, go out, make two drags, come back to the dock, take 'em off and chuck 'em in the dumpster. Because they're not even worth patchin'. There's more patches than there would be original webbin'. So it's gon' be bad. It's gon' get worse. There's no predators for 'em, so. We'll see what happens.

A: So going along with the future of that and what you're talking about, where do you see the future of the fishing community and industry going?

W: It's gonna die. I think it's gonna die. The only thing that's gonna be left is the hardcore people like me and my brother. The oldtimers are gettin' out. A lot of them don't have nobody to take it over for 'em, sell the boat to people out of town... out of state. And it's goin' by the wayside. We're losin' our docks. The docks are strugglin', that's why they're startin' to charge rent because most all the docks in the county are leased. The land's leased. The people own the dock itself because they built the dock, the dock owners. But the land that the dock sits on is leased to somebody, and they pay a thousand dollars a month or whatever for that lease. Well the dock owner has to pay that money. Well years ago, they had so many boats catchin' so many shrimp, a thousand dollars was a drop in the bucket. It wasn't a big deal. But now, you don't have ten boats at your dock, you ain't got but five boats at your dock, and they don't catch a third of the shrimp that used to be brought in, so now they can't make their dock rent with the power bill and the water bill and all this other stuff, so it's dyin'. It's gon' die. And when them dock owners get tired of payin' it and boats leave 'cause rent's so high or whatever, then they'll sell the property or lease the property to someone else for a marina or somethin' like that... they fixin' to do that in downtown Darien right now, they done lost a dock this year. They bought the whole waterfront down there in one area, and that's a whole shrimp dock that's... be gone forever. And it's been a shrimp dock since shrimpin' started. We lost Skipper's. Skipper's was the same way. It was a shrimp dock. That whole place down there was a shrimp dock, that was where I grewed up shrimpin', is right there on this side of the bridge, and this side of the bridge at that same dock we at now. So it's gonna die. Nobody to keep it up. Nobody keepin' business goin'. Now North Carolina, their business is boomin'. They still got plenty of boats, they still got plenty of guys that's ready to go. The boy who bought my boat there, he's a young guy. He had blood in his eyes, ready to go. So he's gonna continue the tradition up there. And it's happenin' all up and down the coast. Up in South Carolina, like Shem Creek, Mount Pleasant. I used to go up there when I was a kid. We used to go up there and make our summers, 'cause summer time's our brown shrimp wouldn't be nothin'. There's three seasons. White, [could not understand] shrimp, brown shrimp, and fall crop. Well, if there ain't no brownies you can go to South Carolina and there's some brownies you'd see there. And we'd go catch brownies up in South Carolina, and Shem Creek would have fifty boats on it. I mean in the creek you could almost

walk across the boats 'cause there'd be so many boats, try two or three deep, little bitty creek, and now there's five on the whole damn creek. And actually now there's four because they lost one the other day. They sold it. And I don't think that fella's gon' buy another one. But it's just like that. And the other dock we used to dock up at, Folly Beach down there, Crosby Seafood there used to be ten boats in there, and I think there might be one left. Maybe two. So I mean it's just, the whole state's goin' down. Right there with Georgia, Georgia's the same way. The whole state's goin' down.

A: What types of things do you think could possibly happen in the next five years that could potentially revive the industry?

W: All they would have to do is bring up the price. If they could get the price of shrimp up a couple dollars a pound, up to, you know, fair market value, then I think the industry would probably bounce back a little bit better because the crews would be makin' more money, the owner's be makin' more money. People say "well, you know, what's two dollars a pound?" Well two dollars a pound ain't nothin' when you talk about a pound. When you're talkin' about ten thousand pounds, and you're talkin' about fifty or sixty thousand pounds that you could catch possibly, and that extra dollar or two, that adds up. Just like with jellyfishin'. When you jellyfish, you know, the price dropped a penny from seven cent to six cent. And then they decide "well it ain't but a penny". Yeah well, but it ain't but a penny. Well you do sixty, seventy-two thousand pennies. You know, that's just like seven hundred somethin' dollars you're losin'. Well that's my fuel bill for that day. That paid my fuel. So now the fuel that I have to pay for comes off to six cent, and I lose money. But that has to be paid first before you make any money, so if you burn too much fuel, you don't really make that much. Pennies matter when it comes to commercial fishin'. It's not fair for us because we're gettin' less shrimp money now for our shrimp than we've ever, just about ever had. In the 80s and 90s I remember we were gettin' these big shrimp on sale, the boat was getting' eight dollars a pound. And now them shrimp's four fifty, you know? And the price of fuel's went up, the price of ice went up. We lost our ice plant this year. They had the same ice plant in the county out there for over fifty years or more. It's gone, you know. He didn't have nobody to take it over, so it's gone. Now the docks are havin' to put on their individual ice plants to make ice so they can keep their business goin'. Now they got all these machines, all these old ice machines there, used to grind ice up and make it into snow, nobody needs them no more 'cause the block of ice plant's gone. What you gon' do now? I mean it's crazy. And you know, it's the trickle-down effect. Everything that it does to a shrimp boat, a shrimp boat by itself is just a boat, but by the time you rig a shrimp boat out, you have the crew, you have, you know, you payin' the dock, you're payin' the hardware store that supplies all your supplies, the net guy that built your nets, the turtle shooter guy, you know, they make the aluminum grids for the nets, you got, you know, the railway work, the machine shop work on your propellers, your winch, your shafts, you got, you know, it ain't just one boat. There's a community built around the whole boat to keep that boat functional. And you start takin' pieces out of the pie, the boat can't survive. I'm serious. We done lost one gigantic piece of the pie with the ice plant. And a lot of our railways are closin', you know, there's two left in the county and they barely goin'. In fact, we're probably gonna lose the one down on the waterfront soon because there's nobody left, there's no boatwrights left that wants to work to repair wooden boats. You know, you got to be pretty crafty to build a boat and to put planks back in and stuff like that. If you don't believe me, go down there and check out the guy doin' it right now. He's a

master boat builder, built five shrimp boats in his lifetime. He's down there puttin' the boat back together now, and you can see the planks and everything the way he's buildin' it. He's a cool cat. But I mean he's gettin' old, he can't hardly do it no more, and I was talkin' to him yesterday. I said "hey man, what... you ever thinkin' of plankin' another boat again?" He's like "hell no". But you know he's gettin' paid sixty-five dollars an hour to do it so, the money's good. But I mean like I said, there ain't... all that old knowledge is fadin' fast. So then some young guy comes, buys a boat and, a wood boat, and he wants to have a plank put in, there's nobody to put the plank in. Then you kinda gotta guesstimate how to do it. Read books or whatever, when used to there'd be guys standing there, "hey I need a plank put in. Ok." And then it's done, you know, in two hours, plank's in. So the craftsmanship's leavin', the industry's dyin'. And that's in my lifetime. I've seen it. Ain't gettin' no better. Anything else?

A: What advice would you give to the next generation of commercial fishermen?

W: Pay attention. Pay very close attention. To every single detail. 'Cause I wished I could remember half the shit my daddy taught me. 'Cause it all matters. Especially with a shrimp boat, with the shrimpin' with the nets. It's minute, minor adjustments from catchin' shrimp and not catchin' shrimp. You could be six links of chain off when you're tickin' a chain and you will not catch shrimp. You'd catch half what everybody else catches. Six links. That's six inches. So it's bad. It's just, all in them adjustments, you know? You gotta know how to adjust 'em. You don't know how to adjust the rigs, you don't pay attention, you don't observe, one net catchin' more than the other net or you know what your buddies are catchin' around you compared to what you're catchin' when you're draggin' right there with 'em, then you won't realize that you're losin' money by not havin' your rig adjusted properly. Pay attention.

A: And if you could go back in time, I guess, would you do all of this over again? Or would you do something differently?

W: I'd be right there all over again. Might be better off than I am now. 'Cause I'd of done a few different things different.

A: What types of things would you have done differently?

W: Well I've had a couple boats give to me there, shrimp boats. I had a big sixty-five foot boat give to me there that I could've put it back together, and I decided not to. I ended up sellin' it for little to nothin' to get away from it. And I should've put that boat together. I should've put it together and started fishin' then, but I didn't. I tried to buck the system and go a whole different route, and it didn't fly. I could've been way better off by now. But, you know, now you know.

S: I have a few, I guess they're just technical terms because this piece will be open to the public. What exactly is a trout line?

W: Trout line? A trout line is, there's two different ways to catch a catfish. Actually there's three different ways. One of 'em's highly illegal. But there's three different ways you can use to catch a catfish. A trout line is a long line of hooks, and you tie one end to the bank, and the other end's to a brick out there, big rock or whatever, and you got the long line of hooks with swivels on



'em, and you probably do a hundred hooks per line. And you got your boat rigged up, you got a [could not understand] boat, which is a commercial gillnet boat, little small outboard boat, and you hook you a piece of PVC pipe up on the bow, like a [could not understand] with a bolt, so it'll spin, and you go to the riverbank, pick up the trout line, hook that onto the boat, and you start walkin' down it, and as you come to the hook, you flip the old bait off, put a new piece of bait on, and you come across a fish, you unhook the fish, tuck him in the back, and you just go all the way down the trout line like that all the way to the front end of the hooks. Most of the time you're runnin' between five hundred and twelve hundred hooks a day on ten or fifteen different lines up and down the river, and then you save your fish. The other way is they use a net, a hoop net they call it. And all it is is a bunch of hoops arranged in a cylinder configuration with some funnels in it, you take shrimp heads, which catfish love old shrimp heads, you dump them in the funnel in one side, and all the catfish swim in the funnel to get to the shrimp heads, and you catch 'em that way. And then there's another way that's highly illegal, that we have partaken in thirty years ago, and, have you ever seen the old telephones that you crank up? Old box telephones? Well inside that thing is an electric motor that you crank. It puts out a lot of juice, and that juice ran down the telephone line to the telephone company and they said "hey what you want? Connect me up with so and so". Well, you take that rig, hook it up to a trawlin' motor, take two leads, put 'em over the side of the boat, and you got, each cell in the battery, each hole in the top of the battery is two volts, and you take your thing and you keep steppin' up the volts until you get the motor spinnin' just right and the catfish shock, it shocks the catfish, it tickles 'em, and they all float upside down to the surface. It don't hurt 'em, 'cause when you get past 'em there they'll sink back down and go on back about their business, but it just tickles 'em, paralyzes 'em, or whatever it does. You just, you called it telephonin', is what you called it. And you just pick the catfish up. We've done that. It's bad, very bad. But that's just, you know, ways to make a livin' back in the day.

S: And then I know a jellyball is a cannonball jellyfish. How did you get into that?

W: My buddy, it was runnin' my bossman's boat the Blessed Assurance for ten or fifteen years. About twelve years he was runnin' the boat. Well he got in some trouble actin' stupid and ended up havin' to go to jail. Had to report to prison. And I take care of boats. When I'm runnin' my boat, I keep it up, keep, you know, I don't tear things up. You know I keep it goin'. I'm a good captain. And he was, that was his boat there, he took care of it like I take care of my stuff, so he called me up said "hey man, you wanna jellyball?" I said "well, yeah I guess, why?" He said "well I'm fixin' to have to go to jail. Can you watch my boat for me? Fish my boat for me while I'm in jail? And when I get out next year, at least I know the boat'll be all there and them boys ain't stole all my shit off of it and the boat ain't trashed out and done, I can continue fishin'." I said "yeah man, I'll do it for you, you know? I'll take the grenade for you." And come to find out, he got out of jail and decided to go a different route and he didn't wanna come back jellyballin' or shrimpin' that boat, so every year, it was my option to take that boat jellyballin'. And I done it from 2012 to, on that boat 'til 2016. I fished that boat every year, jellyballs.

S: And then, this probably is painfully obvious, but the back deck is the back of the boat? And when you say you worked the back deck, that's just, it's not like being a...

W: [could not understand] up there, the back deck was my responsibility, you know? And that's the crew's responsibility. The captain's up there drivin' the boat and everything, he's, ideally he wants to have a good crew that can take care of all the work back there. He don't have to come back there and do nothin', he can just concentrate on catchin' shrimp. 'Cause that ain't easy to do. And you have to stay focused and concentrated on, you know, payin' attention to all the environmental issues to make sure you catch enough shrimp for everybody to make a livin' that day. 'Cause it falls on your shoulders. If you don't catch shrimp, nobody makes no money.

S: And you said the Graveyard.

W: Yeah. That's a place in, it's the east end of Altamaha Channel, between [could not understand] and Altamaha. There's a place there and, what it is is there's an old sailin' ship in there, and it used to be a graveyard but the beach washed it out and they moved it. The old cross is still in there. Concrete cross, it's on the bottom. But it was, a sailin' ship wrecked there in eight, nineteen, 1909 I think. It wrecked there and they, pieces of the ship's still there. It was an old wood sailin' ship but it had steel ribs. Back in the day, Britain ran out of rib material to build the ribs of the ship, so they started doin' steel frames with wood planks. And that's what kinda ship that was. It was steel frames with wood planks. They still catch some of the steel frames, old eyebeam with big ole brass ship pens and stuff, it's cool as shit. Tears the net all to hell, but it's still there.

S: So that's how it got the name Graveyard?

W: Graveyard, yes. Used to be a lighthouse there, I mean, before the Old Sapelo Lighthouse was there now, used to be a lighthouse on the other side. And that's where they was, and I'm talkin' this was in the 1800s, so, long time ago.

S: And we understand what black gill is. It's a ciliate and then the melanin covers the actual disease. How does that affect your business going on?

W: Well for years, Mr. Scientist up there at the UGA dock said it didn't hurt the shrimp. We knew different. We knew when it started that somethin' drastic was happenin' because you could pretty much [could not understand] by it. You'd be fishin', won't see no sign of it. Nothin'. Shrimp'll be clean. Then all the sudden you'll start seein' one or two shrimp a drag, maybe ten or fifteen shrimp a drag. Every drag you start seein' it. Okay, well that's one week. And then you do that for a week. Then the next week it'll jump up to about fifteen or twenty percent of the shrimp have it. Gets more and more and more. And usually when you first see it, that first shrimp or two, you got three weeks to a month you can take it to the bank. It's gon' be wide open, full blown, seventy-five percent of the shrimp'll have it. And then all the sudden, for four or five years there, it just turned off a water spicket. Literally, I mean, nothin'. You go out the next day, zero shrimp, the next day, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero. It's like they all just evaporated. In fact, that good time I told y'all when I was with my dad out there, we caught that hundred boxes in the same place, right? And black gill was seventy-five percent of the shrimp. Well, we blew the engine up, messed the valve up in the engine, so it took us five days to fix it. Had a mechanic workin' wide open to fix it, 'cause you know, we was missin' shrimp. Well, in our spot. Well, we got the motor fixed, went back out there, nothin'. Gone. In fact, I quit a week later 'cause

there was no shrimp up and down the whole Georgia coast, they all just disappeared at one time. And I went to buildin' bridges. But the scientist is all "I don't kill the shrimp". Well it does somethin' to the damn shrimp, 'cause they all disappear for a reason. You know, somethin' eats their ass or they just die. And we kept tellin' 'em we see shrimp that are half dead. You know, the back half of the shrimp in pink or rotten, and the front half's still alive. You know, I mean, how do you explain that? You see a bunch of 'em that way when the black gill shows up. And I think they're startin' to get their head around it now that it's detrimental to the shrimp. I tried... I told that... I don't know if you believe in the system? Tryin' to get as much grant money as you can, because I've made some suggestions to 'em, they searchin' in all the wrong places and doin' all the wrong shit. 'Cause I was wantin' to be a marine biologist when I growed up, so I pay attention. And they checkin' in the bottom of the sounds and stuff like that for the ciliate, and it's not there. It ain't gonna be there 'cause it don't like cold water. Y'all been swimmin', you know. This much of the water's warm, you know, at your feet is cold. You dive down ten foot and it's pretty damn cold, chilly even. Well if it don't like cold water, cold weather, cold water, then why the hell would it be on the bottom of the river? It's cold down there, never sees the daylight. Wouldn't you think it'd be up on the riverbank where it's warm? They don't know how long it lives out in the water, if it can live out in the water, there's a bunch of things that they just ain't doin' right, in my book, that they startin' to, startin' to realize now. I think it's in the marsh grass. We got a lot of marsh grass. See, well, the thing about it is, all your shrimp go in the grass and eat at night. They don't do it durin' the day, you know, 'cause somethin'll eat 'em. Birds'll pick 'em up or whatever. But at night, all these shrimp, fish, crabs, all that shit goes up in that grass and feeds, you know? And when the tide changes, they haul ass back out. Well, you know, they pickin' it up in there I bet you. If you stop and think, you know, if there's two or three black gill ciliates at the base of every stalk of marsh grass, that's a lot of ciliates. Damn lot of marsh grass. And they've listened to some of my suggestions up there. They've started lookin' in other places. They like me goin' on the cruise all the time. "Hey what you got for us today?"

S: Can you still sell a shrimp with black gill as long as it's...

W: Yeah. Yep, yep, yep. And it don't hurt the flavor, taste, or nothin'. You can't tell any kind of difference whatsoever in the shrimp except its gill's black. It's got a black spot right there on its gill. That's it. You head the shrimp, you can't even tell it was ever affected. 'Cause it's local concentrated. And when you boil 'em like with the heads on, with the black gill, can't taste no difference. There ain't no difference. So, I mean there's not like, it's bad for human consumption or nothin'.

S: Well I think we're done with our questions. Do you have any questions for us? Or do you have anything to add that you think that we didn't cover?

W: No, we covered a lot of basis. Pretty good bit.

A: Thank you.

W: Yes ma'am.