

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

Deepwater Horizon Oil Disaster–Gulf Coast Fisheries
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Ran Bui

Interviewer: Linda VanZandt
Interpreter: Angel Truong Phan

Volume 1043
2011

This project was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration through Mississippi State University-Northern Gulf Institute, Grant Number NA06OAR4320264. Louis M. Kyriakouides, Principal Investigator.

©2012

The University of Southern Mississippi

This transcription of an oral history by The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage of The University of Southern Mississippi may not be reproduced or published in any form except that quotation of short excerpts of unrestricted transcripts and the associated tape recordings is permissible providing written consent is obtained from The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. When literary rights have been retained by the interviewee, written permission to use the material must be obtained from both the interviewee and The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage.

This oral history is a transcript of a taped conversation. The transcript was edited and punctuation added for readability and clarity. People who are interviewed may review the transcript before publication and are allowed to delete comments they made and to correct factual errors. Additions to the original text are shown in brackets []. Minor deletions are not noted. Original tapes and transcripts are on deposit in the McCain Library and Archives on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi.



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

An Oral History with Ran Bui, Volume 1043

Interviewer: Linda VanZandt

Interpreter: Angel Truong Phan

Transcriber: Carol Short

Editor: Linda VanZandt

Biography

Mr. Ran Bui was born in 1960, one of eleven children, and raised in the port city of Vung Tau in southern Vietnam. Mr. Bui's parents are originally from Hai Phong in the north of Vietnam. His father, Canh Bui, was a member of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnamese Army) and a fisherman; his mother, Mau Thi Nguyen, fished with the family and worked for a seafood company processing oysters and shrimp. Mr. Bui began fishing with his father at age eleven. He was raised in the Catholic Church and attended Catholic school in Vung Tau.

Mr. Bui and his family escaped Vietnam from Vung Tau, on their boat, just days before the fall of South Vietnam on April 30, 1975. They were eventually picked up by an American ship and transported to the Philippines. After stays on another island, then Guam, they landed at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas. In 1977, after living in Oklahoma, Mr. Bui and his family moved to Biloxi and began shrimping the Mississippi Sound. He and his wife Lynn Bui have four children. Their boat is named *Lady Sariah* after their first grandchild.

Table of Contents

Childhood in Vietnam.....	1, 13
Father	2, 4
Family of origin, siblings.....	2
Learning to fish as a child.....	4
Mother.....	4
Family fished together in Vietnam for survival.....	5
Father sold boat to go in South Vietnamese Army.....	6, 14
Species caught in Vietnam.....	7
Regulations	9
Marketing catch	9
Fishing in Vietnam, circa 1960s	10
Jumping from boat before he could swim.....	11
Splitting and marketing catch in Vietnam	14
Going to Catholic school in Vietnam.....	15
American soldiers in Vung Tau	15
Memories of war, circa 1975, helping civilians escape from Communists in Phan Thiet.....	15
His escape from Vietnam at fourteen, not enough food, water on boat.....	19
Others on boat.....	19
Deciding to leave Vietnam.....	19
Trip from Vietnam to American ship.....	20
Transferring to American ship at sea.....	20
Safe on board American ship.....	20
Fort Chaffee, Arkansas	21, 23
Working on chicken farm, Oklahoma.....	22, 24
Differences between Vietnam and America	23
Sponsor in America.....	23
Arriving in Biloxi, Mississippi	25
Beginning to shrimp in Biloxi.....	26
First boat in United States.....	26
Shrimping successfully, working with father in Biloxi	26
Hurricane, 1985, damage to shrimp boat	27
Hurricane Katrina, 2005.....	29
Returning home after evacuating for Katrina	30
Shrimping after Katrina	31
BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster.....	32
Working in the cleanup effort	32
Dying sea life after oil disaster	32
No shrimp in shrimp season of 2011, following oil disaster	33
Dispersant BP used in Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi Sound, kills shrimp.....	33
White shrimp population decreased, September 2011.....	33
Losing money shrimping	33
Assessment of future of fishing on Mississippi Gulf Coast.....	35
Sea turtle deaths, TEDs, BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster	36

Possibility of training for other jobs	36
Love of fishing.....	37
Impact of BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster on community	38
Help for unemployed fishermen since BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster	39
Trade Adjustment Assistance program.....	39
Dangers of shrimping.....	40
Classes in safety	40
Wife’s loss of job after Katrina.....	42
Daughter’s love of fishing	46
Species seen in the Mississippi Sound.....	46
Family shrimps together	46
Boat, <i>Lady Sariah</i>	48
Mr. Bui’s parents	51
Multigenerational fishing family	52
Son, shrimping	52
Hopes for children.....	54
Being the wife of a fisherman.....	56
Reciprocity and mutuality in the fishing community	57
Finding shrimp	58
Overcoming the tremendous obstacles in his life	58
Bicultural, bilingual family.....	60
Adjustments made to the fishing life	61
Biloxi-Vietnamese population shifted north after Katrina.....	62
Typical cost of shrimping trip \$4000.....	63
Appendix: Photographs.....	65

AN ORAL HISTORY

with

RAN BUI

This is an interview for The University of Southern Mississippi Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. The interview is with Ran Bui and is taking place on September 20, 2011. The interviewer is Linda VanZandt. English/Vietnamese interpretation is provided by Angel Truong Phan. Also present is Lynn Bui, wife of Ran Bui, and their daughter, Rianna Bui.

VanZandt: Today is September 20, 2011. This is Linda VanZandt with the Center for Oral History, and I'm here in D'Iberville, Mississippi—or are we actually in Biloxi?

Bui: We're in Biloxi.

VanZandt: We're in Biloxi, OK, at the home of—

Bui: We're in D'Iberville, but I don't know; we got an address in Biloxi.

VanZandt: Biloxi address? OK. And we're at the home of Ran Bui.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And we're here with Angel Phan, as well, who will offer interpretation. So, Ran, you are a fisherman here—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —all your life.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And if we can just start back and hear a little bit about your life in Vietnam. Can I ask you first just to say your name?

Bui: My name is Ran Bui, and I'm from Vietnam, Vung Tau.

VanZandt: Vung Tau!

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. And I'll spell it, V-U-N-G, T-A-U.

Bui: Yeah. Yes.

VanZandt: A big fishing village, beautiful town.

Bui: It's beautiful there.

VanZandt: In South Vietnam. You were born there and raised, all your life?

Bui: Yeah. I born in Vung Tau, yeah.

VanZandt: OK. And did you stay in Vung Tau most of your life?

Bui: No. I born in Vung Tau, but my father, you know, he got to go in the [South Vietnamese] Army, and we moving here, here, there, you know.

VanZandt: So you moved with him, of course.

Bui: Yeah. I stayed with my relative, and—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: Yeah. (speaking Vietnamese) We owned a boat, but he in the Army and—

VanZandt: Do you know what he did in the Army? Was he a soldier, officer?

Bui: Yeah. He was soldier of—(speaking Vietnamese). He was soldier, Army, a couple month, and then he go take care of the, the—

Phan: The American—

Bui: The town.

VanZandt: The town, like security?

Bui: Yes, yeah.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese) (speaking to VanZandt) And if you want to ask the questions, I'll just restate them (inaudible).

VanZandt: OK, good, good. And so your father was in the Army.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: And what year were you born?

Bui: I born in nineteen—(speaking Vietnamese).

Phan: I was born in nineteen sixty.

Bui: Nineteen sixty.

VanZandt: We're almost the same age, one year apart. OK, 1960. And you were born in Vung Tau. And did you have brothers and sisters?

Bui: Yeah, I have six brother and three sister.

VanZandt: OK, so ten children in your family.

Bui: Actually, we got eleven, but two pass away.

VanZandt: OK, OK. And where were you in the order of children?

Bui: I'm second older.

VanZandt: Second oldest, OK.

Bui: Yeah. My sister is the first one, and I'm the second.

VanZandt: OK. And what were your parents' names, or *are* your parents' names?

Bui: My parents' name, Canh Bui.

Phan: Canh Bui.

Bui: C-A-N-H.

VanZandt: C-A-N-H.

Bui: Bui.

VanZandt: Bui. Is that mother or father?

Bui: That father.

VanZandt: Father, OK.

Bui: And my mama is Mau Thi Nguyen.

Phan: Mau, M-A-U, T-H-I, N-G-U-Y-E-N.

VanZandt: OK. (writing names down) OK, great. And Ran, does your name have any special significance? Does that mean anything in Vietnamese?

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: I don't know. (chuckles)

VanZandt: (chuckles) I just wondered.

Bui: Yeah, I can't even find the same name my daddy give me, my mama give me, around the world, whatever. I try to find the same name, but I don't know why they give me that. (laughs)

VanZandt: They just liked—it sounded good. They liked it. OK. (laughs)

Bui: Either way, maybe they heard American when they in Vietnam. They heard the American—Communists come over. They say, "Run, run, run!"

Phan: (laughs)

Bui: I don't know if that's what it is! (laughter) They named me Ran (pronounced "run.")

VanZandt: (laughs) Ah, that's a good story.

Bui: Yeah, I don't know. That what I thought.

VanZandt: Yeah, yeah. Well, what did your father—what was his occupation? Was he a shrimper, fisherman, too?

Bui: He's a fisherman, shrimper, all kind.

VanZandt: So that's where you learned—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —to fish and shrimp.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: How old were you when you started going out with your father fishing?

Bui: Yeah. We been our family about eleven, twelve years old, learning from him, when I was young, young, going out with him.

VanZandt: And did you go to school?

Bui: Yeah. I go to school over there until about sixth grade. And then we run away from—I mean, when North Vietnamese come, and we have to come over here, and then I go a couple of year in school over there, over Oklahoma. We moved [to] Oklahoma, and then we got a—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah, yeah. He had friends down in Biloxi, Mississippi, and they told him that (noise interruption) fish here, so he moved here (noise interruption).

VanZandt: OK. So fishing brought you down here, too.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Being able to continue that.

Bui: Yeah, because my mama and my daddy, they, all their life, they fishing, and we work in seafood. That's why I come down, working.

VanZandt: Yeah. And what *did* your mother do? Your father was a fisherman. What did your mother do?

Bui: She seafood; she worked in seafood. She go work with us sometime, too. But before she got really [a lot of] kids when, when we first move here.

VanZandt: A lot of kids to take care of. (laughs)

Bui: And she had to stay home, take care and (inaudible).

VanZandt: Right. Well, when you say she worked in seafood, did she sell at the market, or what did she do?

Bui: No. She work seafood for the company.

VanZandt: She worked for a seafood company.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: OK. What did she do there? Do you know?

Bui: She pop the head on shrimp—

L. Bui: Opened oysters.

Bui: Opened oyster and—

L. Bui: Or popped, [de]headed shrimp.

VanZandt: And was that in Vung Tau that she did that?

Bui: No. In Vietnam she go fishing on the boat with us. *All* the family in the boat.

VanZandt: *All* went out. So she went fishing, too, out there.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Interesting. I haven't heard that yet.

Bui: Yeah. In Vietnam—(speaking Vietnamese).

Phan: Yeah. Those that went to school, they would stay with relatives. And the ones that were not going to school, they would go shrimping or fishing on the boat to earn an income.

Bui: And we go—they have to take care of the kid. The kid too little. We (inaudible) somebody to watch them.

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: They had to take them with them.

VanZandt: Right. So when you were old enough, eleven, twelve—

Bui: Yeah. I old enough I know how to work, follow my father.

VanZandt: Yeah. Did you enjoy that? Was that fun going with him?

Bui: Yes. I had to work to survive, over there.

VanZandt: You needed to help support the family.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Well, fishing was very different in Vietnam than here (chuckles)—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —on the Gulf Coast. So can you just talk about what you fished for, just the fishing life there, and how it was different from here?

Bui: There a lot of difference over there.

VanZandt: How was it different?

Bui: Because we work over there, one boat can't work it. We had two boats to pull the net and all.

VanZandt: *Ah!* So *two* boats would pull the net together.

Bui: Yeah. But over here they got outrigger; they got (inaudible) one boat pulling four net. Over there two boat pulling one net. (chuckles)

VanZandt: Pulling one net, instead of one boat pulling four nets.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. Not as much horsepower, maybe, to pull a net?

Bui: No, not much horsepower.

VanZandt: OK. And did your father own his own boat?

Bui: Yes, we own the boat.

VanZandt: Do you know if he built the boat?

Bui: Yeah, we built a couple of new one, and after that, he go in the [South Vietnamese] Army, he selled it. And when he come back, he buy another one.

VanZandt: So when he went in the Army and sold it—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —were you shrimping then at all?

Bui: Yeah, we were fishing. We [were] still fishing.

VanZandt: So you would go with other people on their boat?

Bui: Yeah, fishing with—my mama she run(?) the boat.

VanZandt: It just wasn't your boat anymore, family boat.

Bui: Yeah, yeah. We got a boat. We sell the boat when he in the Army, and then when he come back, we bought another boat.

VanZandt: And then went out again.

Bui: Then we were working.

VanZandt: Well, what kind of things would you catch in Vietnam?

Bui: Oh, we catch shrimp, fish, lobster, stingray—

VanZandt: *Stingray.*

Bui: And all kind of fish: king mackerel, croaker, all kind of—

VanZandt: King mackerel, and what was the last one that you just said?

Bui: Croaker.

VanZandt: How do you spell that, for the tape?

L. Bui: C-R-O-C-K-E-R, like croaker, C-R-O-A-K-E-R. Have you never seen a croaker?

VanZandt: No.

L. Bui: They croak.

Bui: Yeah, that's how they do.

L. Bui: They croak. When you catch them, they croak, just like their name; they croak.

Bui: (Inaudible) they call it.

L. Bui: It goes, *croak, croak.*

VanZandt: (laughs) (speaking to Phan) Have you seen one?

Phan: Yeah.

L. Bui: Yeah, they do. They sound just like, if you say “croaker,” when you catch them, they croak. Just like (making sound) *croak.*

VanZandt: Do you find those around here?

L. Bui: Yeah.

Bui: Yeah.

L. Bui: And they catch the same thing we catch here.

VanZandt: You do. And what size fish is that? I mean—

Bui: They not big fish; they small.

L. Bui: Croakers, they don't get very big.

VanZandt: Maybe six inches?

L. Bui: They don't get very big.

Bui: About three, four inches.

VanZandt: Oh, OK. I've never heard of that before.

Bui: Some of them big, but you don't catch a lot.

VanZandt: Right, yeah, just the smaller ones.

Bui: [We] get some catfish, catfish, eel, them yellow eel, yellow eel.

VanZandt: Yellow eels?

Bui: Yeah, in Vietnam. You go there, you seen them?

VanZandt: I *didn't* see those.

Bui: Yeah, they're big.

VanZandt: Wow, I don't think I did. I'm trying to remember at the market. We went to a lot of markets.

Bui: Yeah, they got yellow eel.

VanZandt: No. You know, I did see that. Now that you say that, I do remember seeing that.

Bui: Yeah, they're kind of long.

VanZandt: *Yeah.*

Bui: And about that big.

Phan: It's like a delicatessen for them.

VanZandt: Yes, a delicacy, right.

Bui: Yeah, they're yellow.

VanZandt: *Yes.* So you caught *everything* in your net.

Bui: Yeah, we caught.

VanZandt: So you would find *all* of that, unlike here where you're just catching one thing, shrimp.

L. Bui: You catch it all out here, too.

VanZandt: But you're just—but you're only licensed for certain [fish].

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: What are the kinds of differences? I mean, there you could do anything and not worry about breaking regulations.

Bui: Yeah. Over there we don't have to buy a license or nothing. Over here, whatever you want to catch, they have to buy a license.

L. Bui: But you're going to catch it in your net anyway, but you can't keep it.

Bui: Yeah.

L. Bui: I mean, you're only allowed so many crabs, so many fish, but you're going to catch the same thing in the nets here that they caught over there, but it's limited here. See, over there they didn't have limits. Over here you're like limited.

VanZandt: Right.

Phan: But you can purchase extra license, but—

VanZandt: Right, but certain quantities, yeah, all that's controlled.

L. Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: So that it doesn't get overfished. And so when you would catch all of that in your net, tell me, just paint a picture for me, because I've never been. I mean, this is all new to me—

Bui: I think we got some picture over there.

L. Bui: Of the boats with the—Brian, I think Brian's got the one with all the shrimp on the deck and the fish.

VanZandt: From Vietnam?

L. Bui: No, from here, for our boats here.

VanZandt: Oh, from here, do you? Oh, that would be great to see. So what would you do then? So you've got your net. It's a lot done by hand, I'm sure, then—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —as now, but then what would you—how would you separate? And—

Bui: Yeah, we had to—

VanZandt: —tell me about taking it to market, selling it.

Bui: Yeah, we have to separate them, and I head them, and I put them in the ice hole, and when the time come, then we sell it to the seafood.

VanZandt: So how long would you be out at a time?

Bui: Oh, most of the time I go out a week or ten days.

L. Bui: She's talking about Vietnam.

VanZandt: Vietnam, yeah. I'm sorry about that.

L. Bui and Bui: (Inaudible) (laughter)

VanZandt: We'll continue; we'll continue that!

Bui: OK.

L. Bui: He got lost.

VanZandt: Or you can continue and just talk about both, but just—yeah.

Bui: In Vietnam, before 1970, '69, we go in and out every day.

VanZandt: Every day.

Bui: From '72. '73, we build a *bigger* boat. (brief interruption) Yeah.

VanZandt: (continuing) Yeah, you built a bigger boat.

Bui: Yeah, we got a bigger boat, and we got *ice*. We go on an—

VanZandt: An ice boat then, yeah.

Bui: Yeah. And we go a few day, four or five days, depend on how much we caught. If you get full, you go in.

VanZandt: You've got to go back, right.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. And who would you sell to when you got back?

Bui: They got people come down—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah. Many people come, and whoever gave the best bid for it, then they got it.

VanZandt: Oh, OK. So people would be waiting there and *bid* for your catch.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK, very different from here. (laughs)

Bui: Yeah. Over—

VanZandt: So you'd negotiate the price.

Bui: Yeah. Over here, you just come in the factory, and they unload it for you.

VanZandt: Very different.

Bui: You go get ice and fuel and take a break, a couple of day, and go back out.

VanZandt: So any crazy stories that you remember fishing in Vietnam? Anything interesting that happened while you were out there, just memories that stick out in your mind about fishing?

Bui: Sometimes, I forget now (chuckles); too young. I can't remember much. But I remember some.

VanZandt: Right. Any big storms that you were in?

Bui: One time, my daddy, he built a boat in Binh Thuy where, that other town. He built a boat over there, and we got—

VanZandt: Binh Trang?

Bui: Binh Thuy, Binh Thuy.

VanZandt: Binh Thuy.

Bui: B-I-N-H and T-U-Y [T-H-U-Y].

VanZandt: Oh, OK.

Bui: And he build a brand-new boat over there. And when we come from Vung Tau, we got another boat. We go over there, and my mama, when I little, (laughter) they park outside the water, where the waves(?) are, and we put a—it looks like a—in Vietnam they got a—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: I don't know [if] you know. (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Like a pond? A pond?

Bui: Yeah, yeah. I don't know how to call that.

VanZandt: Oh!

Bui: Yeah. My mama tell me, "Stay on the boat." Or she going to go and get my daddy. And I didn't. I jumped out. (laughter)

VanZandt: (gasps and laughs) You jumped out of the boat?

Bui: Down in that thing.

Phan: Down into the pond.

VanZandt: Into the pond?

Bui: Yeah, yeah, the boat parked there. We didn't find them, so we can go in the other side over there and—

VanZandt: Could you swim?

Bui: No, no, no, no. When we coming in and when we get out, you know, and the thing, you know, turn over.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: No. (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: Yeah. It turn over, and my mama, she know how to swim, to try to save me.

VanZandt: Oh, my goodness.

Bui: And my other cousin, he on the boat. He see, and he pick up the anchor and come and rescue me. But my mama, she still in the water; she almost go down. And another boat—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah. His mom was sinking, and she almost drowned, but another boat had came, and they saved her, and they pulled her by her arm.

Bui: The arm. She almost go under, and then they go and save.

VanZandt: How horrible—and saved her, out.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese) (chuckles)

VanZandt: That must have been very scary to watch.

Bui and Phan: Yeah.

Bui: (speaking to wife, Lynn) Come on, Lynn! You're not going to sit here with me?

L. Bui: I am. I'm listening. I'm listening!

Bui: Come over here. (inaudible)

L. Bui: I'm listening! (laughter) I'm just sitting here listening.

VanZandt: (chuckling) OK, good!

L. Bui: I've got (inaudible; speaking simultaneously).

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese to Mr. Bui)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: They're still alive. They live in Biloxi now.

VanZandt: They do? Your mother *and* father?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Oh, how wonderful!

Bui: But they're kind of old now.

VanZandt: How old are they now?

Bui: Well, I tell, he born in 1928. I don't know how old he is. My wife and I don't even know how old he is.

VanZandt: He's probably seventy-three, maybe, or early seventies.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: Yeah.

Phan: Yeah. I just asked him earlier if his mom and dad was still alive, and he said they are here in Biloxi, Mississippi, and they came over to the Americas together, and you can ask him more about—

VanZandt: Yes, we're going to do that. I'm curious, before we get to your leaving Vietnam, any special memories from school, school days or friends growing up, games that you played. What did you like to do when you were young, for fun?

Bui: In Vietnam I go to school in Vung Tau one time, but I got a grandfather live over there by the school, and I stayed with him. Sometime I stay with him, only weekend because in a weekday I had to stay in school—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah, like a convent, when he went to school. Yeah, a convent.

VanZandt: So it was a Catholic school?

Phan: Catholic school.

Bui: Yeah, Catholic.

VanZandt: OK. So you lived there at the school during the week and stayed with Grandfather on the weekend?

Bui: On the weekend, yes.

VanZandt: OK, so go ahead. Were you going to tell a story about school?

Bui: Yeah, we go to school—

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan and Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah. (speaking in first person for Mr. Bui) During that time, my mom had to be a fisherman, and that's how she was able to get money to feed the kids and everything. And my father was in the [South Vietnamese] Army. And some of the kids went to school, and his older sister, he remembered she actually quit school, and she helped his mother to go fishing.

VanZandt: To go fishing, to support the family, OK. How long was that? How long was your father in the Army? Do you know how many years?

Bui: Probably be in, he in and out—

VanZandt: Sure.

Bui: —for about three or four year.

VanZandt: OK. OK. So your older sister helped a lot—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —with your mother.

Bui: Sister (inaudible). Yes.

VanZandt: OK. And your catch, when you would bring it, you would sell it. And then, did you always keep some for the family, too?

Bui: Yeah, we keep it to survive, [and] you pay for people working and whatever, fix the boat.

VanZandt: The crew, maybe, too.

Bui: And whatever left, we spend it. (chuckles)

VanZandt: (chuckles) Did you learn to navigate, drive the boat?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And navigate?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Well, so you went to Catholic school, and what was that like? What were the nuns like?

Bui: They good. They charge a ticket to (inaudible), good way we grow up and all that.

VanZandt: Grow up the good way.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Do things right.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: (laughs) And were your parents both Catholic, too?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: OK, Catholic family. So do you remember any stories that your father might have told you about being in the Army or during the war? Because you were, what? Fifteen years old when Saigon fell?

Bui: Yeah, thirteen, fourteen.

VanZandt: So it was a tough time, I'm sure, those years your father was fighting. Do you remember any stories that he would tell you when you were together?

Bui: No.

VanZandt: Did you know much about what went on in the war?

Bui: I didn't know much.

VanZandt: Not too much. Did you see, living in Vung Tau, were there many American soldiers around, other soldiers?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Because that was a big—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —port and, yeah, tell me about that, what your impressions were about all of the people coming and going during the war. Just any stories about that.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: When the war still on, we go work shrimp company. And I go to market— (speaking Vietnamese) We see a lot of—we take people. We got a boat. We take people from Phan Thiet.

VanZandt: Phan Thiet.

Bui: Yeah, and people, move them back to Vung Tau.

VanZandt: Ah!

Bui: We do a lot of that. And we see a lot of people die, in the water—

VanZandt: (heavy sigh) *Oh.*

Bui: —floating. When we navigate, we have to move away from them because a lot of people, they drive from the boat, finding someone. Some fell off the boat and [were] dying.

VanZandt: And this was during the war in 1975, or when people were leaving?

Bui: Seventy—yeah, when—[19]75 when the North—

VanZandt: Right, when the Communists—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —moved in. Saigon was falling.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: You helped carry people from Phan Thiet to Vung Tau.

Bui: Yes, yes.

VanZandt: Ah. You and your father?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Was he out of the Army then?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Right. Oh my goodness. So these were civilians—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —trying to escape.

Bui: Yes, trying to escape.

VanZandt: And you would bring them to Vung Tau. Why? Why was it better for them to come to Vung Tau?

Bui: Because they keep bombing over there. They bombing everywhere; that why they had to go.

VanZandt: Keep moving south.

Bui: Yes, keep moving south. And then we, when we come to South, [as] they get closer, we all pack up on the boat, and we leave Vung Tau. We go out to ocean.

VanZandt: That's when you left?

Bui: Yeah. And American people, they waiting out there.

VanZandt: Ships?

Bui: Yeah, ship waiting out there. We get in a barge and wait a couple of day. I see a lot of people hungry, no water, people fall off the boat, die. I've seen that.

VanZandt: I'm so sorry. You were a witness to that.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: And when did you leave? Tell me about April 30, [1975], and maybe just the—

Bui: No. We go before April.

VanZandt: That's what I was going to ask.

Bui: You know, 28 or 29, I don't remember exactly the day.

VanZandt: But before the 30th.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: So how did you plan that escape?

Bui: Because when that time come, the Communists all over, they shooting everywhere. And we got lot of family living there. And then you get on the boat, out.

VanZandt: So you left with *all* of your family, your mother and father, all your brothers and sisters?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: You all got to leave together.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: That's unusual; so many families—

Bui: Yeah, they separated.

VanZandt: —left behind, but you-all got to stay together.

Bui: Yes, yes.

VanZandt: How were you able to do that? Is that because you had your own boat?

Bui: Yeah, we had our own boat, but we got a lot of—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: Cousin and (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: They had a lot of relatives.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah. They had a lot of relatives, and you usually go in pairs(?) (inaudible).

VanZandt: So everyone decided—did everyone decide together to leave?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Did anyone want to stay?

Bui: Yeah. I got one aunt still over there. She—

VanZandt: She didn't want to—

Bui: Because her husband in the Army, she don't want to leave, and she still over there now.

VanZandt: Was he still gone? She didn't know where he was, or were they together, she just didn't—

Bui: See, he in the Army, but she don't know where he at, so she had to stay. And now she's still down, back in Vietnam.

VanZandt: OK, she's still there. But your mother wanted to leave, and your father wanted to leave?

Bui: Yeah, because they have to. If they don't, they go in prison for a long time because they in the Army.

VanZandt: Right. So things would've been bad for them if they hadn't left?

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Yeah. So when you left, can you just talk about that day that you left? Did you leave at night or daytime? Just talk about getting on the boat and what that was like when you left.

Bui: Yeah, in the middle of the day. And we see a lot of gun, machine gun and all that.

VanZandt: Machine guns, ah.

Bui: Yeah, say, "Time to go." And we all put together, food, water, on the boat. And when we out of canal, they're still shooting at us. That why we have to (chuckles) [leave].

VanZandt: They were still shooting at you—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —as you were leaving through the canal.

Bui: Yeah. Yeah. On the boat, they shoot to the boat, got a lot of holes, you have to poke(?) it out.

VanZandt: Did you? *Oh, my goodness.* And what did you take with you? Did you have any clothes, extra?

Bui: Yeah, we had a few clothes, belongings, and we got water. We would have to get water and food.

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: Because we fishermen, we go fishing.

VanZandt: You knew how to be prepared and take things with you. Did you have other people with you, too, on the boat, not family, just other people?

Bui: Yeah, we got a lot of people.

VanZandt: How many?

Bui: Labor(?) and stuff. Probably about a hundred people on the boat.

VanZandt: A hundred, wow, OK. And how big was the boat?

Bui: The boat about seventy feet. Yeah, a pretty big boat.

VanZandt: That's a big boat, yeah. Well, tell me about leaving. How did you feel when you were leaving?

Bui: Well, when they come, we have to go. I don't know. When I young, I don't know how I feel. If we stay, a lot of gunfire and kill somebody, and so we have to go.

VanZandt: You felt like you didn't have a choice.

Bui: No choice. No.

VanZandt: Um-hm. And you were fifteen.

Bui: No, about thirteen or fourteen.

VanZandt: Thirteen or fourteen.

Bui: I don't know; I don't know. I think about fourteen years old or something.

VanZandt: OK. Very young. What was that trip like? Just tell me about where you landed and what that journey was like after you left.

Bui: Over from—

VanZandt: When you left Vietnam.

Bui: When I took(?) to—

VanZandt: Did you know where you were going?

Bui: Yeah. We don't know *where* we going. They just take us, where to go, and then we go from there.

VanZandt: And you were picked up by an American ship?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: How long was that [before] you got picked up? How long were you gone? Same day?

Bui: No, no. We in the boat a couple of day, and people, a lot of people get hungry, crying; people desperate for water. They're fighting for water, for food.

VanZandt: People on your boat?

Bui: No, we on the boat, but we get on a barge. They say get in the barge first—

VanZandt: You got on a barge.

Bui: —before the American ship picked them up. And then we stayed a couple of days. A lot of people thirsty, hungry, fighting for food. And then they come and pick it up. A lot of people, they hungry. They put the big net down. And they taking people up, but some people so hungry and no food; they climb up. They holding it. When they pick up, you know how a ship, a big ship.

VanZandt: Was it a net?

Bui: Yeah, in the net. And people, they can't wait. They hang onto the net, and then they hang on no more. They drop it. I see that, um-hm. A lot of people die. But we got lucky. We got—one of my cousins, she pass out, and we go in the front of the barge, and we see the—*nobody there*. You just go right there, and we go up in, on the net.

VanZandt: *Right*. So you were able to get on there.

Bui: Yeah, and lucky—

VanZandt: Did you help her, carry her, because she passed out?

Bui: Yeah, and we got a lot of family. We help her, get her water, and go up. When we go up there, they feed us a lot of food.

VanZandt: Then you were OK.

Bui: Yeah, they have can good, Army food.

VanZandt: Canned food, right. And so then where did you go?

Bui: And then after they pick up people with their food, they running about, I think about two day or two night or something. I don't remember. We go on Philippine.

VanZandt: *Philippines?* OK.

Bui: Yes. And then from there they transfer them. They transfer all the people on the other boat, the other ship, and then they go to Wick. You know that island, Wick?

VanZandt: Not Guam?

L. Bui: Wick.

Bui: No. We go Wick first.

L. Bui: I don't know how you spell that. Maybe W-E-E-K?

VanZandt: OK. I can look it up.

Phan: He went there first and then to Guam.

VanZandt: OK.

Bui: Yeah, we stay over there about two month, three month. I don't remember.

VanZandt: Sure.

Bui: And then they take a airplane, American airplane. They take us to Guam.

VanZandt: To Guam.

Bui: Yeah. To Guam one day, they do the paper, and they take us to Fort Chaffee.

VanZandt: Fort Chaffee! Arkansas.

Bui: Yeah, Arkansas, yeah. We stay over there about, maybe nine or ten month.

VanZandt: Oh, OK, long time.

Bui: OK, and a sponsor—(speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: Say a sponsor go to the whole, the whole family and cousins, grandpa.

VanZandt: *Really?*

Bui: Yeah. We go to the, where they farm with chicken, chicken farm. We go over there. We working.

VanZandt: In Arkansas, still?

Bui: No.

VanZandt: Oklahoma, when you—

Bui: Went Arkansas, and then they sponsor; go to Oklahoma.

VanZandt: To Oklahoma.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: And you worked for a chicken farmer, in Oklahoma?

Bui: Yeah, a chicken farmer.

VanZandt: The whole family?

Bui: Yeah. Some of them raised chicken. Some of them raise baby chicken, the egg, chicken. And we stay over there about nine, ten month, and we got—

VanZandt: (speaking simultaneously) Do you know—oh, I'm sorry. Do you know where in Oklahoma?

Bui: Lawton.

VanZandt: Lawton?

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. I knew some other people that were there. OK.

Bui: You know where that is?

VanZandt: Sure.

Bui: And then we stayed about nine, ten month. And we got a, people same city(?), they say, "You're fisherman. Either you go over here, or you go Florida." And then we come over here ever since. And we stay here.

VanZandt: And what year was that that you came to Biloxi?

Bui: Biloxi? I think '77.

VanZandt: Seventy-seven, OK. So altogether you were gone about two years before you came here to Biloxi—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —after you left Vietnam.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And what were your first impressions when you landed in America at Fort Chaffee, after a very long trip? (chuckles) What did you think? What did you think about America and being here?

Bui: We hear everybody say, boring over here, because in Vietnam a lot of people around. You go over here. [They said] everybody stay home. You want to go somewhere, get in the car and go somewhere. That's what they said. But they get used to it. You get used to it.

VanZandt: So *there*, you had to get in a car and drive.

Bui: No, over here.

VanZandt: Yeah, in Oklahoma, to see people, do things. But Vietnam, everyone—

Bui: Yeah. We just walk around everywhere, and we see people.

VanZandt: Yeah. And did you see anyone in Fort Chaffee that you knew from Vung Tau?

Bui: Yeah, we see a lot of people.

VanZandt: Did that make you feel better?

Bui: Yeah, we stay over there. But when the sponsor have, when somebody leave, all crying. We don't know when we going to see back (inaudible).

VanZandt: That must've been so difficult.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Everyone going at different times, different places, all over the U.S.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: So did you choose to go to Oklahoma, or that's where the sponsor lived, and they just took you there? Did you have a choice?

Bui: Yeah, the sponsor, they say. But we all have to go work, so. They have fishing club(?) over there. That's why they sponsor all us, because the Army base (inaudible).

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah. He said that, "Yeah, we do have a choice. Some sponsored one family, but this one, they sponsored many families so they chose to go with this one because his family could stay together.

VanZandt: (brief interruption) (speaking to Mrs. Bui) Oh, thank you, very good. That was so nice. (speaking to Ms. Phan) So you went so you could all stay together—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —as a family to Oklahoma.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: That's so wonderful.

Bui: I don't want to go with the other sponsor. They want sponsor one family, but I don't want to do that. They wait for the whole group to go.

VanZandt: *Right.* How many were in your family?

Bui: There were a lot of us.

VanZandt: Ten children, mom, dad.

Bui: And my cousins—

VanZandt: Cousins.

Bui: My mama family and my daddy family.

VanZandt: Oh, my goodness. *A lot* of you.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And so do you remember the name of your sponsor, remember their name?

Bui: No.

VanZandt: Yeah, OK. But they were good to you?

Bui: Yeah, they good. When we go out there, we live in a trailer thing, their family.

VanZandt: Trailers.

Bui: They got food, everything, all ready.

VanZandt: They helped you.

Bui: Enjoy a week and then start working. They show you how do work.

VanZandt: Did they teach you chicken farming? They taught you?

Bui: Yeah, they teach you how to do stuff.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: Yeah.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: He's just describing where he worked at. When he first came to America, he was in a chicken farm. And they would get like a—when they would put the eggs in there.

VanZandt: Incubator?

Phan: Incubate them. And then they would hatch them, and he would deliver them to a different company, so that they could raise those little chickens.

VanZandt: Oh, OK. So then you *finally* got to Biloxi. (chuckles)

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: In 1977.

Bui: Seven, yeah.

VanZandt: And what did you think about Biloxi? You said you had a friend already here fishing?

Bui: Yeah, one friend, yeah.

VanZandt: And so he encouraged you to come.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: And the whole family came at the same time?

Bui: Yeah, yes. A lot of people come down here. And when we come down here, we saw; it's not a lot of people. They got apartment and all kind of home, and they say, "Wherever you want to live in, you go, (inaudible) go in there and live."

VanZandt: Really?

Bui: Because when we move down here, ain't much, nothing.

VanZandt: *Very* different from now. So you had your choice to live, plenty of apartments, places to live?

Bui: Yes, um-hm.

VanZandt: And where was your first home? Do you remember where in Biloxi?

Bui: Yes, in east home(?), East Biloxi, in Biloxi.

VanZandt: Uh-huh, like Point Cadet?

Bui: Yeah, where Point Cadet is.

VanZandt: OK. And did you-all live in one house?

Bui: No, we got a—

VanZandt: You had a lot of family.

Bui: My mama got about ten, say about ten. We live in about four-bedroom apartment. And the other family live in, beside us.

VanZandt: Right, nearby. Well, tell me about starting to shrimp here.

Bui: OK.

VanZandt: What was it like then?

Bui: OK. When I first over here, they got a small boat.

VanZandt: About how big, when you say “small?”

Bui: It about forty feet, thirty; it was kind of small. You go to work, a little out here.

VanZandt: Out here in Back Bay, or the Mississippi Sound?

Bui: Yeah, Mississippi Sound. And we go fishing there, and my mama work in the oyster.

VanZandt: She did? In the oyster factory?

Bui: Yeah, she was shucking oyster.

VanZandt: OK, cracking the shells open and processing them.

Bui: Yeah, and we go fishing (inaudible), and we build bigger boat, bigger boat.

VanZandt: You built your own boat?

Bui: No. We bought them.

VanZandt: You bought different boats, bigger ones, OK.

Bui: We buy them.

L. Bui: (Inaudible)

Bui: Then, (chuckles) I forget.

VanZandt: Yeah. So you got bigger boats, and bigger. So you were doing well.

Bui: Yes, yeah, we were.

VanZandt: Was your father shrimping with you?

Bui: Yes, yes.

VanZandt: So father and you?

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Who else went out?

Bui: And a couple of deckhand.

VanZandt: A couple of deckhands, OK. So you owned your own boat. You bought a boat here.

Bui: Yes, yeah, yeah.

VanZandt: How did you buy the boat? Were you able to save the money—

L. Bui: (son Brian enters room) That's Brian. You (referring to Mrs. Phan) went to school with him?

VanZandt: Oh!

Phan: Yeah, I did go to school with him!

Bui: Can we take a break for a little bit now? (end of Part 1; beginning of Part 2)

VanZandt: Let's start again. OK, so we were just talking about—

Bui: Shrimp.

VanZandt: Yeah. And your mother was working in the oyster factory. So OK. Go ahead. So you went out and kept getting a bigger boat and bigger.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: So things were good.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Shrimping was good here.

Bui: And then after hurricane come, we got a little boat away. The hurricane come, we leave the boat. We run to canal. We leave the boat.

VanZandt: The industrial canal?

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Now, are you talking about, which storm? Are you talking about Hurricane Katrina now?

Bui: No.

VanZandt: OK, way back.

Bui: I think, way back. [Nineteen] eighty—

L. Bui: —five.

Bui: Eighty-five.

VanZandt: Eighty-five. Betsy?

L. Bui: Five.

VanZandt: Oh, '85, OK, go ahead.

Bui: We leave the boat there, and we go hide somewhere. And when we come back, the boat sunk.

VanZandt: It had sunk.

Bui: Yeah. And then they help us to pick it up, and we bring it back to dry dock, and everybody help into getting boat fixed.

VanZandt: Repaired.

Bui: Yeah, and have to repair and have money to fix the boat. And from there, we just working our way up; get a bigger boat. (laughter) And then when I got—my daddy got about seventy-foot boat, and a wooden boat, kind of old. And he run to ground, and we go trying to go to dry dock, and it sunk right out there.

VanZandt: *Oh*, how did that happen? It ran aground?

Bui: Yes. He go on a shortcut, and big boat can't go on (chuckles) shortcut.

VanZandt: *Oh*, too big for that, where he took it.

Bui: He went around, and the boat sunk, and then we don't buy no more boat, and I go work on a freezer boat.

VanZandt: On a freezer, someone else's freezer boat then?

Bui: Yeah, freezer boat, ice boat, and then—

VanZandt: As a deckhand? So you were helping—

Bui: Yeah, a deckhand and captain. They want me captain; I don't want to be captain.

VanZandt: Oh. Why didn't you want to be captain?

Bui: Too headache, too much headache.

VanZandt: Too much headache.

Bui: Yeah, and then—well, after Katrina, when we come back here and try to fix the house and all that, and somebody say he sell a boat. One of my cousin, he say he want to sell the boat, and we bought it from [after] Katrina. And we got a boat now.

VanZandt: Well, tell me *about* Katrina. When Katrina happened, where were you? Just tell me about that. So you had a boat before Katrina.

Bui: No, after Katrina. I'm talking about after Katrina.

VanZandt: OK. Well—(brief phone interruption)

Bui: After Katrina—

VanZandt: Tell me about your Katrina story.

Bui: OK.

VanZandt: You were shrimping before Katrina happened? Were you shrimping?

Bui: Yeah, we shrimp. And all the Coast Guard, they—

VanZandt: Coast Guard?

Bui: Yeah, they tell us you have to come in and go hide. But I don't have no boat, so.

VanZandt: Oh, you *didn't* have a boat then. You were a deckhand.

Bui: Yeah. So I jump up to the land and take my family and go hide it, go to Houston or wherever.

VanZandt: So you left, before Katrina.

Bui: Yeah, we, the whole family, we left. And then we can't find no hotel, no place, and we park on one of them gas station—gas station, Lynn, or?

L. Bui: No.

VanZandt: Rest area?

L. Bui: Rest area.

Bui: No, not a—rest area, and then we come to a—where that at?

L. Bui: That's [Hurricane] Ivan, right? That's not Katrina. Katrina, we went to Lucedale, [Mississippi].

Bui: Oh.

VanZandt: Oh, OK, yeah. Too many hurricanes to remember. (chuckles) So during Katrina you evacuated to Lucedale.

Bui: Yeah, yes.

VanZandt: OK.

Bui: With her nephew. And when we come back, after Katrina we come back, we got to chain saw. Everywhere we go, the tree fall, and we have to cut the tree to get

home. You know what? We the first one to go back. We go Biloxi and see. Oh, my God, the whole thing wipe out.

VanZandt: Shocking to see.

Bui: Yeah, shocking see. Everything. Boats, some in there where we were, and all casino on the land. And we tape the house up, and we just tore up on the side out there, and we cover up. And we still lucky we still got place to live. If we don't, we don't *know* where we going to stay at.

VanZandt: So you had this land here, sitting.

Bui: Yes, yes.

VanZandt: But not the house.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: You had a trailer somewhere else and then brought it here.

Bui: Yes. When Katrina hit, we had to live here already. It just tore up my home, my back deck, and whatever.

VanZandt: I see. So you had to redo the back deck.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: It's a good thing you had those skills. You could do that, and your son—

Bui: I don't know how to do carpenter [work]. I just try to do it.

VanZandt: Right, but you did. It looks beautiful.

Bui: I just try my best, have some place for the kid.

VanZandt: Yeah.

Bui: Us, we get old, and (inaudible). I do it for the kid.

VanZandt: Sure, to leave something for them.

Bui: Um-hm.

VanZandt: So after Katrina, were you able to shrimp again pretty soon after the storm?

Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: Tell me about that.

Bui: After Katrina, in couple of week people come, but they have to fix the ice (inaudible) and diesel before we can go out because we don't—

VanZandt: There was nowhere to ice up. (kitchen noise)

Bui: Nowhere to ice up and nowhere to get diesel, so they had to fix the (inaudible) (interference with kitchen noise)

VanZandt: Repair all that before you could go.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Some people I've heard went to Bayou La Batre, before they—(kitchen noise)

Bui: *Shhh!*

L. Bui: I was cracking eggs.

VanZandt: That's OK. Got to fix some food! So some people were going to Bayou La Batre to get fuel and ice because you couldn't get it here.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Did you do that, or you just waited?

Bui: We just waited. We had a small boat. We didn't have any big boat.

VanZandt: OK. So when did you start shrimping again after Katrina? Do you know what year? Was it 2006?

Bui: Yeah, I know it's two thousand—

VanZandt: Or 2005?

Bui: Two thousand five, yeah, about a couple of month later.

VanZandt: What was that like, because, I mean, there was debris out there.

Bui: Yes. They go out there, a lot of debris. All the way, some pick up in net all kind of debris.

VanZandt: Did it ruin your nets?

Bui: Yes, everything (inaudible).

VanZandt: Do you repair your own nets?

Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: Wow. And so tell me just about—it's been six years now since Katrina.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: And then the [BP Deepwater Horizon] oil spill happened in April last year [2010]. And you were shrimping up until the oil spill?

Bui: Yeah, we not shrimping yet, the oil spill. But the big boat, they do, but they close it [waters]; they close all the area. Nobody can go shrimp no more. And they hire people go clean the oil and stuff.

VanZandt: Were you able to help with the cleanup?

Bui: Yeah. We go to school for learning, training, and then they didn't call us about a month later, a couple of month later. We only work twelve day. People work three, four month; we only work twelve days.

VanZandt: Twelve days?

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Cleaning up?

Bui: Yeah. We go out there and run around and see if you see oil, report to them.

VanZandt: So you had like a radio that you'd report on?

Bui: Yeah, yeah. We assess and report to them and take them and see it; we clean it up.

VanZandt: And how would you clean it up?

Bui: They got a material, some kind of material. You throw it down there, and it soak the fuel up, or if they too thick, they have to wear a glove or what, pick it up.

VanZandt: Well, what did you see? Just describe what you saw out there.

Bui: I saw a bird, turtle dying.

VanZandt: With oil.

Bui: Yeah. Oil was on them.

VanZandt: Where was this, out in the Mississippi Sound?

Bui: Yeah, in the Mississippi Sound, I see them.

VanZandt: How far out did you go to help cleanup?

Bui: By the Horn Island, Ship Island.

VanZandt: Yes. Yeah. And you saw the wildlife had been affected.

Bui: Yeah. Yeah.

VanZandt: And was that a good thing to be a part of the cleanup? Did that help you?

Bui: Well, I think it help out with the income, so we can survive because they close. But this year, we never see—I've been work all my life, and I never see this happen,

this year. We got no shrimp. Now, every year before that, we got shrimp. We go catch shrimp and bring it in. Now we go out there, wasting fuel and wasting all.

VanZandt: For thirty-something years you've been shrimping here.

Bui: Yeah. I never see that.

VanZandt: Every year you've had shrimp.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Until now.

Bui: Yes, until now. I haven't seen that.

VanZandt: Why do you think that is? Why—(noise interruption)

Bui: Oh, I've probably seen the oil, the oil spill, when they put the chemical down, the tar ball go down and—

VanZandt: Dispersant?

Bui: Yeah, and the shrimp can't grow, and they eat that, they die, or whatever.

VanZandt: And what they're eating, it kind of works through the chain, the seafood chain.

Bui: But they can't even grow before. This time of year, they got a lot of big shrimp. Now, we go out there, and they're still small, kind of little, small.

VanZandt: So this is September and normally—

Bui: Normal—

VanZandt: —what season would this be? Would it—

Bui: White shrimp.

VanZandt: White shrimp season.

Bui: Yeah, yeah.

VanZandt: And you would be catching a lot now.

Bui: Yeah. We catching some; we just survive. We catch some to sell and make profit. But now we go, and we losing fuel. We losing money.

VanZandt: Have you been out since the oil spill?

Bui: Yeah, we've been out.

VanZandt: How many times have you?

Bui: Yeah, I been out first season. We made a couple of trips, and the brown shrimp we do OK.

VanZandt: When was that, that you went out?

Bui: In June, huh, Lynn?

VanZandt: In June.

L. Bui: You've been home like six weeks.

Bui: And how about when we first—

L. Bui: They open in May.

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: Yeah. We go a couple of trip, and we do OK, but after that, oil.

VanZandt: OK, with the brown shrimp but not since then.

Bui: No, not seen much. They don't' even grow either, the shrimp—

L. Bui: They were small.

Bui: —were small.

L. Bui: *Very* small.

VanZandt: Oh, my goodness. So it sounds like the bigger the boat you have, if you're able to go *way* out into federal waters—

Bui: No. I go in the [Mississippi] Sound water.

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: Yeah, in the—

VanZandt: And there's no shrimp, but if you go out further, then there are shrimp. It's just not—

Bui: And I got friend, they go, and they losing money, too, a lot of them. I got cousin [with] big boat, go out.

VanZandt: And they're still not finding any.

Bui: Nope.

VanZandt: Do any of them go to Louisiana?

Bui: Yes. Yeah.

VanZandt: And they're not finding any there either?

Bui: They saying no.

VanZandt: Alabama? What about Alabama?

Bui: No. They say they wasting fuel.

VanZandt: So Ran, what do you think the future holds for fishing around here?

Bui: I don't know.

VanZandt: Do you think it will get better?

Bui: Either way, they always try blame for us, kill the turtle. Before we shrimping, we nobody shrimping when the oil spill, and the turtle dying; they keep blaming on the fishermen and all that. You see it on TV.

VanZandt: Yeah, and let me just explain that for the recording. The fishermen had been blamed for turtles—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —dying.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Because they said you weren't using the turtle excluder devices, the TEDs, T-E-D-S.

Bui: No. Before, twenty year before, (inaudible) the turtle dying. Now the oil spill and turtle dying, and then they (chuckles)—

VanZandt: Blame it on you, right?

Bui: Yeah, blame it on shrimpers. A lot of them get mad, and all that.

VanZandt: It must be very frustrating.

Bui: Yeah, they try to (inaudible) the shrimper. That what I heard. I don't know what they try to (inaudible) all the fishermen down there. I don't know. After that, I don't know what I'm going to do.

VanZandt: Well, yeah. I wonder because after Katrina it was bad. Katrina was a catastrophe.

Bui: Well, yeah, they recover.

VanZandt: Tell me the difference. How does it seem after Katrina and after the oil spill?

Bui: Yeah, after Katrina, in a couple of year later, we pick it up good. Now, (inaudible) they say they pick up more good, more, but then the oil spill, and I don't know [what] happen. No shrimp.

VanZandt: Um-hm. And so do you plan on—would you like to go out and continue shrimping if you could, if things were good?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: You're not ready to retire yet. You want to—

Bui: No, no, not yet.

VanZandt: Yeah. Well, some people are talking about maybe other careers, training for—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —for occupations. Have you thought about that?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: Is it something you would be interested in doing?

Bui: They give us a lot of career to go, to learn it for free, but—

VanZandt: Like what, for instance? What could you learn?

Bui: The electric, A/C [air-conditioning repair].

VanZandt: A/C?

Bui: Blue, blueprints.

VanZandt: Blueprint reading? I saw that.

Bui: Yeah, all that. And what else, Lynn? What else piece of paper they send it?

VanZandt: Yeah, I saw refrigerator—

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah, uh-huh.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese) I have a man; he work insulation. I work with him before, and he always call me back for working in—

VanZandt: Insulation?

Bui: Yeah, insulation. And then I love to fish. It's my life. I don't want [to change].

Phan: He don't want to change.

Bui: I got a lot of work. They call me to go work all the time with my—I love to go fishing.

VanZandt: Tell me what you love about fishing. What do you love?

Bui: Because we love to go fishing because we got fresh food to eat, and wherever, like fresh air, all that. When you go work on the land, you work in the casino, OK, but you work in construction, the sun. When I first move here, I know how to weld.

VanZandt: Right. To weld.

Bui: Yeah. But I go work outside with my friend. I see a lot of people pass out. I work a couple of week. I say, "I ain't working no more. Too hot."

VanZandt: From the heat, yeah, goodness.

Bui: Yeah. A lot of people took out every thirty minute. They pass out, but unh-uh, not me.

VanZandt: No, not worth [compromising] your health.

Bui: But I got one younger brother; he work now, welding now. He work all over the United States.

VanZandt: Oh, goodness.

Bui: He make good money.

VanZandt: I'll bet. Was fishing good money?

Bui: Oh, we do all right. You know how fishing is. When we fishing, we got money. The more money you got, the more you spend. And then winter, we have to borrow money, fix the boat.

Phan: Yeah.

VanZandt: You have to learn to budget your money so you have (chuckles) some left, for the winter, and not spend it all. Right?

Bui: Yeah. We do that. We always try to back up some if something wrong with the boat or the house or whatever.

VanZandt: Do you do most of your repairs all by yourself?

Bui: No. Some of them we can fix; some we have to call mechanic.

VanZandt: Sure, sure. Well, Ran, how have you seen this community change since the oil spill? How has it affected, maybe just you personally? And you've said a little bit about that. What about the whole community, your friends?

Bui: Well, a lot of people talking about it, but I don't know if they're affect. They say, when the oil spill, there's no shrimp and don't know what to do. That what I heard.

Phan: Yeah. (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: The whole community, I see. I live here thirty year.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: How they do this; how they do that. I don't know—

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: —get into that. That's what I heard.

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: They separate, this group, that group, and that group, yeah.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese)

Bui: A lot of group, this one tight-knit group; this one tight-knit group.

Phan: (chuckles) Yeah. He just finds that there's some good, and of course there's some bad, and (speaking in first person for Mr. Bui) I don't want to talk too much about the bad, but there is a lot of, I guess, different organizations started, and there's just a power struggle between them all, whether it be the Catholic Church or just different community organizations.

Bui: But a lot of people attend these groups.

Phan: But overall they're all doing good.

Bui: (Inaudible)

VanZandt: Sure, that's normal, right. That happens. Well, who has helped you? What has been the good?

Bui: Help me right now?

VanZandt: Where have you gotten help since the oil spill?

Bui: Since the oil spill, we got money from, they pay us some.

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: We go work for twelve day.

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: And then the government help us; do that kind of paper.

L. Bui: Yeah, the agriculture, yeah, like farmers and—

VanZandt: Oh, is it the TTA program?

L. Bui and Bui: Yeah, TAA [Trade Adjustment Assistance program], yeah.

VanZandt: TAA? Yeah. Would you tell me about that? What is that? I haven't heard much.

Bui: Tell her what we got.

L. Bui: It's like for like farmers or fishermen and stuff. And like the prices of shrimp for like the last couple of years, they go from like 2007 to 2008, whichever year was like the greatest—

VanZandt: The best.

L. Bui: —food price. The food price, the shrimp prices, and then they would pay you to go take these classes. You went to school to take these classes.

VanZandt: And what kind of classes were they?

L. Bui: He went to them. I didn't go to the ones.

VanZandt: OK. What kind of classes were they?

L. Bui: Business management, like how to make your—

Bui: How to use it for business.

L. Bui: —business more productive. What would you do to change that business, how to make it—

VanZandt: More—maybe market it.

L. Bui: Yeah, right.

VanZandt: Your fishing, your business as a fisherman.

L. Bui: Yeah, a lot of the Vietnamese went.

VanZandt: OK. Was that helpful? No one's really talked about that point.

Bui: Yeah, it help us, some money to pay bill.

VanZandt: Yes, definitely. And did you feel like you learned anything? And what did you learn?

Bui: Yeah, we learn a lot of thing. We learn safety, for when we go out on the boat and all that.

VanZandt: Some more safety measures.

Bui: Yeah, yeah. I learn a lot of safety measures.

VanZandt: Really? What kind of things that you weren't doing that maybe you will do next time when you go out?

Bui: We go out. Before we go out, whatever we do, we have to be safety first.

VanZandt: Safety first.

Bui: We have to have everything safety first, before. I do the safety first before you leave.

VanZandt: Did you.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: It's dangerous work.

Bui: Yeah, it is *very* dangerous.

VanZandt: What's dangerous about it? What kind of things, for someone like me who knows nothing about shrimping? (chuckles)

Bui: It's a lot—

VanZandt: What are the dangers?

Bui: The dangers about the rope, sometime the rope, when we dragging, all kind of rope hanging around. If you don't be careful, you hit your head. And when we pick up the net(?), you better move out of the way for the, to block, somebody broke, and hit it down. I got a lot of people get killed like that.

VanZandt: Oh, good grief.

Bui: And the safety, like people fall off the boat, how to get them up, or how to throw them ring and all that. I have to do CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation].

VanZandt: Yes, right.

Bui: CPR and all that.

VanZandt: Right, and save them; rescue and CPR. That's great. That's fantastic.

Bui: Yeah, I learn that, probably whole week for the one class. (chuckles)

VanZandt: (chuckles) In one week you learned a lot and made a little money, so that's good. That's a good program.

Bui: And they taught me how to do the good food, how to ice the shrimp, and how to clean up good, and all that; get it good, whatever.

VanZandt: So was that the first time you've ever had someone show you how to do those? You just taught yourself before?

Bui: No. They teach you how to do all that, but I don't have to because we've been fishermen all our lives.

VanZandt: You could teach them.

Bui: Yeah, we know what to do.

VanZandt: OK. So you already knew all of that.

Bui: Yeah. It's good to learn it.

VanZandt: Sure. Hi. What's your name? (Mr. Bui's young daughter enters)

Rianna: Rianna.

VanZandt: Hi Rianna.

Bui: That's the youngest one.

Phan: Yeah. The youngest one.

VanZandt: That's your daughter, the youngest. She's beautiful.

Bui: She a tomboy, she (inaudible).

L. Bui: Yeah, a tomboy. (laughter)

L. Bui: (whispering) She's eleven, right now.

VanZandt: (chuckles) She's eleven, did you say?

L. Bui: Eleven. She's the baby.

VanZandt: She's tiny.

L. Bui: They're all tiny.

Bui: She picky. She don't want to eat what we eat. She picky.

VanZandt: She looks like a picky eater. (laughter) You've got your work cut out with her.

L. Bui: That was (inaudible).

VanZandt: Aw. Well, we'll wrap up. I know you've got things to do. (all speaking simultaneously)

L. Bui: The only thing, they eat so early at school, and they come home; they're so hungry.

VanZandt: Yes. It's a long time. I remember.

L. Bui: I don't know why they eat so early.

VanZandt: Oh, I know. So you almost have to have dinner made.

L. Bui: I always have them something to eat when they come home, and then I cook supper again. But see this one; I have to cook—if I cook for the other kids—so she'll eat Vietnamese food before she'll eat American food.

VanZandt: Will she?

L. Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: And does she speak—do your children—tell me about that, how you—because we've got—

L. Bui: They, they—

VanZandt: —a Native American here—

L. Bui: They really don't speak it. (chuckles)

VanZandt: They don't? But can they understand Vietnamese?

L. Bui: Some of us.

Bui: Some of them. You talk about money, and they know. (laughter)

L. Bui: Yeah. (laughter)

VanZandt: The universal language.

L. Bui: But it was kind of hard because I always worked, and I hadn't worked since—well, I *did* work. But since Katrina, I worked at a fast food. It was a chicken place on the beach, and Katrina just totally took it, so.

VanZandt: What was the name of it?

L. Bui: Cajun's.

VanZandt: Oh, yes.

L. Bui: [Cajun's] Fried Chicken. I worked there for like seven years.

VanZandt: Oh, my goodness.

L. Bui: Yeah. And I was assistant manager.

VanZandt: *Oh*, my goodness.

L. Bui: And then when they took it, and then I'm like—

VanZandt: What did you do? Did they plan on rebuilding it?

L. Bui: No, he didn't re—he made a mistake there because that man made *a lot* of money there.

Bui: Yeah, Cajun was good.

L. Bui: *A lot* of money there.

Bui: Cajun did—

VanZandt: Did well.

L. Bui: Yeah. *Very* good.

VanZandt: Was he ready to retire? That was too much?

L. Bui: He had three stores. He had one in D'Iberville. There's still the one on Pass Road in Gulfport. And then he had one on [Highway] 90. And the one in D'Iberville and the one on 90.

VanZandt: And there was no place to eat. I mean, I just used to think if someone would just open a little restaurant like that.

L. Bui: I mean, he got that insurance. He should've reopened it. But there wasn't nothing left. All that was left was a concrete slab. But you know, so.

VanZandt: So what did *you* do after that?

L. Bui: I went and helped him clean up the one in Pass Road, but then they wanted to demote me, and I said, "No. I'm not taking a decrease in pay. No, no, no, no, no."

VanZandt: (chuckles) Only going up!

L. Bui: I mean, and so I just drew my unemployment, and then I went to work for his uncle at his gas station for a while. And then my mom got sick, so I just stayed home and then took care of the kids. Well, I did go on a boat with him (Mr. Bui) every now and then, but she—

Bui: Rianna's boat (inaudible).

VanZandt: Well, Rianna, I'm so glad you're here. And we have the microphone on. Do you want to say something? How do you spell your name, first?

R. Bui: R-I-A-N-N-A.

VanZandt: R-I-A-N-N-A. OK. It sounds a little like your dad's name. Is that because of—was that on purpose?

L. Bui: Unh-uh.

VanZandt: OK. And you're eleven?

Bui: Yes, ma'am.

R. Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: So what grade are you in?

R. Bui: Sixth.

VanZandt: Sixth grade! Is that in middle school here, or will that be next year?

R. Bui: Middle school here.

VanZandt: You're already in your first year of middle school?

Bui: Yes, ma'am.

R. Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: That's big! That's OK. How do you like it?

R. Bui: It's good.

VanZandt: Is it?

R. Bui: I have nice teachers.

VanZandt: That's good. So you go to different classrooms now, right? You switch—

R. Bui: I go to five. We used to have to go to seven, but now we go to five.

VanZandt: That's better, yeah. So you have a different teacher each class?

Bui: Yes, ma'am.

R. Bui: And we have elective, and I go to PE [physical education].

VanZandt: And what is your elective, what class?

R. Bui: PE.

VanZandt: That's PE, oh, OK. Do you like PE?

Bui: (enthusiastically nods head) Um-hm.

VanZandt: You do! (chuckles)

R. Bui: Yes, ma'am. We go outside, and today we had to go walk laps around the thing.

L. Bui: (Inaudible)

VanZandt: But just walk, you didn't have to run, so that was all right.

R. Bui: Yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: Well, you look like you got some sun. You must be outside a lot.

R. Bui: Yes. I do *not* like staying inside.

VanZandt: (laughter) So what would you go do now after school? What's your favorite thing?

R. Bui: Go play with my friends.

VanZandt: Do they live around here so you can just walk?

R. Bui: One lives right there, yes, ma'am.

VanZandt: How nice! So what do you do with your friends?

R. Bui: Oh, we usually go walking or go jump.

VanZandt: On the trampoline.

R. Bui: Or swim.

VanZandt: Or swim? Will you get to swim? Where do you swim?

R. Bui: Right here.

VanZandt: There's a pool right here?

R. Bui: In the back.

VanZandt: I didn't see that! You've got it all right here. You don't need to go anywhere else. How fun! Well, we're just talking about fishing. Your dad's been shrimping a *long time*. So have you been out on the boat with him much?

R. Bui: Yes, ma'am.

Bui: She love to go.

VanZandt: You like it then! Tell me what you like about it.

R. Bui: I like going out and seeing dolphins and seeing what other creatures they have.

VanZandt: Wow! So you see dolphins? Do they come up close to the boat?

Bui: Yeah, *very* close.

R. Bui: We get to feed them with fish.

VanZandt: You feed them the fish. Have you ever been able to touch one?

R. Bui: No, ma'am.

VanZandt: (chuckles) Not that close. What else do you see besides dolphins?

R. Bui: I see fish and puffer fish, and—

VanZandt: Oh, I love puffer fish.

R. Bui: —and pelicans.

VanZandt: *Oh*, they're wonderful.

Bui: Seagulls.

L. Bui: A bunch of seagulls.

R. Bui: Seagulls.

L. Bui: And they poop on your head.

Bui: They poop in your head. (laughter)

VanZandt: You didn't tell that story! (laughter) Was that just one time, poop on the head, or lots of times? (laughter)

Bui: In the summer, they go with us. And her and—

R. Bui: We, sometimes we go.

Bui: —the second boy. They go with us for a couple of day.

VanZandt: *Oh*, you spend the night?

Bui: Yeah. We got a small boat, but they got everything in it.

R. Bui: Bedroom, a stove, cooking, like eating room, bathroom.

Bui: Have to go (inaudible; speaking simultaneously).

VanZandt: *Wow*, so it's like camping out! How fun! You've got the life, girl. (laughter) Have you ever held a puffer fish?

R. Bui: Yes. I tried to keep one, but it died.

VanZandt: Oh.

R. Bui: It was on the boat, and then it died because it wasn't in water.

VanZandt: It wasn't in water for long, yeah. Well, so I guess you won't do that again.

R. Bui: And then my brother put a crab in my boot. (laughter) A baby one, but he took off the claws, and the side of it poked me, and I started bleeding.

VanZandt: Did you get him back?

R. Bui: I was going to put another crab in his boot.

VanZandt: That's what brothers do. They just have to mess with their sisters. (chuckles) Well—

Bui: (Mr. Bui brings photographs) See. That's our boat.

VanZandt: Oh, here are the pictures you're showing.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: OK. I was going to ask the name of your boat.

R. Bui: I'm so tiny (referring to herself in the photograph).

Bui: See this.

VanZandt: I need to get my glasses on. (she borrows Mrs. Phan's and laughs)

Phan: (laughter) Could you see with them?

VanZandt: So the name of your boat, for the tape, is *Lady*—

Bui: *Sariah*.

VanZandt: *Sariah*. And where did you get the name?

Bui: From my grandkid; that her right here, my grandkid. (chuckles)

R. Bui: That's *Sariah*.

Bui: That her name.

VanZandt: Oh, your grandchild, that's her *name*! What a beautiful idea. Where do you keep it, Ran? Is it Back Bay at the dock back there—

Bui: No, it's—

VanZandt: —or small craft harbor?

Bui: Tell her where it is.

L. Bui: St. Martin.

VanZandt: St. Martin, OK.

L. Bui: St. Michael's, not St. Martin, St. Michael's.

VanZandt: OK.

L. Bui: It's behind The Palace [Casino], you know what The Palace is?

VanZandt: Right.

L. Bui: If you're coming down Oak Street, you turn on Fifth Street.

VanZandt: OK.

L. Bui: That's where the new Margaritaville [Restaurant and Casino] is going to be.

Bui: (Inaudible; speaking simultaneously)

VanZandt: *Oh*, I got you.

L. Bui: Down there.

R. Bui: Mama, where's Daddy's glasses?

Bui: I need my glasses. (laughter)

L. Bui: He's blind as a bat.

VanZandt: I know. You're like me. (laughter) OK, so we have *Lady Sariah*. This is a *beautiful* boat. It's blue and white.

Bui: Yeah. They got everything.

VanZandt: Everything on it. So you dock it in St. [Michael].

Bui: Yeah.

R. Bui: Here you go, Daddy.

Bui: Oh. (arranging photographs)

VanZandt: When were these taken, were these—

Bui: This year.

VanZandt: This year, recently! Oh, you must be so proud of that. That is *beautiful*. And I know you're proud (referring to Rianna). How cool, to have your own boat.

Phan: Is this a wedding (referring to photograph)?

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: This is your granddaughter.

L. Bui: That's one of them. That's the five year old.

Bui: (begins speaking Vietnamese with Mrs. Phan while VanZandt and Lynn Bui refer to photographs)

Phan: Yeah.

L. Bui: We got a—

VanZandt: Sariah. So was she the first grandchild?

L. Bui: Um-hm.

VanZandt: That's why you decided to name the boat?

L. Bui: Yeah.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

VanZandt: What was it named before that?

L. Bui: When we bought it, it was *Captain Ricky*. (all speaking simultaneously) (laughter)

Bui: She got blue eyes.

Phan: Like her eyes, right?

L. Bui: Yeah. My grand—that's my second one. She's got blonde hair and blue eyes.

VanZandt: *Oh!*

L. Bui: That's her sister. (laughter)

VanZandt: *Wow!* I bet people don't know they're related.

L. Bui: No. They don't think—and see, her mom and dad both got—

R. Bui: Brown eyes.

L. Bui: Brown eyes, and like dark brown hair, and she come out—you see. I was blonde hair and blue eyes.

VanZandt: I was going to say. (laughter)

Phan: Yeah.

VanZandt: What a handsome picture.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: That's a nice picture, yeah.

VanZandt: *Oh*, my goodness.

L. Bui: That's his mom and all them.

Bui: Mom, hm.

R. Bui: Did you just do Mama?

VanZandt: Oh, who is that?

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

R. Bui: Isn't he our cousin?

L. Bui: It's his sister's grandson.

VanZandt: Sister's grandson. Aw, he's so *cute*!

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

L. Bui: So he's just got his mom and dad left. His grandma and grandpa's passed and—

VanZandt: OK. But your mom and dad are still—

Bui: Yeah. (inaudible; speaking simultaneously)

L. Bui: And my mom and dad's gone, so it's just us.

Phan: So you guys are Grandma and Grandpa now.

L. Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Now you're carrying on the legacy.

L. Bui: Yeah.

Phan: Yeah, carrying on the legacy.

VanZandt: So what is this picture, for the tape? What am I looking at?

L. Bui: This is a wedding we went to in Florida.

VanZandt: Oh! Who is this?

L. Bui: That? I don't have my glasses on.

VanZandt: I know. You're like me.

Phan: Yeah.

VanZandt: It looks like the eldest.

Bui: That's my mama and daddy.

VanZandt: This is your mother and father. *Oh.* With one of the great grandkids?

L. Bui: That's Sariah when she was a baby.

Bui: When she was a baby, yes.

VanZandt: That's *beautiful*.

L. Bui: And who's this one, Ran? You got the glasses on. The older one in the picture?

VanZandt: Ran, your mother and daddy, were they from Vung Tau, originally?

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: OK.

L. Bui: No. They were from the North [Vietnam].

Bui: Oh, they from the North, yeah.

VanZandt: Do you know where in the North?

Bui: Hanoi.

VanZandt: *Hanoi*, really?

Bui: Yeah. Hai Phong, Hai Phong.

VanZandt: Hai Phong! Oh, sure.

L. Bui: Yeah. Which one, this one right here?

Bui: Oh, that my dad.

L. Bui: That's his dad.

VanZandt: I thought so; I thought so.

L. Bui: See. This is my other son right there. That's Skylar.

VanZandt: OK. So you've got Skylar, Rianna.

L. Bui: We've got Brian. And we've got Jasmine. She's, her and Skylar look more like Ran. That's Jasmine in the middle, right there. But Rianna and Brian look alike, and the two middle look alike there.

VanZandt: That's so funny how that happens.

L. Bui: Yeah. But she's about that big around. She's like (makes sound).

VanZandt: Yes. What did your father do when he lived in the North? Did he fish up there, too?

Bui: He fisherman, too.

VanZandt: Was his father a fisherman, too?

Bui: Yeah, his father a fisherman.

VanZandt: Long tradition in your family.

Bui: Yeah.

L. Bui: (speaking to Rianna) Baby, Mama will fix you something; hold on.

Bui: I'm a lifelong fisherman.

R. Bui: Mama, I got it.

VanZandt: Well, let me just ask you about that, before we can finish up. Your son has been fishing with you though—

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: —you said.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: For how many years? When did he start?

Bui: I—

L. Bui: When he was about eight.

Bui: No.

L. Bui: Brian's been going with you since he was about eight.

Bui: Well, he go play.

L. Bui: But I mean—

Bui: Now, he go working after Katrina.

VanZandt: After Katrina he started.

Bui: Yeah, he go help me.

VanZandt: And you were saying that he had a football scholarship from Biloxi High, or he could have gone to USM [University of Southern Mississippi].

Bui: Yeah, yes.

VanZandt: But he wanted to work shrimping.

Bui: No. He don't want to work shrimping. He want to work on—

L. Bui: No. He wanted to take a break for a couple of years. He said he didn't want to go to college right away, and that's what he did.

VanZandt: Well, that's a good idea.

L. Bui: But he worked with me at Cajun's, so.

VanZandt: *Oh*, I see. OK.

L. Bui: Before he graduated.

VanZandt: So he's just helped you kind of off and on, shrimping.

L. Bui: Now, they're partners; now, they're partners.

VanZandt: But *now* you're partners. It's official.

Bui: Yeah, I help with him, and let him handle it now.

VanZandt: Have you taught him well? Is he good at what he does?

Bui: Yeah, he good. He good.

VanZandt: He looks strong, like he'd be a good help. (laughter)

Bui: Yeah. (laughter) We need everything heavy—

VanZandt: Heavy lifting.

Bui: “Go get it, boy.” (laughter)

L. Bui: But I mean, Skylar works better on the boat than Brian.

Bui: Yeah, the second one, he faster.

L. Bui: (laughter) Yeah.

Bui: He pretty good, the second one. But he not chunky like that.

VanZandt: Right. Not, yeah, as big of build.

L. Bui: (laughter) Chunky.

Bui: You see that. He go down here, and he work this way on that (referring to punching bag on porch).

VanZandt: I was looking at that. I see the punching bag outside. (laughter)

Bui: Yeah, he work on that.

VanZandt: He works out.

L. Bui: Well, see, Skylar played football this year, but I think he's not into it. He said he's not going to play next year. He'll graduate next year. He'll be a senior.

VanZandt: In high school. Wow, that's great.

L. Bui: But he said he's not going to play football next year.

VanZandt: Yeah.

L. Bui: That's his decision, but I'm not going to push him. But he's got a lot of things in the mail to go to, like up to visit the college and all that.

VanZandt: Sure.

L. Bui: Yeah, he gets them all the time in the mail.

VanZandt: They're recruiting him, sure.

Bui: They want to take him, go, take him some thing—

VanZandt: Oh, they want him.

Bui: Yeah, but he keep hiding.

VanZandt: (laughter) He may change his mind before too long.

Bui: And our second boy, same thing. They keep sending him paper.

L. Bui: They all have.

Bui: Want to send them—

VanZandt: Well, what *would* you like? What is your dream for your children? What would you like?

Bui: I want them to want to be a doctor and growing food, good, learn how to grow food.

VanZandt: Learn how to grow food.

Bui: And be a doctor, save people; that what I want. So I don't know how long, but one day, no matter how much you got, how much money you got, you can't buy food no more. I think so. I don't know, but that what I think.

VanZandt: And why?

Bui: You have to learn how to grow your own food to survive yourself because one day, I don't know when—not my generation, *they* generation—I want them to learn how to grow food and be a doctor or take care of people and all that. That what I want.

VanZandt: That's very interesting.

Bui: I tell them that, and I'm kidding all the time, but they do what they want to do. They're American.

VanZandt: Sure.

Bui: But that what *I* want for my kid.

Phan: (speaking Vietnamese about aquaponics)

Bui: (speaking Vietnamese)

Phan: Yeah.

Bui: Yeah. (speaking Vietnamese) They're still young. They need to learn that because you never know what happen in the next generation.

VanZandt: So it's good to be prepared—

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —for the future because we don't know what it holds. Is that what [he's saying]?

L. Bui: He's always said that, though. He's adamant about that.

Bui: Yeah, I keep—

L. Bui: He told them, they're going to—

Bui: No. I tell them that, but whatever they want to do, they can. But I remind them, see, so maybe they're good to listen.

VanZandt: Well, I think that's very good advice because we only have a limited amount of resources, and we've got to learn how to be self-sustaining on our own, too, and not so dependent.

L. Bui: Right.

VanZandt: And what did he say about the aquaponics, Angel, because I didn't know if he knew about it. What do you think about the farm-raised [product]?

Phan: Yeah, (speaking Vietnamese).

Bui: Yeah, I'm getting old, and it won't be long.

VanZandt: Too late to learn, you mean?

Bui: Yeah. But I want to take the kid. When, if they're still [learning], about their age, they can learn it.

Phan: Yeah. He just wants his kids to learn how to grow their own crops, and be doctors one day. (chuckles) He wants them to save the world.

L. Bui: That one that she's talking, that's my—she'll be fifteen in December. She's the one that wants to go; she's talking about going to college.

VanZandt: Is she?

L. Bui: Already.

VanZandt: *Good.*

L. Bui: But, see, both her and my sixteen-year-old's been nominated like two or three times to go to Washington [DC].

Bui: One we got—

L. Bui: But it always hit at the wrong time of the year.

VanZandt: Well, what is it, kind of a camp or leadership experience?

L. Bui: It was like Leaderships of America, with Congress and all that.

VanZandt: Yeah.

L. Bui: To go to Washington.

VanZandt: That would be a great experience.

L. Bui: There was like twice, each. They both got nominated, but it was in the winter when you weren't shrimping, and so, yeah. And then he's like, "Well, I ain't letting them go up there." So I don't know.

Bui: They young. They don't know what to do.

VanZandt: Can I ask you, since you're sitting here Lynn, about being the wife of a fisherman, shrimper? You were mentioning earlier when he's gone for long periods of time. What was that like, raising four kids?

L. Bui: *Pshhhh*, hard! It was hard because before he got the *Lady Sariah*, he was on a freezer boat. He'd be gone like six, eight weeks at a time.

VanZandt: Versus now.

L. Bui: Right. Maybe nine, ten days, yeah, like that, yeah. It was hard, and I worked a full-time job. I'd go back to work right after my six weeks was up, right back to work, and then daycare and the bills. It was *hard*.

VanZandt: Taking care of all that.

L. Bui: Because there was like twelve years difference between my first and my second [children].

VanZandt: Yeah.

L. Bui: So he was like grown, and then it was like starting all over again. So it was rough.

Bui: Yeah, we raising two—

R. Bui: Can I go play?

L. Bui: Yes, baby, just check in.

VanZandt: Raising two different families, sort of, right.

L. Bui: It *was*. It was like starting *all* over again. It was like starting from scratch. And then after I had the second one, then it just went *boom, boom*. And I had all—but I've worked a full-time job with all of them, so.

R. Bui: (talking on the phone) Oh, can you play?

VanZandt: Well, how close-knit is the seafood community and fishermen here? I mean, for someone who doesn't live in Biloxi and doesn't really have a good feel for that, do you have a support network? Do you-all work together, or is it more competitive? And is there—

L. Bui: No. I mean, if they're catching, they'll call you, "We got some shrimp over here. We got some over there." Or if one boat's going out, say we're catching, they'll call you.

VanZandt: Work together.

Bui: Yes.

L. Bui: A lot of them do. Some don't; some do.

R. Bui: (talking on phone) OK, bye.

VanZandt: That's good.

L. Bui: It's just—sometimes they do. You get some out there that's like, "*Pshh*, I ain't telling nobody there's something out here." But they wait for *him* [Mr. Bui] to go, and then when he goes, they want to follow him.

Bui: Follow me, see where I go.

L. Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: You're good at finding it. (laughter)

L. Bui: Now, they'll follow him, "You going out?"

R. Bui: Where's my flip-flops, Mommy?

VanZandt: So how do you know where to go?

Bui: Oh, we just go out there, got to go here and over there, and you can't stay here.

VanZandt: OK. So is there a certain spot that you go, right off the bat, that you know is usually the best spot to go?

Bui: Yeah. Because that why a lot of people follow me.

VanZandt: Yeah. (laughter) "There's Ran. Let's go!"

L. Bui: (laughter) "He's leaving. Let's go."

VanZandt: That's great.

L. Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Well, we'll finish up because I know you've got kids here wanting your attention, but is there anything that I have not asked—and I know we could go on for a lot longer—but that you'd like to share, and that somebody maybe fifty years from now would like to know about 2011, Ran Bui?

Bui: About twenty year from now, they, I(?) be gone! (laughter)

VanZandt: Yeah, who knows? But—

Phan and VanZandt: A message to your children.

VanZandt: Or anything at all that you'd like to just end with? You've been through so much in life.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: You've overcome a lot of obstacles, from life in Vietnam, war, escape; *incredible, incredible* story.

Bui: We've been in a hard life. Even we come over here, me and my wife see (inaudible), she work, too. And I (inaudible), oil spill(?), work all my life.

R. Bui: Bye, I'm leaving, Mom.

VanZandt: You've worked very hard. What do you think has helped you to get over all of these [obstacles]—losing it, leaving everything behind, leaving your country, your home, starting over again.

Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: Oklahoma; Fort Chaffee, Oklahoma, Biloxi, Katrina.

Bui: We planning to die over here now, (laughter) Biloxi now.

L. Bui: Well, duh! (laughter) But, no. You got to pick up the pieces and go on. You got kids. You just—

Bui: Yeah, we got kid; we go on.

L. Bui: You can't let life defeat you. You got to say, "Hey, I'm stronger than this, and I can do it." I mean, I worked seven years and never missed a day of work.

VanZandt: Wow, that's saying something for you.

L. Bui: Like him, there's times when he didn't work in the winter, and I worked all-year round. And like when he worked and there was times we discussed, after having the kids, not to go back to work. And his mom's like, "No. You better let her go back to work," because a lot of times, it takes two.

VanZandt: Absolutely.

L. Bui: It takes two incomes.

VanZandt: Absolutely.

L. Bui: So.

VanZandt: So you-all had to kind of reassess, along the way, many times, I'm sure.

L. Bui: Um-hm. But our motto is never live above your means because if you live above your means, you're going to fall on your hiny.

Bui: Yeah, that what—

L. Bui: And we've done that. We had to tell my oldest son that. He tried it, and it *didn't* work out. He learned the hard way, so.

Bui: Well, you know—

L. Bui: I mean, I'm proud of what I got. What I got I'm thankful for.

Bui: We work for what we got, and we don't—I don't like the payment or whatever. Whatever I got, I pay cash for it, or we don't have it and do without. Americans [make] payment, a lot of payments, and I—

VanZandt: A lot of debt. It's a different way of thinking, isn't it?

Bui: Yeah, a different way of life in Vietnam. In Vietnam, all you go work. You go work and survive every day, and you don't have worry about no bill. But over here, you don't work, you can't pay your bill.

VanZandt: Sounds like you learned some lessons the right way, growing up, that have served you well here in America, too. Has it been challenging raising children, at all, in a bicultural, bilingual family?

L. Bui: Unh-uh.

VanZandt: You think it's been a—

L. Bui: My kids, the two middle ones, they hang with the Vietnamese. Their clan [claim?] is full. That's theirs.

VanZandt: Interesting.

L. Bui: My son, he's sixteen, and his girlfriend's Vietnamese. But he's had, I mean—but I mean they embrace their culture. Just like Brian, I mean, he embraces that culture. I mean, never once do they like put it down or never—

VanZandt: They were never ashamed or wanted to be anything else?

L. Bui: No. Me, neither. I mean, at first my brothers hated me. I mean, I was like the—but my mom loved him *dearly*.

Bui: Yeah.

L. Bui: She did no wrong in his eyes, no wrong.

Bui: Before, talk about her mama.

L. Bui: Yeah.

Bui: Her mama, they got turnover(?) at Cedar Lake over there after Katrina. Nobody over there help her. I the one to go over there.

L. Bui: She would never call my brothers. They live right there in the trailer park, and she would never call them.

Bui: I the one who have to go over there fix her house.

L. Bui: Me and Ran, we did it, both of us.

Bui: Yeah, we went.

L. Bui: We did it.

Bui: But she got a son, building hotel, in construction and all that. Yeah, her son. Show about her son. And your brother build that—

L. Bui: Oh, the brick masons? Yeah. No. She would never call him. She would always call me and him. She would never call my brothers, and they live right there, yeah.

VanZandt: Real responsible and helpful, that's great.

Bui: I always, every time she call, I be there. And whenever something wrong with her house, I be there.

VanZandt: Well, it sounds like your son's carrying on that. He was very happy to go help the—

Bui: Yeah. See, he have to.

VanZandt: —friend who broke down—

L. Bui: Yeah.

VanZandt: —was it, today?

L. Bui: Yeah. Brian's gullible. I mean, he's not gullible, but Brian will do anything for you. Yeah, Brian's always been that way.

Bui: And he's a good boy.

L. Bui: He bought a used trailer, and he redid—I mean, he gutted the whole trailer and redid the whole inside.

Bui: Before he got (inaudible) right there.

L. Bui: Yeah.

Bui: You know all them (inaudible) right there?

VanZandt: Right.

Bui: I don't know what they do—

L. Bui: But he lived above his means, and that's what happened. It come back to bite him in his butt.

Bui: He lost it all.

VanZandt: Do you think you'll always be here on the Gulf Coast? It sounds like you love it.

L. Bui: Yeah, we're home rooted. I'm home now. I hated it when we moved here. I hated it out here, with nobody, nothing. He was on a boat, and then I worked. The kids were in school. It was lonely at night. And I'm like, "*Grrr*."

VanZandt: What changed? What changed your mind?

L. Bui: Hm. I guess when they started like building—I don't know. I guess I just got used to it, being—

Bui: You get used to it. Everywhere you go, you get used to it.

L. Bui: I mean, it took a long time for me to get used to it out here because he was on the boat when we moved the trailer out here. I wouldn't even watch him move the trailer. I went to work that day.

VanZandt: You were in the boonies. (laughter)

L. Bui: Yeah. I mean, but you're really not because when we moved over here, there was nothing but Wal-Mart. But now, it's just shot up around here.

VanZandt: It really has. Post-Katrina, too, a lot of the Vietnamese community has moved up, up north, too. Tight?

L. Bui: Right.

VanZandt: Before, your—

L. Bui: There's a lot of them that live out here now. Like out on [Highway] 15 and on, what is that? What is the name of that road? Seaman Road up there.

VanZandt: Yeah.

L. Bui: I mean, there's not too many left in Biloxi.

VanZandt: It's really changed East Biloxi.

Bui: But after Katrina, my father and my mama, the house flooded, the old house, where it still stand.

VanZandt: It's still—oh, really?

Bui: Yeah. And then they live with my sister a couple of months, and they say they can't handle it. And then we all go over there and fix the house up for them and—

VanZandt: You did.

Bui: —a month or two month later, they move back in.

VanZandt: They did; they moved back? Is that house still there?

L. Bui: Um-hm.

Bui: Yes.

VanZandt: So you sold it?

L. Bui: No. They still live there.

Bui: They still there.

VanZandt: They still live down there, oh.

L. Bui: They redid it, yeah.

VanZandt: Because there aren't a lot of people out there anymore.

L. Bui: Unh-uh.

VanZandt: Yeah.

L. Bui: It's small. I mean, it's just him and her, Meemaw and Pawpaw and the son, one son that lives there, so. But, yeah.

VanZandt: Well, thank you so much. I know—

Bui: You're welcome.

VanZandt: Y'all have been so generous—

Bui: No, you.

VanZandt: —with your time.

Bui: No, we just free time. We working.

VanZandt: You've got some free time. So it was good timing, maybe. Well, I hope you won't have too much free time. (laughter)

Bui: Well, it won't be long.

L. Bui: When he gets back out there, I mean, he's been—I mean, he's getting restless now. It's time to go.

VanZandt: Are you?

L. Bui: But there's nothing out there.

Bui: But I don't know why(?) this year.

VanZandt: When do you think you'll go out next?

Bui: Maybe next week or something.

L. Bui: Well, if the shrimp don't come in, I mean, you can't go waste your diesel. I mean diesel's high.

VanZandt: How much does it cost you to prepare to go out to make that trip next week? How much would it be?

Bui: I got food or fuel with the ice, will run a couple of hundred dollar; two, three hundred dollar, but if the fuel, everything, it going to cost about \$4,000, four or five thousand dollars.

VanZandt: For one trip.

L. Bui: He's not counting groceries.

VanZandt: For nine or ten days, without groceries, yeah. That's a big risk to take. But you're going to take the risk next week, you think?

L. Bui: Um-hm. Yes, he is.

VanZandt: Well, I'd love to hear. We'll check back and see how things are going.

L. Bui: He needs to.

VanZandt: OK. Thank you so much.

L. Bui: He's been home too long.

Bui: Thank you for coming by, anyway.

(end of interview)