

SylvesterDixonPart2

Mark: All of okay those are the channel. That's the channel coming in starting from those little keys all the way down in there. That's a small area.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: But the red tide pushed them in there.

Mark: There were hundreds of tarpons pushed in there and sharks too okay.

Interviewer: Do you remember when?

Mark: Now the tarpons got -- I'll have to look on my calendar.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: The tarpon got out of there.

Sylvester Dixon: What did that tell you about tarpon?

Mark: They got out. Those sharks did not.

Sylvester Dixon: You know what tarpon [*indiscernible*][00:00:40].

Mark: Those tarpon will come up. You see a shark swimming along. You're not used to seeing this and I mean a shark now. This tarpon will come up and just knock the hell out of that shark. They come out bang.

Interviewer: Why do the tarpons get away and the sharks can't?

Sylvester Dixon: Because they--

Mark: They breathe air.

Sylvester Dixon: The tarpons whenever they come up and go--

Mark: They breathe air.

Sylvester Dixon [00:01:06]: --they can breathe air. They use that air. That's the reason they survive in mud puddles and everywhere else and so far up the creeks.

Mark [00:01:13]: And they can swim fast. When they want to bogey,

Interviewer [00:01:16]: Oh I see.

Mark: -- they get out of here.

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Interviewer: I've seen them diving, yeah.

Mark: We were out, me and Keith were out permit fishing one day when all those fish left the pass to go *[indiscernible][00:01:27]*. Jimmy Robertson was fishing a piece inside us and I said this to Keith. I was like, "Man, what the hell is it? Is that a big giant school *[indiscernible][00:01:37]*?" Those fish, Sylvester, we had to put the boat on plane to stay up with those fish and they were going straight off shore right up the shipping channel.

Sylvester Dixon: I've seen within a period of a day.

Mark: It had to be 10,000 fish.

Sylvester Dixon: Tarpon not necessarily being in a hurry travel 12. I've followed them myself 12 miles *[00:02:00]* in a day up the beach.

Mark: I have no doubt.

Sylvester Dixon: I'm not exaggerating.

Mark: No.

Sylvester Dixon: That's

Mark: You want me to tell you.

Sylvester Dixon: And I mean they wasn't necessarily in high gear either 12 miles.

Mark: That's fish left to --

Sylvester Dixon: I'm talking about.

Mark: That's fish left to glades. They're on their way now. They're probably laying off that point right now.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, I'm talking about a period of eight hours. They travel so they're going well over mile an hour nothing to them.

Mark: Why are you guys here?

Interviewer: Yeah so--

Sylvester Dixon: They're researching.

Interviewer: Yeah, we're both researchers. I'm affiliated with University of Miami and we both work for *[indiscernible][00:02:40]*.

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Mark: Okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, so we've just been trying to learn as much as we can about red tide by visiting areas in the gulf and talking to guys to like that spend every day in the water.

Mark: Well, in my opinion I did not -- this is ground zero for that red tide outbreak.

Sylvester Dixon: We had a pretty bad one last year.

Mark: I know but Sylvester. Buddy, I'm telling you. You know I spend a lot of time in that part of the world in June, July and August

Sylvester Dixon: Tell me this Mark? Tell me this then Mark?

Mark: And that was horrible.

Sylvester Dixon: So let me ask you something, did you ever run your hand through the water and looked at it?

Mark: No, I'm too busy *[indiscernible]*[00:03:20] but I could see it through my pole.

Sylvester Dixon: Have you ever run your hand through it in real bad red tide?

Mark: Where it's cloudy?

Sylvester Dixon: I mean really bad yeah where you know it's really--

Mark: I've not seen it.

Sylvester Dixon: You had never on your hand through it?

Mark: I don't want to stick my hand through it.

Sylvester Dixon: Next time I told these girls if you ever see it real bad, you can take your own hand through it and pull your hand out like that and it strings off your hand.

Mark: I believe that.

Sylvester Dixon: They don't drip off your hand. The water drips.

Mark: Clings?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, yeah just kind of...

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Mark: I saw the -- I don't know how many dead manatees I caught in the FWC [00:04:00]. I've still got pictures on my phone I could show you. Sea corals, dolphins, it killed stuff I've never seen dead before from red tide.

Sylvester Dixon: I had but--.

Mark: Tarpon, I don't know how many tarpon I found dead. I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah but you're talking about the crabs and the horse shoe crabs and the shrimp and the crabs.

Mark: Sea horses, I mean just you name it, It was dead. I'm hoping that don't happen again because Sylvester have known each other for a long time and we've discussed situations like this to where if red tide ever hit us during tarpon season we would be in big trouble.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, it hit.

Mark: And we were. I got customers that are not coming back.

Interviewer: From this past year?

Mark: Mm-mm. They have not re-booked. Guys have been fishing for more than a decade. They're just kind of waiting and see.

Sylvester Dixon [00:05:14]: Oh yeah I had some trips that they didn't want to book--

Mark: Yeah, They're waiting to see what happens.

Sylvester Dixon: -- because they was afraid of the red tide. They were ready to go but they went down the keys because it was guaranteed that there wasn't enough trips.

Mark: So where I noticed a lot too...

Sylvester Dixon: See he spends, him and Tommy spends more time down there.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: And Tommy and I talk a lot about bodies of fish movement. We don't necessarily talk locations but we talk bodies of fish moving. They'll live down here off of Chino and they'll stage up in here off these keys in some of these basins and then they go from there and they set up shop here [00:06:00].

Interviewer: What species?

Mark: It's Tarpon.

Sylvester Dixon: It's tarpon.

Interviewer: Tarpon.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: And then they'll go on to the pass. And then the fish that come up, they'll and Sylvester knows this they'll lay off at a certain point and wait on water temperature right now that's what they're waiting on as water temperature. And then they're going to be on it for *[indiscernible]*[00:06:17] pass and they know that the child is going to be there for them and they've got to start putting on fat stores for the spawn that's coming up. And we all -- these are all things we know. I think all the fish that were in pass recently were up here and on this moon coming up they're going to hit this wall and come back to the pass.

Sylvester Dixon: So he focuses more on tarpon.

Mark: I fish for tarpon.

Sylvester Dixon: He focuses more on tarpon and he'll fish for him from--

Mark: I've been fishing for him since February.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, from the middle of April basically. You're successful through--.

Mark: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: Sept -- well.

Mark: Yeah September is really good actually.

Sylvester Dixon: September.

Mark: But we just don't have any business here that's *[indiscernible]* [00:07:01].

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 2: So to where I fish from the middle of May.

Mark: May, June.

Sylvester Dixon: From the middle of May to the middle of June and then I'm off the water. How much time do I spend on the water after summer time after--?

Mark: After you're done tarpon fishing?

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Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: Probably not that much.

Sylvester Dixon: Did you see me out there hardly ever?

Mark: No, no. My favorite month to tarpon fish is July mainly because --

Sylvester Dixon: There's no traffic.

Mark: -- After the force there's nobody here and the spawn's over. The majority of the spawn is over. I mean we're still on the moon you'll get a push of fish that come up and leave the keys and will come up here. They'll set up in around Bonita Beach and Marco Island. They'll live there. They'll come up. You will still see pre-spawn activity, daisy chaining and males ramming females, stuff like that but most of the time by July you don't see the volume of fish that we do in May and June. But there's [00:08:00] nobody here, the fish are damn.

Sylvester Dixon: Because they aren't got the pressure on.

Mark: And they don't have any pressure on at all.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: Fish get smart.

Mark: Yes, they do. Tarpon--

Interviewer: Are you charter fishing year round?

Mark: Yeah, if somebody calls me I'll charter fish all year round.

Interviewer: So what did you do in the past year with the bad red tide that we had and you said guys were calling you telling you they were not coming?

Mark: I lost 31, 32 days mainly in June and early July.

Interviewer: So you don't have an option like there's no other -- you can't fish for something else or go further out or anything like that?

Interviewee: My clientele is all centered around --

Interviewer: Tarpon.

Mark: -- one species of fish.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: That are a big part of his stuff and he wants to focus more and more on that all the time.

Mark: Yes, that is.

Sylvester Dixon: He doesn't want bait fish work out there.

Mark: There are a handful of guys here --

Sylvester Dixon: It's very specialized.

Mark: -- they take not just the fly fishing but the actual art of fly and I'm not trying to say something.

Sylvester Dixon: Tommy Lock is into that too that's why him and Tommy are *[overlapping conversation][00:09:12]*.

Mark: Yes, I mean we tie everything IGFA, if you're on my boat you're fishing legal fly fishing leader to where if you did hook a world record and I have a kill tag on my boat. And if I put the tape on them and nothing got them, I can tell you right now, I'm going to smash that fish and kill it.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay so let's go to this though Mark. So let's go to this, what percentage of the guides around here are in that specialty though probably --

Mark: To the degree that Tommy and myself?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah and Jimmy.

Mark: There's probably maybe five.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, maybe a percent or two of these specialty.

Mark: Now you got the keys and that would go into the...*[00:10:00]*

Sylvester Dixon: So him and Tommy is in the real small bracket for tarpon and specialty fly fishing.

Mark: I've done a lot with BTT over the years tagging fish, doing the stock assessments. I know.

Sylvester Dixon: He's talking all about tarpon.

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Mark: Yeah, and this is all focused around tarpon. I talk with a lot of guides in the keys. The guides that fish the big tarpons in the keys which are all fly fishing tournaments. This is a very small fraternity of guides and anglers that take as seriously as we do.

Sylvester Dixon: I think for them to look at things as an overall picture though, they're looking -- they want to look at probably what the majority of the guides.

Mark: Absolutely yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know but we're interested if you focus like even just you know about this area so specific.

Sylvester Dixon: That's me.

Mark: He knows this like-- if you walked into your backyard and you know where you got this plant and this, this is where he spent his entire childhood and adult life.

Sylvester Dixon: This is my specialty. This area right here.

Mark: Yes, there's probably isn't anybody around here that knows that stuff better than him.

Interviewer: Yeah. How long have you been in this area fishing tarpon?

Mark: I have been-- this is-- I started in 1998 and it doesn't seem that long ago.

Sylvester Dixon: It isn't that long ago.

Mark: No, it's not.

Sylvester Dixon: So let's go back to this.

Mark: It's 21 years.

Sylvester Dixon: Whenever we had Charley, I told him that we haven't had a red tide that bad since then, when do you remember starting in Charley? I remember running across the harbor in spring time and fishing *[indiscernible]*[00:11:52] and all of this.

Mark: I remember when you had to go over there and fish because this was pointless.

Sylvester Dixon: What time of year was that though?

Mark: It was a spring time.

Sylvester Dixon: It was a spring time. [00:12:00]

Mark: It was a spring. It was March and early April.

Sylvester Dixon: So the last hurricane cut and went through before November. The four storms that went--

Mark: Was that-- Charley was 2004

Sylvester Dixon: '14.

Mark: On Friday the 13th.

Sylvester Dixon: Was it '14?

Mark: August the 13th 2004 was Hurricane Charley.

Sylvester Dixon: I think it was '14, wasn't it?

Mark: No.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay then it was '04.

Mark: 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay.

Mark: 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: So I had that *[overlapping conversation][00:12:26]*.

Mark: But I remember that year though that you were running over there and fishing.

Sylvester Dixon: And it was in the spring.

Mark: Yes, that was spring.

Sylvester Dixon: But the last of the storms went through in October.

Mark: Yeah, but you remember how good the fishing was that fall.

Sylvester Dixon: How long does it take after we get a bunch of rain before the red tide to start? You take this--

Interviewee 1: I don't know because they would know more about that because there has to be a formula for this. There has to be an algorithm because if you have this much volume up in the center part of the state, if you had let's say you had 10 inches of rainfall in 48 hours, they should be able to know what the flow rates are going into the lake and

coming down the piece in Myakka Rivers into those river systems that shed into the harbor.

Sylvester Dixon: But so salinity all the saline right here is what he's talking about.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: Because if you-- the piece of the Myakka Rivers are a tide off for a pretty far away up that river system. You can still see the effects of the tides along way up these river systems but I think certainly in June so Sylvester may or may not agree with me but our rain patterns start typically late May. Would you agree with that?

Sylvester Dixon: Late May.

Mark: Late May we start getting that afternoon pattern and then it starts damping and then what is now crystal clear up there is going to be strong ice tea going and by [00:14:00] August, it's like black coffee color. Okay but from what I understand about red tide is it can survive in that fresh water.

Interviewer2: Right that's what tends to happen. There's a threshold where it just can't and--

Mark: There's a threshold where it just can't.

Interviewer2: -- I don't know the specifics of it but *[overlapping conversation]* [00:14:21].

Mark: And I don't know either and I don't know how the tide edges off of *[indiscernible]*[00:14:25] point and where in this harbor is the cut off point for it to survive. But remember Sylvester all that muddied up grass and dead red fish and black bloom that laid off in the phosphate deck there in June that would have been in the second week of June? It was in the second week of June.

Sylvester Dixon: I was almost done then but I know it was bad.

Mark: Hundreds.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: Hundreds of big and we've had red tide events on the opening of stone crab season in October.

Sylvester Dixon: So it happens in the fall like I said.

Mark: It happens in the fall.

Sylvester Dixon: And the spring.

Mark: And I don't know that we've had a successful spawn out of our red fish over the last several years.

Sylvester Dixon: That's a problem with the red tide.

Mark: And that's the problem with our red fish here. He'll tell you. I can't tell you how terrible the red fish is here.

Sylvester Dixon: Seems like overall -- you want to write this down. I think I've seen more red tide probably in the fall of the year than the spring of the year.

Mark: I would agree with that.

Sylvester Dixon: It's more prevalent in the fall.

Mark: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: So you've had all the rain the summer and then in the fall it comes time to pay for it.

Mark: I can remember October 5th we were throwing traps, was with your brother. Was throwing traps off Don Pedro, Home Island and it being solid orange water [00:16:00] and I'm going, "Why in the hell would a crab crawl into a trap when he's got all eat and those big spawn brute size red fish as far as you can see floating dead."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: And I don't think we've had a successful-- what is the state doing as far as assessing when the red fish spawn, where they're spawning, and what are they doing to monitor the counts that come on shore of those lava and how long are they forecasting to keep red fish close, infinite closed because you want me to tell you what the next double jeopardy is for this area? You'll not talk about this.

Sylvester Dixon: What?

Mark: Stock drops. Trap stocks. They change the law and allow you to possess them all year round what for a day?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: Per angler?

Sylvester Dixon: They did finally take away the breeding fish to 20 inch ones.

Mark: They did that and that was smart but I mean.

Sylvester Dixon: It isn't enough.

Mark: It's not enough. The worst thing that ever happened to the fishery here is that freaking ramp right there and they just-- they bought that property next door and they're going to put 75 more parking spaces in there.

Sylvester Dixon: There's nothing that you can do to stop that kind of stuff.

Mark: I know Sylvester but--

Sylvester Dixon: There isn't a whole lot that we're going to do to stop the building and all the golf courses.

Mark: I understand that.

Interviewer: So we talked about some of the big events, the one in 2018 and 2014.

Mark: 2014 was bad.

Interviewer: Yeah, were there too-- were other ones that stood out to your other years where there was a really bad time?

Mark: I would have to check my log.

Sylvester Dixon: He said 2004 not 2014. You said Charley was in 20--

Mark: Was 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay so.

Mark: It was Charley.

Sylvester Dixon: So it wasn't 2014?

Mark: It wasn't '14. It was 2004.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mark: It was August 13th [00:18:00] was when Charley hit was 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: You all just make note that it was the Charley event.

Interviewer2: Yep, I got it in here.

Sylvester Dixon: After Charley--

Interviewer2: The four storms that came through.

Sylvester Dixon: --the four storms.

Mark: LEY not LIE.

Interviewer2: So 2004 and this passed 2018, were there any other red tide events that you remember in a particular year?

Mark: In the fall it would-- when did your brother get that crab vessel? What year was that?

Sylvester Dixon: Well, we've had--

Mark: 2012?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, we've him off and on but like I said it seems like the overall events happen more in the fall of the year than the spring year.

Mark: I would agree with that.

Sylvester Dixon: You know so that's probably when they have to focus on it more is probably towards the fall of the season or activity of it.

Mark: But I think too, I would love to see what the temperature differences are in those years and what the rainfall amounts were and what was --

Sylvester Dixon: Well, for sure rainfall.

Mark: What was being led out of the lake, the volumes. I'm not saying that's the only cause that's not where I'm going with this but that's part of the puzzle. It's a complicated issue.

Sylvester Dixon: This is very complex. I was going over them.

Mark: Super complex.

Sylvester Dixon: Telling them about how much the passes fill out.

Mark: Oh gosh.

Sylvester Dixon: And the short time that he spent here, you've seen areas fill out probably 10 foot.

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Mark: Easily. We can't even where the high bridge is and I know you know this because you pick up at Uncle Henry's. Tell him something is more you got to run your jack plate all the way up and slow way down just so you can idle through there.

Sylvester Dixon: Through that one [00:20:00] bridge and there's 20 foot of water there just after the side of it. I remember being out there. Tommy, and Danny, and [indiscernible][00:20:07] that was his granddaddy and there would be 14 foot of water underneath that house over there to the side.

Mark: Yes, not any more. There's dry land there now.

Sylvester Dixon: There was a guy that just died over here just this past fall. He said that there's 30 foot of water in that pass.

Mark: He could tell you enough.

Sylvester Dixon: 30 foot of water where there's a dry sand bar but he was born over there on little Gasparilla and he knew this was his baby right here. This area down that's by the same area he didn't venture off too far.

Mark: Actually you can parade on this area but you get the gist of it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, do you want to draw where you saw red tide and -- 2004, 2018?

Mark: 2004.

Interviewer: Yeah, let's do the 2004 and if you--

Mark: I don't remember but I remember in 2004 it being there. Now, 2018 you can just draw a circle around all of that.

Sylvester Dixon: Because he was spending more time out there. He focused more probably back up here in 2004.

Mark: I had Dr. Hearts on the boat.

Sylvester Dixon: When is this so?

Mark: This was August.

Sylvester Dixon: Of this past year?

Mark: Of this past year. Yeah, of this past year and I remember because word got out on these and you know me I'm not going to go slamming I want to be by myself. And so these, I left here and went down to that's Reglas and this would be-- I can't read that but that should be Chino. This should be Chino key right here.

Sylvester Dixon: Where his finger is.

Mark: There it is.

Interviewer: Yeah, Chino it says right there.

Mark: So right here [00:22:00] and there's a bar, a spoil. There's the spoil but these fish I think had left the Caloosahatchee and they were acting funny. And tarpon, what I've noticed with tarpon over the years with regards to red tide is they swim really hard and really fast and really close to the surface throwing a wake that's how...

Sylvester Dixon: You will see it

Mark: I mean and are rolling constantly whereas Sylvester tell you, you might see a fish rolling. You won't see him roll again for 100, 200 yards. Actually you will see friend roll.

Interviewer: Yeah we saw him.

Mark: But these fish are rolling constantly which told me in my mind, in my opinion that the fish needed oxygen and there was no oxygen in that water and what was funny is, Sylvester will tell you, usually in August thread fern herrings are almost impossible to find, aren't they?

Sylvester Dixon: Sometimes.

Mark: Big ones.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: There were piles of thread fern herring stacked up here and I thought that was odd that those bait-- that's a bait fishing thread fern herring.

Interviewer: That were dead?

Mark: No, they were alive.

Sylvester Dixon: They were just stacked up there.

Mark: But they were just stacked in there.

Interviewer: In this area?

Mark: Yeah, they're all Chino. Chino and Reglas which Reglas is--

Sylvester Dixon: Do you think bait fish survived that Mark, do you think--?

Mark: I don't think they did.

Sylvester Dixon: The time that he seen them they was alive but--.

Mark: They were alive but they were--

Sylvester Dixon: There was pushed in there.

Mark: They were up top leaping and they were pushed in there and I think they got trapped in there on top of that red tide.

Sylvester Dixon: Like the shark.

Mark: Yeah like the shark.

Interviewer: Yeah, when was that?

Mark: That would have been the first two weeks of August so I would say that was probably about [00:24:00] the start of the second week of August and I know this because I fish the same angler every year in that time window.

Sylvester Dixon: It goes back to me telling you back whenever I was little those sharks got trapped in there. Remember me telling you about that. You remember that story about that?

Mark: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: The sharks that got -- so these fish will try to go and move from it but if they get trapped.

Mark: Yeah, now--

Sylvester Dixon: So apparently fish--

Mark: I don't know now. What I don't know is when those fish left there? I don't know where they went.

Sylvester Dixon: Fish might get trapped in this area in here because they don't have-- there's nowhere to keep going like this right here. Do you follow me?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: They probably get in here. They probably run. They go this way they're going to get into it. They go this way, they're trapped. If they come in here, they can keep going to this on the other side of that.

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Mark: I don't know what was going up the harbor that time of the year but I know when I finished the last this would have been the second week of August. I finished up and Sylvester will tell you this is -- probably it will never happen again in my lifetime. But right here, where's Boca Grande pass?

Sylvester Dixon: Right down here.

Mark: Right here okay. There's a *[indiscernible]* [00:25:28] here.

Sylvester Dixon: *[indiscernible]* [00:25:32].

Mark: There were hundred. The last day that I finished, there were hundreds of -- and that may have been these fish. Hundreds of them in here and I caught the shit out of them.

Sylvester Dixon: I'll tell you what I thought was kind of a little bit strange about this red tide that we had is we would have real bad periods and would say oh men it's not up. It's got what we call on fire its worked it's way, its ate all the nitrogen and all that out of the water [00:26:00] and settled. The water is clear and we're good to guard. Three weeks later,--

Mark: There will be more.

Sylvester Dixon: --here come again and just as bad as the time that we thought it was gone at it's worst and then it cleared up for two weeks and then here it would come again.

Mark: Typically what we always saw like this event he's talking about because I got--

Sylvester Dixon: That's what happened on the 18th.

Mark: I remember certain things that Sylvester will say. We've known each other for a fair amount of time but I remember him saying when that red tide had run it's course, he said, "Mark, you could see a quarter on the bottom and it's *[indiscernible]* [00:26:42], remember?"

Sylvester Dixon: Oh yeah that's--

Mark: That's how clear the water was.

Interviewer: And then it would come back after that?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, come back after that.

Mark: It would come back. That water would get so clean because there's probably nothing left of the-- I don't know the scientific term you use but it's all the--

Sylvester Dixon: It eats everything up.

Mark: --plantain and all the--

Sylvester Dixon: But what I ask them, this is--

Mark: There's nothing. There's no marine snow. Let me put it to you that way.

Sylvester Dixon: I'm going to the next level in my thinking now Mark. After that gets done eating that Mark, what do you think happens to that nitrogen and all that nutrients that was in the water?

Mark: I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: There's no way for it--

Mark: Do they consume it all?

Sylvester Dixon: Does it consume it and dissipate or does settle to the bottom and we're just compounding our problem over the years?

Mark: I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: That's next. That's what level I want to go to next.

Mark: But what's funny though if you remember 2004 after Charley because we've fish tournaments that year, remember? Remember all the boats from Texas, and Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama where up there dragging the harbor for shrimp, remember that when we fished the championship?

Sylvester Dixon: There's a big shrimp this year.

Mark: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: Whenever we have a big red tide event, there's a big shrimp [00:28:00] and I told you all that. A lot of shrimp, a lot of crabs.

Interviewer: Yeah they like it.

Sylvester Dixon: Blue crabs. They like it because they feed on predators.

Mark: We can remember there was a championship tournament and we were in the top five. And I can remember us going back up the harbor to weigh in and those big open

golf shrimp boats, black smoke pouring out of the stacks and the harpoon had a pole of 25 foot gear.

Sylvester Dixon: 25 foot?

Mark: Yeah, and then there--

Sylvester Dixon: I was up there in the middle of the day.

Mark: You know they were pulling in the middle of the day. You know they were pulling more than that.

Sylvester Dixon: In the middle of the day because the water was dark.

Mark: Yes, but they were clobbering the shrimp.

Sylvester Dixon: That was really--

Mark: Clobbering and the crabs.

Sylvester Dixon: That was back in 2004.

Mark: That was 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: In fact it was Charley. That was the year of Charley.

Mark: You remember Cole back caught the crap out of the blue crab that season.

Sylvester Dixon: Whether they were catching the crap out of the blue crabs this season and they're catching the shit out of the shrimp offshore. Now, they're not catching them up in the harbor like they did that year.

Mark: Not like that year.

Sylvester Dixon: But they're catching them offshore this year.

Mark: But this is spring and that was fall. It was. We had the top five, the top 25 shot out got delayed from Hurricane Charley and that was October when we did the finish of that tournament.

Sylvester Dixon: So if these things repeat their self then they'll have the shrimp from up there next fall?

Mark: It should be this fall.

Sylvester Dixon: Should be this--

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Mark: Should be this fall.

Sylvester Dixon: This fall. Okay it will be interesting to see.

Mark: It would be very interesting to see.

Sylvester Dixon: To see if that happens this fall. They did do it this winter.

Mark: A lot of that stuff scenical. There's peaks and valleys to it. Now the guides haven't caught any stone crabs this year.

Interviewer: Yeah, I heard that.

Sylvester Dixon: I wonder what they call after Charley, who would you talk to find out what happened to the stone crabs after Charley?

Mark: Probably Michael Mills.

Sylvester Dixon: Did he have traps after Charley?

Mark: I don't know.

Interviewer: Is he a local guy?

Mark: They grew up in Keys Marathon [00:30:00].

Sylvester Dixon: Stan's gone.

Mark: Stan is gone.

Sylvester Dixon: Stan would have told you.

Interviewer: He sent that too.

Mark: Stan would know--

Sylvester Dixon: Stan would have known.

Mark: --because he probably kept logs too or he had to.

Sylvester Dixon: Hang on.

Mark: And metric tickets.

Sylvester Dixon: There's a guy up in Venice that would know. What was his name? I forget his name. I forget.

Mark: *[Indiscernible]*[00:30:17] 2004.

Sylvester Dixon: He possibly could have been.

Mark: He might know.

Sylvester Dixon: He would know who was crabbing then buddy boat ride would. Whenever they retrained the commercial fisherman that was close to gill nets to Clam have you all ever heard that?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Mark: I went to school with old buddy. Buddy was born on water. This guy--

Interviewer: Is he here?

Mark: This guy they went to teach him how to dive and they gave him a mask and I'm telling you he's got a lot more experience on the water. He's been all the water all his life. He didn't even know how to put on a scuba mask. He tried to put it on backwards.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh.

Sylvester Dixon: And this guy had a job. All he knew was working. He didn't play in the water, he worked. But he didn't even know to put on a mask to get in a pool.

Mark: It was a source of a living in a lifestyle.

Sylvester Dixon: He hardly knew how to swim Mark.

Mark: I believe that. It doesn't surprise me. Now that stuff showed up in May.

Interviewer: Which stuff?

Mark: The red tide.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: And I can remember.

Sylvester Dixon: Which May is that?

Mark: If you talk to Tommy Lock he'll tell you because I was fishing off the ponds and he was up here at Murdock point on the shores and I called Tommy.

Sylvester Dixon: That was back down here Mark.

SylvesterDixonPart2

Mark: Oh yeah he was at Murdock point and I was down off here at the ponds and I called him and I said I think this is red tide. And you know those little round--

Sylvester Dixon: Go back to this.

Mark:-- slouanders, you know what I'm talking about?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah. They go back. Don't we start looking for it after we've had a bunch of rain and we get real larry. We're all good [*indiscernible*] [00:31:56] waiting for it to happen no time.

Mark: Yeah, waiting for it to happen.

Sylvester Dixon: We wait for it to happen after we get a bunch of rain.

Interviewer: Is there anything you can do to [00:32:00] prepare like does it help to know that it is coming? Is there anything that--?

Sylvester Dixon: There isn't a damn thing you can do.

Mark: There's nothing you can do about it.

Sylvester Dixon: Because you don't know where and how bad it's going to go.

Mark: I can tell you that it would behoove the state to do some health studies on the impact of red tide on humans because I can tell you how I shitty I feel after being in it all day. It's mild like flu symptoms.

Sylvester Dixon: You see it doesn't bother me in any way.

Mark: It bothers the crap out of me.

Sylvester Dixon: It don't bother me.

Mark: I feel tired and I have a headache.

Interviewer: Yeah. How long does that last after being in it?

Mark: For as long as I've been -- you know typically the symptoms clear up by the next morning but then you get out in it and right back to where you were.

Interviewer: Does it ever stop you? Did the health impacts ever stop you from going out?

Mark: Oh hell no.

Sylvester Dixon: Let's see.

Mark: No. Now, I don't know what those poor souls are doing on Caloosahatchee with all the blue green stuff that's a separate issue. I think it's a cause.

Sylvester Dixon: So tell me something Mark, what do you think is causing that blue-green stuff up there though? Do you think lack of water flow has anything to do with that?

Mark: It could. I mean you know.

Sylvester Dixon: Stop and look at where the snot grass builds up like inside. Where does that stuff build up that worst of that stuff?

Mark: In sanitary places.

Sylvester Dixon: Where you don't get floods.

Mark: Where you don't get a lot of floods.

Sylvester Dixon: So what's going to happen whenever a pass--?

Mark: Okay but little--

Sylvester Dixon: What's going to happen whenever a pass fill up though?

Mark: You won't have a flood.

Sylvester Dixon: Good and you're going have a very *[overlapping conversation][00:33:43]*.

Mark: Now rattle me this one. Why is there sargassum grass? Why is there sargassum weed in Bull Bay?

Sylvester Dixon: Oh you noticed that too.

Mark: It's been there. I've been messing with crap for three years.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, but it hasn't been there much longer than that.

Mark: Not that much longer than that. But how--

Sylvester Dixon: It's new.

Mark: But how is that--

Sylvester Dixon: It's in the grass. It's growing in there.

Mark: How is that growing in there? Isn't that [00:34:00] a [indiscernible][00:34:05]?

Sylvester Dixon: They're not only in Bull Bay. It's out there off of [indiscernible][00:34:11] the coral bay white pelican.

Mark: Is it really?

Sylvester Dixon: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So captain Mark, what are your-- if you have any, what are your suggestions for management, for forecasting or what do you think would help? What do you think should be done?

Mark: Well-

Sylvester Dixon: I think you should start monitoring this water.

Interviewee: First of all yes. If you don't have data that is reliable I think you're wasting tax payer money and your time. I think there has to be a base line to start from and I think if the state is willing to risk it's tourism dollar on -- if it's willing to gamble the tourism dollar and the whole reason if you look at a satellite map of Florida, all the grass are along the coast. What do you think is going to happen when nobody wants to live there anymore or they can't live there anymore let me put it to you that way? Now, this has been the worst red tide in recent memory. It may not happen again for 20 years.

Sylvester Dixon: Everybody asked me when are we going to get the next one?

Mark: You know, what was it, '98?

Sylvester Dixon: You know how long is it going to take?

Mark: What was it? '98 I think there was a really-- remember that was a long lasting red tide. It was '97, '98. It happened. It was very, very bad.

Sylvester Dixon: That was pretty bad.

Mark: It was pretty bad but I would like--. I would love to see the comparison between that time period and the events that led up to this because you remember we had a very dry spring.

Sylvester Dixon: In '97 and that, how long did you thing that lasted though?

Mark: I thought it lasted about as long as this. I don't [00:36:00] know if it was the intensity.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, but their intensity.

Mark: I don't think the intensity was that bad.

Sylvester Dixon: With that intense stuff, what--

Mark: I don't think the intensity was this bad.

Sylvester Dixon: Three months at the most?

Mark: Probably but it was bad. It was pretty bad.

Sylvester Dixon: Three, four months.

Mark: But I think the state needs to-- I think the state needs to maybe I don't know. Maybe even form--

Sylvester Dixon: He has got a good point. There's absolutely no telling how many millions of dollars that that water out there brings.

Mark: Generates.

Sylvester Dixon: Generates.

Mark: State wide.

Sylvester Dixon: Especially I'm talking even this area. There's absolute no telling how many billions.

Mark: State wide, I would-- you're with the University of Miami?

Interviewer: mm-mh.

Mark: Why don't you guys do a study with the math department?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: And have them try to put it -- because they did it with bone fishing in the keys. They came to a conclusion on a dollar amount of what every bone fish released in the keys is worth in the value of tourism dollars. That's fuel, food, lodging, guide fees, on and on and this list goes and all these other peripheral businesses that feed on that fat let's say and I want to say the value amount came to about \$60,000 and I could be wrong on that so don't quote me on that.

Sylvester Dixon: Mark is talking with this now. Hang on I won't ask you a question.

Mark: But I would love to know what -- I would love for the University of Miami--

Sylvester Dixon: I'm fixing to give you all the facts that you're going to get real easy.

Mark: -- or Miami as my mother would call it.

Interviewer: Miami.

Mark: I would love for them to put a dollar amount on what cost of tourism brings to this state.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: And let's weigh [00:38:00] --

Sylvester Dixon: Hang on. Give me just a second so she can type this and I got Brook on the phone.

Mark: Okay.

Sylvester Dixon: Roughly what did the red tide cost the public this past year?

Mark: 35% of that year, pretty close.

Sylvester Dixon: In this area it cost publics \$42,000,000 in sales in this local area.

Mark: There you go. I bet that works out to about 35.

Sylvester Dixon: That didn't come from here from me.

Mark: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: Because she's in the know and you know.

Mark: Yeah, she has to track that.

Sylvester Dixon: But yeah alright. Would you say that that was in your district or would you say that was in the Fort Myers, how many districts would you say? Lakeland South region? Okay alright. So that would cover Fort Myers, Sarasota, probably not up above and Naples not above Tampa though probably, right? Okay.

Mark: I doubt it.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay, I love you. Bye. That's a rough estimate but she works in customer service. She's a customer service manager in the store so she looks at all the-- she can tell you--

Mark: I bet if you broke that down, I bet it would be somewhere between 28-35%.

Sylvester Dixon: \$42,000,000 in one company.

Mark: One company.

Sylvester Dixon: One company.

Mark: But let's circle back to--

Interviewee: The sales.

Interviewee: I would love to know and I don't want to hear it from politicians because I don't trust any of them. I don't trust any of them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: I would love to know all the peripheral revenues generated from the sugar industry. I want to know what that dollar [00:40:00] amount is on subsidized and I want to know if Florida is willing to gamble it's greatest resource because I think we're missing the boat on our greatest resource. Our greatest resource in this state is drinkable water and we're pissing it away but I would love to know if they took away Sylvester's livelihood back in the day by putting constitutional limits on the ballot box and took away gill nets okay, which the scientists did not back it up. It was public perception so what is the public perception on continuing to put up with events like this because I think it is preventable. I think we'll continue to have red tide but I think a lot of it has to do with rainfall. I think water flow needs to be restored to the Everglades.

Sylvester Dixon: Mark, they can't do that.

Mark: Why can't they?

Sylvester Dixon: You got highway 27, 75 and 41 cutting off the Everglades. It's a dam. They're going to have to take out those three roads.

Mark: They don't have to take them out. They make these things called bridges.

Sylvester Dixon: So guess what?

Mark: I know it's going to cost--. Listen, I know it's going to cost billions of dollars.

Sylvester Dixon: I went to a red tide meeting a while back and they said they reached the milestone and they built three or four miles of bridges over 41.

Mark: So?

Interviewer2: Yeah, actually I drove on that recently.

Mark: What was it? Three or four miles?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: What's three or four miles? We got a seven-mile bridge but three or four mile isn't going to do nothing. How long is 41?

Sylvester Dixon: Three dam long. It's a big dam.

Interviewer: More than three or four miles.

Mark: You build a dike. You put a road on top of it and that's what 41 is [00:42:00].

Sylvester Dixon: I don't know--

Mark: That's what it is.

Sylvester Dixon: -- the people is going to spend the money but you're right. I'll give you--

Mark: I'm going to tell you why you're wrong on that. I'm going to tell you why you're wrong.

Sylvester Dixon: What wrong on what?

Mark: Why they won't spend the money. I'm going to tell you they will spend the money. All these snow birds and all that okay you've got a whole class of *[indiscernible]*[00:42:26]. They're getting to die and I'm not trying to be morbid but that's just reality.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay.

Mark: Okay and the upcoming generations, people that you and I fish are more willing I think and that's just my opinion to it so I can be 100% wrong but I think they would be more willing to pull more money towards something like this. Sorry ladies but I'm going to get pretty. What the fuck are we subsidizing sugar? Why do we pay as much as we do at the store for sugar?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: When we can import it cheaper from South America.

Sylvester Dixon: You're right.

Mark: So we've propped up these family/companies for decades.

Sylvester Dixon: That's pretty scary.

Mark: And then they pump that money. The biggest that pisses me off about that Sylvester, they don't give a shit politically who you are. They're going to pump money to whether you're a democrat or republican as long as you scratch their back.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: As a matter of speaking.

Mark: That's how it's done.

Sylvester Dixon: Let me tell you. I went to red tide. Van Harbor went to it.

Mark: Yes.

Interviewer: Where was that and when was that?

Mark: I didn't even know.

Sylvester Dixon: This red tide--

Mark: It was up at the even center.

Sylvester Dixon: It was up at the event center.

Mark: I didn't even know.

Sylvester Dixon: So I want you all ladies to listen to this and they had 15,000 people there maybe.

Interviewer: Wow.

Mark: What? 15,000?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, there no. You can go back. It was I think wood event center. I don't know. No, probably not.

Mark: That might hold--

Sylvester Dixon: Go back.

Mark: That might hold 1000 people [00:44:00].

Sylvester Dixon: Okay maybe it was just a 1000 but listen you had *[indiscernible]*[00:44:08] marines, top scientists up there speaking and they like to boo that poor guide off the stage.

Mark: Okay. You've not talked about this.

Sylvester Dixon: And you know why they booed him off the stage for? Whenever he said that the stuff that caused red tide was natural in the water. And they booed and it hit me like a hammer and then I thought about the piece River and bone valley. That's whenever bone valley hit me is whenever he said that is a natural substance.

Mark: It is a naturally occurring.

Sylvester Dixon: Natural substance in the water.

Mark: Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: Do you know what I'm talking about bone valley up there off of Venice pier where they go out there and dive.

Mark: Yeah, they find the bones.

Sylvester Dixon: In the shark's teeth.

Mark: In the shark's teeth. Yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: I was telling--

Mark: They found a burial site off there.

Sylvester Dixon: I was telling them that.

Mark: Off of Minnesota last year.

Sylvester Dixon: What was the term that I used about the decaying? What do you think causes red tide? Is it the decaying matter--

Mark: It could be.

Sylvester Dixon: Where do they get phosphate from? The same place. What about all the dead fish that died that they've proven now in red tide? Look at all the nitrogen so you're going to tell me that nitrogen isn't there from bone valley?

Mark: I'm not saying there can be natural occurring processes that contribute to a bloom.

Sylvester Dixon: Natural deposits of phosphates.

Mark: Okay but that's a geographical area bone valley, right?

Sylvester Dixon: What about the Peace River though whenever it washes out?

Mark: That's fresh water. I realize that comes down into the bay system I get it okay.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah but there's natural deposits--

Mark: I understand that.

Sylvester Dixon: -- along that.

Mark: Here is what I believe, Sylvester.

Sylvester Dixon: So I believe that's why it's been around for so long back in the '40s and before.

Mark: That very well could be and there's nothing we can do about that [00:46:00].

Sylvester Dixon: Okay so then let's go back to my latest theory Mark.

Mark: Okay.

Sylvester Dixon: Is if the red tide don't dissipate and they keep settling to the bottom and compounding, what is there to that?

Mark: I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: Because if this new trans keeps going out going to the bottom and keeps compounding, compounding, compounding, and compounding that could be one of the reasons possibly that red tide keeps getting worse.

Mark: I think we had a perfect storm for this red tide scenario. We've been very dry. Every freaking person in this state has to have a green freaking lawn everybody.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: And it was dry and dry and dry and then we had a tropical low spin up and dam 10 inches of freaking rain. Where is it going to give?

Sylvester Dixon: In May and that was the most--

Mark: And I think that and then of course we've got an aging dike system around Lake Okeechobee. I don't fault. I don't blame the army court. Their hands a tied dude. What are they going to do, Sylvester? They got the diet feet. It's called the harbor- hover-freaking diet for crying out loud. You know when he was president a long freaking time ago. It's

an aging infrastructure that needs attention and that's part of the reason they dump volumes of water that they do.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: What they're going to do? You've got all those communities to the south of the lake, we got a hurricane, what's going to happen?

Sylvester Dixon: Mark, how long has this stuff been going on that they've never done nothing about it?

Mark: There you go.

Sylvester Dixon: There's some like those roads going to cross the alley and all that.

Mark: They've known this for a long time.

Sylvester Dixon: For long, long time.

Mark: Is the restriction of fresh water flowing into Florida Bay through the Everglades [00:48:00] in the northern keys, is that what led to the decline of shrimp fishery in Florida Bay? I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: I think that you-- they've already made all the plans to go around those roads.

Mark: With returning the water flow?

Sylvester Dixon: Well, with trying to filter the water. They're talking about putting those and it's beyond my comprehension. Who in the world ever thinks they can go out there and build a retention pond big enough to try to hold the water out of Okeechobee is--?

Mark: Hey buddy the Chinese built the dam across the Yangtze River, you know what I mean?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, but to try to build something big enough-- a retention pond big enough to hold the water out of Okeechobee to run it through retention pond and clean it up. And then they're talking about pumping some of it back down into the border zones and the *[indiscernible]*[00:49:03] and the rest of that stuff.

Mark: Well, that's in the limestone. Limestone is--

Sylvester Dixon: There's absolutely no talk with them doing away with 75 and 41 and the rest of that.

Mark: Never going to happen. Never going to happen.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, that's what I told you a little bit ago so it's just--

Mark: No, I'm not talking about that but there are alternative ways of restoring that flow to the everglades. I don't care if you have run a culvert every freaking 100 yards and let it cut under that road bed. You're still letting water flow to the south which is where it wants to go, right?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah, but they're not talking about that stuff no more.

Mark: I agree. Why? Why aren't they talking about it?

Sylvester Dixon: Because it's costing more money to-- or they want to spend some body they'll run in somebody's pocket but they'll build in this.

Mark: But that's where it comes back to where this has become a political issue?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: Okay [00:50:00].

Sylvester Dixon: Somebody is going to get--

Mark: And that's why I would love to see if the law makers are smart. This state, you would get a democrat on this side, you get a republican on this side--

Sylvester Dixon: Somebody is going to get fat happy on those--

Mark: --and say they're-- we're going to get together and figure this shit out.

Sylvester Dixon: Somebody is going to get fat happy on those retention ponds and.

Mark: Sure they're.

Sylvester Dixon: You want me to tell you the problem with retention ponds girls or you're all listening real close?

Interviewer: Yes.

Sylvester Dixon: When have we ever done anything that really helped the problem? It's always made it worse and that's what scares the fool out of me.

Mark: Yeah, and that scares me too. It does.

Sylvester Dixon: They're going to go over there and they're go marking around with those retention ponds and the rest that stuff and they're not going to do nothing.

Mark: And they may not. You're right.

Sylvester Dixon: It's going to make it worse. That's what scares me.

Mark: You may be right.

Sylvester Dixon: There's very little that they do. They did help the snout with the freeze though, didn't they?

Mark: They did. I would--

Sylvester Dixon: Did it surprise you?

Mark: I would have wished-- I wish they would have left it closed for two more years.

Sylvester Dixon: Another year or so.

Mark: At least another year.

Sylvester Dixon: But did you believe that it worked as well as it did? Was you a--?

Mark: I was a little surprised.

Sylvester Dixon: You see there.

Mark: I was a little surprised. I think another thing too that a lot of us don't take into account is just how resilient our ecosystems are if we just give them a fair chance. This is the biggest thing. Sylvester will tell you, I'm a little larry about not eating oysters anymore, are you?

Sylvester Dixon: Oh I haven't ate one in--.

Mark: I haven't ate one in four years.

Sylvester Dixon: Four years probably.

Mark: Four years since I picked the Oysters and I don't know if I'll ever eat oysters here again. That kind of makes me sad.

Sylvester Dixon: We used to have some of the best oysters that was around here.

Mark: The best and I've eaten a lot of oysters. I know Sylvester has too but.

Interviewer: And you stopped just because water quality?

Mark: Well, we've had red tide every freaking December for years.

Sylvester Dixon: I don't know that they've opened it this year.

Mark: It's not. They're still hot [00:52:00].

Sylvester Dixon: They're still?

Mark: They're still hot.

Sylvester Dixon: There's still stuff in there and there's shell fish.

Mark: They're still hot.

Sylvester Dixon: And I'm not talking about-- I'm talking about commercially farm raised clams.

Mark: Yes, they're still hot.

Sylvester Dixon: That you take from an area.

Mark: Yeah, that gets good flow.

Sylvester Dixon: They take them do meat samples on those and they still can harvest that group of clams because there's still got too much and what I have to do going back to what I said about how much of that falling down there and staying.

Mark: Yeah, it could.

Interviewer: It really amazes that clam that there's any clam agriculture in this area given everything you've talked about waterfall and water quality.

Mark: He knows more about that than I'll ever tend to know.

Sylvester Dixon: They trained me and I told you about the body. They trained me to be a clammer on that and.

Interviewer: Yeah, what happened?

Mark: It's a pipe dream.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: It was.

Sylvester Dixon: The red tide-- between the red tide and they made out like the clams lived a lot better like you would get a 60,70% ratio live and you will be doing good to get--

Mark: What was the best ratio you ever got?

Sylvester Dixon: Maybe 50%.

Mark: Yeah, that's pretty big hit to take.

Sylvester Dixon: That would be good. So you buy these clams and they would as fine as a grain of sand. Then you would raise them up to about the size of a thumb nail so you put them in a real fine mesh bag because a real fine mesh net fine mesh so whenever they're so small they don't fall through. You grow them up to about the size of your thumbnail or a little bigger and then you put them in what you call a grow out bag and from there to the time that they get ready to harvest you just lost a bunch of them. They tried. Some people said well, we're over crowded. We put too many in the bag [00:54:00] so they would try to reduce that number and.

Interviewer: What was killing them?

Mark: Lots of things would kill them all.

Sylvester Dixon: I don't think it was a natural environment. We were trying to grow clams where there was no grass because most of the time whenever you find those clams you did them out of a grass bed a lot of times. We were trying to grow in the grass beds or what. At that's three or four foot and we were trying to grow them six or seven foot of water on sand. You see it's totally a different environment.

Mark: Your list was down here, wasn't it?

Sylvester Dixon: Yes.

Interviewer: So how long where you working in agriculture? How long were you trying to make it work?

Sylvester Dixon: I've spent a couple of years at it. Two or three years.

Interviewer: And then after that, did the government, did they pay for everything, they [indiscernible][00:55:00].

Sylvester Dixon: They paid for stuff up front to get you started.

Interviewer: Yeah but then all the labor and the work and everything that's just--?

Sylvester Dixon: That's yours. But they gave us some money to get started. We could take the money but we had to show that we spend on gear four clams. You couldn't go out and buy soft drinks or something like that. You had to buy clam bags or dive-in gear and stuff.

Interviewer: They're still people who are clamming in this area, how do they make it work?

Sylvester Dixon: I think right now the state is trying to come up with a way to fund these people. The last red tide--

Mark: I don't know anything about it since Danny died.

Sylvester Dixon: The last red tide meeting that I went to that was talking about funding and one of the ways that they were talking about funding them is because the clams filter the water and help clean up the water so we needed more clams to filter and clean the water [00:56:00]. So they were boosting up the clam farmers making them look like they're --

Mark: You guys used to dig [*indiscernible*][00:56:08] when you were little, didn't you?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah.

Mark: And big giant hot shows.

Sylvester Dixon: I remember once but I was saying if we get the farmers, the clam farmers to start oyster farming that that's going to clean the water. I had to say it for the poor clammers in that but I don't know that's a lot of clams of course.

Mark: That's a lot to ask for.

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah

Mark: And they got to be in the right areas.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, especially whenever we were in the predicaments that we were in. But they're talking about the clams raising them just for the purpose of filtering the water. I think you would be better off going out there and gathering up that not grass and all that stuff and throwing it on the bank than throwing it in the fields because you know there's a bunch of nutrients in that stuff.

Mark: Oh yes there is.

Sylvester Dixon: Because the big

Mark: That's a great idea Sylvester.

Sylvester Dixon: I hadn't really went over with you all. They're talking about getting rid of all the dead fish and all of that. How about all this grass I talked to you all about?

Mark: It's not.

Sylvester Dixon: And gathering all that stuff out of the water and throwing that on the bank because where a lot of these nutrients is got to be in. Now, listen if you leave that grass in the water washes up there on the bank and it goes back into the water. Let's say like the study that I said about how much after the red tide goes down to the bottom and compounds it so it's still that grass isn't getting rid of it. It's just not-- it's compounding. Can we prove that this problem is compounding?

Sylvester Dixon: Is that part of the chain?

Mark: What's that?

Sylvester Dixon: That stuff. You're going to have natural organic compounds breaking down. Rotting, I mean it's just part of the process.

Mark: We'll see after the summer if that causes as much of it as we got around right now. We'll see if that sparks another red tide. You follow me from that breaking down.

Mark: You know why I don't think we're not going to have any issues this year?

Sylvester Dixon: But hang on Mark [00:58:00], if we got all--.

Mark: Because we've had a wet winter.

Sylvester Dixon: No, it's going to be because it's been a dry year that we won't have any problem. If we don't have no problem it's because it's so dry. Because we had no rain. Because we sat here and looked at--

Mark: I know but I think we've had a wet spring. Not a wet spring, we had a wet winter and I think it's kept enough of the manmade influences flushed at a rate that--.

Interviewer: Yeah, like people's lawns are green and probably won't need the fertilizer.

Mark: Yeah, it's not coming out in one big hit like it did in May.

Interviewer: Because *[indiscernible]* [00:58:42] at the same time.

Mark: And I could be wrong. I don't know.

Interviewer: No, I mean I'm interested in all there.

Mark: That's why I think the state needs to adopt a baseline and where do you start? I don't know. That's a scientist. I would like to see some objective science done on this so that at least we've got a starting point and maybe start to make a plan on how to-- I don't know if you can ever manage it.

Sylvester Dixon: I think it's going to be interesting to see what happens. What comes out of all this grass decaying. The snort grass and all that stuff decaying and all that if there's that much nutrients in it if it does re spark red tide. I'm going to keep my eye on it because I have seen snort grass decaying and spark red tide on the beach. I've see it. Right off after Dan Pedro. That snort grass starting falling apart and red tide developed there within a week after that really started falling apart and sinking to the bottom. Do you think you've ever seen anything like that possibly?

Mark: I probably weren't paying attention.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, I think I've seen it.

Mark: I know that I don't want to go through what we went through again. I don't know if there's [01:00:00] anything that could be done.

Sylvester Dixon: Hey, Mark?

Mark: Yes, Sir.

Sylvester Dixon: What do you think about putting a monitoring thing right over here on that [indiscernible][01:00:12]? The only problem of it is the public.

Mark: I think you would have to put it on the other side to where it can only be accessed by boat and.

Sylvester Dixon: It would be a good place to put one though there.

Mark: There's plenty of flow there.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: Plenty of flow.

Sylvester Dixon: I'm telling you that right there would be some [indiscernible][01:00:32].

Mark: You know Doug Stewart and I used to go take water samples.

Sylvester Dixon: For the state?

Mark: mm-mh. And we had to be in Bull Bay, I want to say between 6a.m and 6:30a.m, and we took samples and I don't think there was ever a sample turned in that didn't have a *Karenia brevis* in it.

Sylvester Dixon: Oh you're talking about the--

Mark: The tide, the algae. I don't think there was ever a sample that we turned in that did not contain it.

Sylvester Dixon: How long did Doug do that though and in what year?

Mark: Doug did it for years. I helped him for a couple just something to do early in the morning go watch the world wake up, take the water samples. Maybe catch something for lunch or dinner but I know that if you went out there in the bay right now and got a quart jar and filled it up I bet there will be red tide in there.

Sylvester Dixon: Probably a good thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, background levels.

Mark: There would be background levels of red tide in there.

Interviewer: I wouldn't be surprised.

Mark: I wouldn't either.

Sylvester Dixon: I think that there was--

Mark: So is that where the science-- is that the direction the science needs to go is figure out at what point does-- what is the mechanism, the trigger that happens to make this event happen?

Sylvester Dixon: It's the salinity.

Mark: Yeah, and that probably has a lot to do with it.

Sylvester Dixon: It's all that salinity.

Mark: All it wants to do is live and replicate. That's all [01:02:00] it wants to do. So how do you keep that from happening? I don't believe putting dispersants or anything like that is right way to go because I think you're screwing with something that could actually be a cleansing mechanism for estuaries.

Sylvester Dixon: Have you ever heard of Andreeff?

Mark: Andreeff, Andreeff. Why does that name sound familiar?

Sylvester Dixon: It's a got a place down there on the harbor shore down there. One of the big houses in Boca Bay down there beside Charlie Rice.

Mark: Okay he's on--

SylvesterDixonPart2

Sylvester Dixon: So anyhow you know his wife gets *[indiscernible]* [01:02:32] in all that from red tide. I mean that's what he said operations and everything.

Mark: Jim Harvey sold his place in Boca Bay because of it.

Sylvester Dixon [01:02:48]: Okay so listen girls this is where I'm getting to. He told me that they use clay over here in the Makabo basin that they've used in other parts of the world to sink it to the bottom.

Mark: What?

Sylvester Dixon: Yes.

Mark: Do what with clay?

Sylvester Dixon: A clay that use in foreign countries that they put over the water--

Mark: That captures it.

Sylvester Dixon: --captures it.

Mark: And pulls it to the bottom and kills it.

Sylvester Dixon: And they've done it over here in Boca Bay. Not Boca Bay, in the Makobo basin as a test. Had you heard anything about that?

Mark: No.

Interviewer: Who do that?

Mark: Well, that changed *[indiscernible]* [01:03:30] so they could do it.

Sylvester Dixon: I think most marine done that but they kind of kept it on the ash.

Mark: So it's a type of clay.

Sylvester Dixon: That they've used in foreign countries.

Mark: Interesting. How do they disperse it?

Sylvester Dixon: Disperse what?

Mark: The clay.

Sylvester Dixon: I'm not sure.

Mark: Shake it out, spray it?

Sylvester Dixon: They said it did work but here we go again all that they had done to sink it to the bottom. They didn't get rid of it.

Interviewer: Yeah, it was adding something else to the environment.

Sylvester Dixon: It's still compounding.

Mark: Yeah, what did the clay do?

Sylvester Dixon: Still goes back to the thing of compounding the problem. You know that's the whole thing I've been sitting here saying the whole time. Is there any way to get the nutrients out of the waters? We just get high and higher levels all the time.

Interviewer: Yeah so--

Mark: What about organisms like the shrimp, clams, are these nutrients that they use as well? Are these organic compounds that they use?

Sylvester Dixon: Well, I'm sure the shrimp do.

Mark: Sure they do.

Sylvester Dixon: And crabs.

Mark: And probably mullet to some degree.

Sylvester Dixon: To some degree.

Mark: So I would like to see more efforts on sea grass restoration quite frankly.

Sylvester Dixon: No, hang on Mark.

Mark: I would.

Sylvester Dixon: Come on.

Mark: What do you mean? Manatee hunting seasons because they use a lot of sea grass. Nobody ever talks about that.

Sylvester Dixon: Mark we can't replant sea grass that's a total waste.

Interviewer: So I like this manatee hunting season idea, we'll see where it goes. I think we talked about--

Mark: Show him that place out there. Show him the middle ground out there where they've eaten it bare.

Sylvester Dixon: I've heard--

Mark: Eaten it bare.

Sylvester Dixon: --that there's for sure studies, what do you believe Mark, do you think that those manatees was brought in or do you think that--?

Mark: I don't know. I have no idea. All I know is my father--

Sylvester Dixon: Supposedly--

Mark: My father killed them in the early 50s and they consumed them.

Sylvester Dixon: I've heard that there's artifacts--

Mark: They eat them.

Sylvester Dixon: I've heard that there's artifacts taking them a way back though.

Mark: They found manatee bones in with the Kolisa Uchis. With the Kolisa burial sites.

Sylvester Dixon: They did?

Mark: Yes, I know they have.

Sylvester Dixon: If they did then--

Mark: I've read about it.

Sylvester Dixon: --they've been here.

Mark: They've been here.

Sylvester Dixon: Okay.

Mark: I don't think somebody said, "Hey [*indiscernible*][01:05:58], please take [*indiscernible*][01:05:59] we're going to throw them up Florida.

Sylvester Dixon: Well [01:06:00], I can tell you this. I can promise you one thing. They eat a ton of grass.

Mark: They eat a shit of sea grasslands.

SylvesterDixonPart2

Sylvester Dixon: And their feces from them I haven't heard nobody doing any studies on that stuff either because it isn't good I can promise you that.

Mark: It's pretty obvious when you see one. They're about that big around and--

Sylvester Dixon: And you get around where there are some manatees, you'll see them.

Mark: Yeah, you'll see them but they eat copious amounts of grass and nobody ever talks about that. What's that?

Sylvester Dixon: I can show you some great big balls spots where they've been. How many would you like to see?

Mark: *[indiscernible]*[01:06:47] out there. Right out there.

Sylvester Dixon: There's one out there as big as this place.

Mark: You can go out there probably in May and there will be several of them out there and they'll be--

Sylvester Dixon: Daily hikers.

Mark: This is how hoggish they are. They'll be floating sea grass that they've chewed on and pulled out of the bottom and they're too lazy to go to the top and eat there off the surface.

Sylvester Dixon: So this is the surface above my house. That's the point--

Mark: I'm serious.

Sylvester Dixon: This replanting sea grass--

Mark: Go out and watch them.

Sylvester Dixon: -- it's a waste of time. The manatees. What's that?

Mark: But anyways I should probably go home and make*[indiscernible]* [01:07:21].

Interviewer: Yeah so I don't want to take any more of your time.

Mark: Yeah, that's fine. Have you talked to Tommy? Have they contacted him?

Interviewer: We're talking to Tommy tomorrow but I love if you all can think of any else in the area that would be a good person to talk to.

Sylvester Dixon: Do you know if *[indiscernible]*[01:07:39] is still alive?

Mark: I do too yeah.

Sylvester Dixon: Or Eunice or Briton.

Mark: Or Eunice yes. He just recently died.

Sylvester Dixon: We lost two some of the biggest.

Interviewer: Sorry to hear that.

Mark: And *[indiscernible]*[01:07:50].

Sylvester Dixon: To the biggest history people around here and they'd talked to you too especially Eunice.

Interviewer: They've kids or family that are still around or?

Sylvester Dixon: Yeah Greg.

Mark: Yeah Greg [01:08:00] or Briton he might. I don't know.

Sylvester Dixon: They own the fishery business over there where the fish house used to be. They own Gasparilla Fisheries. Mitchell King and I think that you're all supposed to talk to Mitchell. Did you all talk to Mitchell?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewee: So all this information you've compiled what are you going to do with it? You're not going to quote me on any of that stuff are you?

Interviewer: No, we're not.

Mark: This isn't for public consumption correct *[laughter]*? I don't want anybody to get mad at me.

Interviewer: No, no. Just trying to compile.

Sylvester Dixon: Van Herbert might know how to get a hold of Mitchell. I don't know. Mitchell has been around here since before I was here.

Interviewer: Okay. You don't have contact for him?

Sylvester Dixon: No, I do not.

Interviewer: Okay. And then that guy, Gasparilla Fisheries you said Greg?

Sylvester Dixon: Greg Alberton.

Interviewer: Greg Alberton.

Sylvester Dixon: Greg Alberton.

Mark: But I don't know where Greg is anymore.

Sylvester Dixon: He's here in town somewhere. Sam would have a way to get a hold of him.

Interviewer: But as you said the baseline data is the problem.

Mark: Is that recording?

Sylvester Dixon: Mark.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark: Bad enough I got my cellphone listens to me. You know that right? Why do you think certain ads pop up? They listen to you. Turn your microphone off.

Interviewer: We're recording and if you're comfortable with everything that you said, I think we had a great interview the first half. It's okay if you don't want to share the part that you were in. I don't know how you feel about that but this is the form that allows to.

Sylvester Dixon: Well, the manatees stuff.

Mark: The other manatees stuff yeah. That was just--

Interviewer: No, we're going to cut that part out.

Mark: That was anecdotal.

Interviewer: I think also I agree with you also so we're just going to cut that part out.

Mark: Yeah, cut that part out.

Interviewer: Okay.