

Female Speaker 1: Yes, you brought everything forth?

Male Speaker 1: [indiscernible] [00:00:04].

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So I want to – I want to start out just by asking a little bit just about you and your business here and how long you've been here and...

Interviewee: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Everything like that. So, can you tell us about yourself?

Interviewee: Yes. I've been here, I bought this property in 1984. And I worked on it all the way on up to 19 years ago when I opened a café. And it's just been good. Never advertised, all word of mouth.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And that's very successful business.

Female Speaker 1: So how long have you lived in Everglades City?

Interviewee: Twenty years?

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, I come from St. Petersburg.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. So, why did you come down here?

Interviewee: Because I bought the property.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: Why did you buy the property?

Interviewee: No, we – you know, when development starts people moving in. They love the quietness of it. I was up in Madeira Beach where I used a commercial boat when I fished up there. And then all of sudden there, everybody from North Coast down they are [indiscernible] [1:20]. I was looking for a place to get further south and I did so.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. So one of the things we're doing is kind of talking about red tide historically. So I'm interested in, what was your first interaction with red tide? Like if you think of the very first time that you saw red tide and...

Interviewee: Probably 50 years ago.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. Was that in Madeira?

Interviewee: And that's where I started as [indiscernible] [00:01:42].

Female Speaker 1: Yes. So, originally you were a commercial fisherman?

Interviewee: Yes, commercial fisherman always part-time. I had a [indiscernible] [00:01:51] [00:02:00]. I started out with six crab and when I finally hung it up by that about 12,000 and I said I'm out here [indiscernible] [00:02:19].

Female Speaker 1: Yes. Yes, I think we're going to have some trouble. I mean, this isn't going to pick up with the – okay. So, you're a commercial fisherman back in Madeira. Was that just stone crab?

Interviewee: No, no long line for grouper, snapper.

Female Speaker 1: Grouper, snapper and stone crab?

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: So, 50 years ago and your first red tide, let's talk about that where it was in Madeira Beach.

Interviewee: It was in Treasure Island.

Interviewee: Yes and...

Interviewee: And I lived like Treasure Island.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: I lived on the Gulf. And it came in, it's stone, bunch of dead fish on a beach.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And they tried breaking them for a while and they buried with a backhoe on the beach.

Female Speaker 1: Buried them with what?

Interviewee: Through the backhoe.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Dug a big trench in it.

Female Speaker 1: So, how long did that last? How long was that red tide, do you remember?

Interviewee: I remember having probably all the time I lived up there. Probably had at least a half a dozen, serious outbreaks.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: But I have never, never seen it this far south...

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And none of the boats that I know has run across it. Kit Johnson (phonetic) had said that red tide was here.

Female Speaker 1: Kit Johnson?

Interviewee: Do you know him?

Female Speaker 1: No, who is that?

Interviewee: He is a crabber, big crabber.

Female Speaker 1: He said that it was down [00:04:00] that there was red tide? Okay.

Interviewee: He said it was offshore here.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. When was that?

Interviewee: A week ago.

Female Speaker 1: A week ago?

Interviewee: Yes. But he's the only one I think that I have heard of.

Female Speaker 1: I think we definitely want to get – we definitely want to talk to him for sure.

Interviewee: Yes, you have to catch him about – he comes in about – he'd be about 6:00, 5:30-6:00 pm.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. He comes in here?

Interviewee: No, down the river cross and...

Female Speaker 1: So, he said that there was – oh go ahead.

Interviewee: And you're going to see some new construction down there, where they put a roof over a gym like. It was wide open just a metal crimp roof on it, he's right across from that. There is a little boat tied up there and I really don't know the name of a little boat is but it's a small boat and he is a big about 44-footer and he's [indiscernible] [00:04:59]. And you will see him, the name on his boat is the Kitkat.

Female Speaker 1: The Kitkat?

Interviewee: Yes. It's K-I-T-K-A-T.

Female Speaker 1: Do you have a contact for him? Phone number?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: No? Okay, that's fine. We'll look around for him.

Interviewee: Yes. I don't think I did.

Male Speaker 1: So, you said that you would fist see severe red tides as 50 years ago?

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Outside of Tampa, Madeira Beach area?

Interviewee: Madeira Beach off of Treasure Island there.

Male Speaker 1: And how long is those red tides last, can you remember?

Interviewee: I can't remember.

Male Speaker 1: Do you remember how they cause you – how they affected your fishing?

Interviewee: [00:06:00] Not really. I can't remember that it ever affected the fishing. I remember cravat right of in the heart of red tide.

Male Speaker 1: Grabbing in the heart of the red tide?

Interviewee: With stone crab, yeah.

Male Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: And I know there was several, several boats of the red tide up there that we had long as I was up there because I know and heard the tourist industry up there. It was

all motels for tourist and they – I remember they were leaving the beaches, move going inland or not coming down but...

Female Speaker 1: And you said there were dead fish on the beach?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Serious dead fish, serious.

Female Speaker 1: Do you remember like what kind of species or was there like?

Interviewee: There was Bali, there was catfish, there was – probably, that was the most of it. Bali, catfish.

Female Speaker 1: Yes, but you said the stone crab were unaffected?

Interviewee: I did not see any stone crab dead on the beach. I saw some blue crabs there which is strange.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: You would think they would be same animal or related somehow, but it was bad and lasted a long time too.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. How long do you think like weeks or months?

Interviewee: Oh, a good month away, six weeks I'd say.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. Because I used to drive home coming out to the beach and I'd be a mile from the beach and you could smell the red tide.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. So after that, you know big event that you remember 50 years ago. What was kind of the next event? Like what was the next red tide after that that you think you really remember? Was there one that also had like a big fish killed or?

Interviewee: Yes. We had quite a few of them and I imagine that it might still be happening about that event [00:08:00].

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: But I don't know, whether it was a year apart, two years apart. But it seemed like we had dead fish on the beach for a long time for many ears. Like it just, it come and go, it come and go.

Female Speaker 1: How often would you see when you left in Madeira, how often would you see a red tide? Was that...

Interviewee: I would say once every three years.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: And it stayed kind of that that same way for the whole time you were living there?

Interviewee: Pretty much so, pretty much so. Yes, I was driving out there 20 years. And I know that it just had a big outbreak of right up there recently because my daughter told me.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes, your daughter still there?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Female Speaker 1: So the red tides in Madeira Beach is kind of the same thing where they all – did they all last about a month?

Interviewee: Yes, I would say three or four weeks anyway, I'm sure of it.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. And was it always the same where you couldn't stone crab, but...

Interviewee: Yes, I've never seen a stone crab dead from it. And I heard some people tell me that they saw a stone crab dead about Fort Myers. But I personally have never seen it yellow stone crab.

Female Speaker 1: Yeah. So what about since you've been in the Everglades and you've been here for 20 years?

Interviewee: 20 years, yes.

Female Speaker 1: So, what's the first red tide that you saw here?

Interviewee: I've never seen red tide at all here. I have never seen. I've read about it, you know, up off in Naples, up off in Marco and pretty close to here. But I've never seen it out in the Gulf here.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: Did you use to fish out here? Use the crab?

Interviewee: I used the crab out here when I first – probably in the 90s.

Male Speaker 1: In the 90s?

Interviewee: Early 90s, late 80s, late 80s, late 80s.

Male Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes. But...

Male Speaker 1: And then but that you stopped actually going out?

Interviewee: Yes, I sold my boat probably [00:10:00] seven or eight years ago.

Male Speaker 1: Okay. And that was more or less the last time that you went out [overlapping] [00:10:05] years ago.

Interviewee: I've been out on water in a little boat but not...

Male Speaker 1: Just not fishing, yes.

Interviewee: Usually [indiscernible] [00:10:12] somebody that died.

Male Speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: So, in the last you are running this business and everything. Have you noticed any impacts from red tides?

Interviewee: Yes, people, you know, and just trying had the oil spilled out in Louisiana.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: People, they called me all the time there and they says you all are right there in front of your place and I said, no, I said, they're all at several hundred miles from me. And it's the same thing with the red tide now but the girls they asked for the [indiscernible] [00:10:46] take care of everything. And my manager is out of town. And I told her you were coming down today. And she said, well, you know, she said, we get a

lot of calls, you know, there's a red tide right there. I've had people asked me I'd be sitting up there if – where does this fish come from? You know they're concerned that coming up there was red tide they said.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. Do you know how...

Interviewee: I told [indiscernible] [00:11:16] I was going to tell you would buy it all from China. [Laughter] He is like no, no don't ever say that.

Female Speaker 1: So, when did the – how long has that been happening? Is that a yearly thing where people called and ask about red tide or is that?

Interviewee: Yes, pretty much. It's all how bad the media gets it out the red tide or you know, the whole world thinks it's on all the beaches and then, you are out on the front yard and everything. But you – when you talk and tell the people that go ahead, you know, we shuffle a lot of stuff, shipped overnight to all over the country. So they're concerned and I can understand it. But once we're done, it's done here else [00:12:00]. I don't think any of the crabbers that I've heard had it done and buy from, had any problems with it. Ted Johnson is out every day. He's out on the water every day.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. So I mean, you said like it's an issue with perception and that people thinking that there's red tide here and that...

Interviewee: Right.

Female Speaker 1: ...that can be an issue. Is there any kind of actual decrease in stone crab populations or any issues out with your fishermen?

Interviewee: Yes. This is – this is about the slow stone crab season I've ever seen here, so, yeah. You guys are – I think next year is going to be a lot less crabbers. They just can't afford they're doing. I remember a few years ago, you know, and even last year, where they get some calls coming in, you know, 4, 6, 800 pounds. And this year they are going out there and they are pulling several amount of crabs and coming in with 60 or 80 pounds.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. The highest I've had on any of my boats there was opening season. And it was an 84 year old captain on a boat and he come in with 320 pounds. And that was a one of the biggest catches I have seen. Yes, then they just didn't come down.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: I had a crabber out of Tarpon Springs this year. And he told me that he made more money this year crab in Tarpon Spring and he had in the 18 or 20 years, put together that he made more money this year. They're up there again, catch them, 6, 800



1,200, 1,500 pounds a day in close like that. That would have been in the past when it's up to north there, it started around in almost [indiscernible] [00:13:44] that was been in the past. When it's up north there this time around, you know, almost a crescent wherever it's time and when it comes down and usually when you're alone, you know, Tarpon Spring, Madeira Beach coming down, if we wait about 10 days [00:14:00] to catch up those. But this year, they never caught up good. I have no idea why they didn't travel south this year, I have no idea.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: But they are having good harvest something up north?

Interviewee: Up there [Overlapping] [00:14:15] yes, Tarpon Springs is – and about the Tarpon [indiscernible] [00:14:21]. And they've had some good – they've made a ton of money up there this year on stone crab.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Usually stone crab, they had it first and they might have maybe the first two weeks to three weeks, that'd be good. And then it would fall off they wouldn't have any crabs. And then, you know, 10 days, two weeks later, they'd be down here.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. So, it's the same population and it just keeps moving south?

Interviewee: Yes. I always thought they moved south.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: So what are your crabber say? What do they think is going on? Like what are some of the...

Interviewee: They don't know.

Female Speaker 1: They don't...

Interviewee: They had no idea, no idea.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And I hear people up and up further north here like Bradenton, Sarasota area, Venice area, that they're not catching much there anymore, so...

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: I don't know where to go.

Female Speaker 1: Are there any other changes like environmental changes that maybe you'd notice here in the last 20 years or any of your fishermen have noticed or...

Interviewee: No, not really, not really, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Female Speaker 1: Any other algae glimpse with like green algae or?

Interviewee: All I've said about the green algae is what I saw on TV, we're playing [indiscernible] [00:15:44] coming out the river up in north Fort Myers.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: Do you remember any other periods that maybe aren't – weren't quite as bad as this time, but were the [00:16:00] stone crab catches were...

Interviewee: No.

Male Speaker 1: No, this is the first time you really...

Interviewee: The first time I can really say since I've been down there and I...

Male Speaker 1: So it's always been very consistent?

Interviewee: Yes, bigger – Everglades is known as the stone crab capital in the world. And all of a sudden, I mean every place going up the line it could be called that.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, they just have not caught a crab.

Female Speaker 1: Is there anything that you can do with your business when you're not getting the amount of stone crabs like this year or like, what did you, did you sell a different species instead or?

Interviewee: Yes, I tried some one of my purveyors. I bought a 10 pound box of claws from him. I saw the picture on the phone and I got it in my freezer and I've never looked at him but I don't want to sell them as stone crabs.

Female Speaker 1: And what are they?

Interviewee: Well, they look like stone crap. But they're like – I'm sure [indiscernible] [00:17:01] somewhere.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, but they look like a stone crab. And like all those markets or Winn Dixie market. I used to go through there and I mean I know what stone crab looks like and I would say okay crabs, these are also stone crabs, I said no, they are not. Then all sudden, he said that's what we buy them for, that's we – no they are not stone crab. And I think one of them might have come out of Mexico.

Male Speaker 1: And now the price is pretty high, right?

Interviewee: The price is pretty high, yes.

Male Speaker 1: Does that affect the sales [overlapping] [00:17:36].

Interviewee: Not really.

Male Speaker 1: People, they think...

Interviewee: People, they – I've seen a lot of it. I had a – I got a guy that lives on Pompano Beach, he usually comes up with two or three, his wife and maybe one or two more couples there. And he wants all the colossal stone crab, wants colossal stone crab. You know, I think they are like [indiscernible] [17:58]. And [00:18:00] here we run up in Tampon, it would be like 6 or 700 onwards.

Male Speaker 1: Oh my god.

Interviewee: Yes. And they'd come and say Ricky, he said how many girls got working today? I'd say three or four, 50 bills and said here put it your \$50.

Female Speaker 1: Wow.

Male Speaker 1: Wow.

Interviewee: Yes, so I mean – and the price doesn't really, really bother.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: They buy it. I know I hated to charge them but, you know, last year, we were – I had a guy out of Miami was paying \$20 a pound on a medium, \$30 a pound on the large, \$40 a pound on the jumbos, and \$45 pounds on the colossal. And that was green, that was right off the boat.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: What are some of the crabbers that work for you now that they're like having a bad season? Is there anything else that they're doing or changes in their fishing that?

Interviewee: No, I would say, I think once again crab, and the crab they just don't – the fish house is really supporting.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: So you're able to support your crabbers even if they're not bringing in enough stone crab?

Interviewee: Yes. I mean they can't very well keep catching anything for you that they can't afford the fuel.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And so...

Female Speaker 1: How many crabbers do a work for your...

Interviewee: I got four and then I got another two or three, I guess.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. Yes, I know we definitely want to talk especially with Kit.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: But did any of the other crabbers that work for you anyone else said they saw red tide or?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: No?

Interviewee: No. Probably because most of them speak Spanish and I don't speak Spanish. And I'm not sure they know what red tide look like.

Female Speaker 1: What did [00:20:00], Kits, Kit knew with that, when he saw it?

Interviewee: Yes, and I'm thinking I'm sure it was Kit that told me that was, that red tide was out there or somebody has bought it or sold the red tide.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Have you noticed impacts from an overall like lack of tourism to this area in the past year?

Interviewee: No, not really.

Female Speaker 1: No, same amount.

Interviewee: Same amount – pretty much same amount.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: I don't know what else...

Interviewee: It does hurt our business, you know, when we can't get stone crab.

Female Speaker 1: Yes, because I had one Saturday that I sold \$30, I sold 9700 and somewhat dollar, about \$30 shorter, selling \$10,000 worth of stone crab in one day. And that was all to go over the counter.

Male Speaker 1: Wow. Well people come over here specifically, I think just to buy stone crab, right?

Interviewee: To buy stone crab, bag of it, yes.

Male Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, we will have on Saturdays and Sundays we will have lines out the door.

Male Speaker 1: Oh my god.

Interviewee: Yes. And it was – it makes more money now because you got to pay somebody for them.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. At a one time, you can make \$6, \$7 a pound for. You know, you have a profit but now they make it \$3, \$4. Hi, Brantley.

Brantley: Hi.

Male Speaker 1: How about the hurricane. I saw pictures out there that...

Interviewee: Yes, the hurricane, yes that was [overlapping] [00:21:48]. Yes, that was in 2017. Yes.

Male Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: How long did it take you to recuperate from that?

Interviewee: I was out of town when it hit. [00:22:00] And the girls claimed that, most of the girls you see in there now, one or two, they are the ones on the bottom of pressure water and pressure water, pull that mud off of there. And in 13 days they turned the power on. And two days later they opened up the café.

Male Speaker 1: Wow.

Interviewee: Yes, in limited menu, but we're open. We're open about a month before anybody else.

Male Speaker 1: So, you were open within two or three weeks?

Interviewee: Yes, 15 days, you know, it would be two weeks, one day.

Female Speaker 1: How long did it take you – how long did it take your crabbers to recover?

Interviewee: I think they probably took a – well, when the crabbers, the crab born in the water, yeah.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: That's good.

Interviewee: Yes, because [indiscernible] [00:22:55] yes, they weren't order yet, yes.

Male Speaker 1: So the crabbers really weren't affected by it?

Interviewee: Well, in their homes itself they were. I don't think we didn't lose any boats or anything.

Male Speaker 1: Right.

Female Speaker 1: And you buy – you buy other products as well not just stone crab, it's just some other...

Interviewee: Yes, I got fish and shrimp but...

Female Speaker 1: So what about that side of your business, how is that...

Interviewee: Yes, it really did. It didn't bother, it didn't bother.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Because most of this stuff, all the scholars come up from either Virginia. Most of them I think they are, you know, right out the back door. And at Louisiana, I know, we get a lot of in Louisiana and a lot of crab out of Texas and but only the local [indiscernible] [00:23:51] of anything is just stone crabs.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And that's what really – that's our [indiscernible] [00:23:56] as we keep this going.

Male Speaker 1: What about [00:24:00] other local, like fish itself or anything like that you know of?

Interviewee: I did but, you know, it was so inconsistent of what you get, you know, and I used to be out there and cutting all the time. All the time, all I do is, you know, [indiscernible] [00:24:14]. That time for America and they're all the same size. Seven to nine hours, six to nine hours, six to eight hours, whatever you want. So, I almost gave up my full life line on that.

Male Speaker 1: So the local product is just...

Interviewee: Yes, just not enough.

Male Speaker 1: Two week consistent supply?

Interviewee: Yes, two week consistent, right.

Male Speaker 1: And what like what are you buying from Central America in particular? Like what species or...

Interviewee: [indiscernible] [00:24:51].

Male Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: What would be, you know, red tide being out here for the first time, as far as you know, in your experience?

Interviewee: Yes, it would have been. I have never seen it.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: As close like that I would say.

Female Speaker 1: Is there any reason why you think that would happen down here or any reason why it would be down here?

Interviewee: I have no idea. Somebody told me that in the Bible, five years ago or something like that. The sea is turning red so, maybe it's been around little longer and all the thing.

Female Speaker 1: Yes, you know, that's the first journal entry about the first time somebody encountered red tide and thought it was the plague and that's...

Interviewee: Yes, right, that's right.

Male Speaker 1: One of a Spanish explorer, right?

Female Speaker 1: Yeah, one of the Spanish explorers.

Interviewee: That's right. I wish I could help you a lot more. But maybe you got to catch up what these guys are after every day.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: Yes, absolutely.

Female Speaker 1: Well, that's, you know, this is, yes this is super helpful. I mean, this is great information. But it's, you know, we definitely want to talk to some stone crabbers so we can have them like I'd love to know where that red tide area was?

Interviewee: Right. [00:26:00]

Female Speaker 1: On a map. But yes, I know, I mean, we just learned a lot just from the last 20 minutes talking to you.

Interviewee: Yes, these guys. They start coming in about 5:30.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. Yes, these are people spotting the red tide and the fact.



Male Speaker 2: I don't really say see they see some going to the [indiscernible] [00:26:47].

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: A little up in a round April, yes.

Male Speaker 2: Yes, like [indiscernible] [00:26:53] but he said look, he come visit and come visit out all the present occurring too though. I also ran into that.

Interviewee: Okay.

Male Speaker 2: All right. Excuse me. Thank you.

Male Speaker 1: And are there wide areas that they [overlapping] [00:27:03]

Interviewee: Yes, some of them of them do, yes, some of them running up there.

Male Speaker 1: And you buy, I mean, you depend completely on what they're landing here, for your supply stone crab. You don't buy there is no other supplier at all for...

Interviewee: No, sometime, I did until this year. I used to buy a [indiscernible] [00:27:28]. And they had a few restaurants and I bought a lot of them and then everything change they sold the property. The waterfront property they had it but I used to, I was his biggest buyer, he told me one time.

Male Speaker 1: Where is that?

Interviewee: In island Capri, it just before you go on to Marco. It's right there.

Male Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes.

Male Speaker 1: But other than that is the guy said [00:28:00] ...

Interviewee: [Overlapping] [00:28:01], right here ,yes.

Female Speaker 1: Did they notice any fish dead round the red tide?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: Mention anything of that nature?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: So the guy who saw the red tide he knew just because it was effecting...

Interviewee: He probably saw a fish killed on the thing.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, that's what he – I would love to think that's how it works. But I'm not sure what it was Kit that told me or somebody else that told me. It might have been someone but I don't know.

Female Speaker 1: I want to talk to all of them but we do have to get back. We do have to drive back to Miami at some point. That's where our office are.

Interviewee: Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. But we want – we're going to talk to Rap Phill. I'm trying to get ahold of it. I'm trying to get ahold of it Stan, Ronnie, Rap Phill's father.

Interviewee: Right. Okay.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. But I think we are talking to...

Interviewee: No, he [indiscernible] [00:28:57] right?

Female Speaker 1: I'm not sure.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: He does?

Interviewee: I think he does.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee: I'm not sure because the [indiscernible] [00:29:08] up in Pensacola too.

Female Speaker 1: Okay.

Male Speaker 1: Right. What is – how many fisherman and grabbers are there up like in Naples, Marco Island? Is there...

Interviewee: There are some of them up in Naples now. I don't think none of them are in Marco itself. There are some up in Goodwin. You know, where the Goodwin is?

Male Speaker 1: I mean, I've never been there but it's a little bit south of...

Interviewee: Marco.

Male Speaker 1: Marco.

Interviewee: Marco, yes. And you know, there's Kirk's seafood on there, K-I-R-K-S seafood. That is run by a Damas Kirk (phonetics), his wife Patty and their daughter, I don't know what her name is. But they've got several stone crab [00:30:00] boats running out of there. That might be a good contact.

Male Speaker 1: Oh, no.

Interviewee: That might be a good contact.

Male Speaker 1: Yes, because it sounds like there's almost a line, you know, between Naples and Marco and down here in terms of the red tide and a lot of people spoken about kind of seeing it up a little bit further. Maybe more closer to the...

Interviewee: Yes, Damas could be a big help. Damas is been around here. He's been in a fishing business all his life.

Male Speaker 1: Oh wow.

Female Speaker 1: Davis, who?

Interviewee: Damas Kirk.

Female Speaker 1: Damas Kirk.

Interviewee: Yeah, D-A-M-A-S.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. And that's Kirk's Seafood?

Interviewee: Yes. And they are on Goodwin.

Female Speaker 1: Okay. Yes, I know, when originally when we were planning these interviews and talking – when I was reaching out to people, a lot of people told me that there was a red tide here. So, you know, just today we've learned so much about, you know, because we have heard a couple other people say that they saw a red tide out.

Interviewee: Everybody saw that?

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, okay. Yes, but now a lot of people that I think there's probably about an 18, 20 mile square out there that everybody is focusing. [indiscernible] [00:31:18], Goodwin fishers in it, Naples fishers in it, the keys fish in it.

Female Speaker 1: Do you have the...

Male Speaker 1: So the fishing is [overlapping] [00:31:29].

Interviewee: They were about all the stone crabbers' fish at the same area.

Female Speaker 1: They are like – if you could draw kind of the area like would you know, I don't this, I mean it's a really far away map. But we're down here in the Everglades here and then US down here.

Interviewee: Yes, yes. I would say it be just right and right about out here somewhere.

Female Speaker 1: You just go ahead draw in it.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. [00:32:00].

Interviewee: And I remember this – the guy told me that had, used to run [indiscernible] [00:32:20]. And I think he said that was like 30 miles square, that were about the crab crabber.

Female Speaker 1: Where all the crabbers go?

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Has everyone in the square also experiencing a bad season?

Interviewee: Yes, fish after the season, yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, there's a few freshmen that probably traveled 60 miles offshore.

Female Speaker 1: Looking for stone crab?

Interviewee: That's where they run the lines after.

Female Speaker 1: That's where they run it.

Interviewee: It's very shallow down here.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And you're probably in about 70 foot of water when you're 60 miles offshore.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. Very shallow.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: As I know up off in Madeira and Treasure Island, you run out there about, you know, 10, 12 miles there and you're in 150 foot of water.

Male Speaker 1: About 60 miles offshore shallow, okay.

Interviewee: Yes, very shallow here, very shallow. And you go around the other coast, you go a mile and you could be in the 500 foot water.

Male Speaker 1: Right.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. Are there any other disruptions that have happened in the past that have caused issues with the stone crab industry over the last 20 years that you can think of?

Interviewee: No, not that [00:34:00] I can think of.

Female Speaker 1: Any obstacles or challenges or?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: So, everything has been smooth up until this last year?

Interviewee: Yes, it's very smooth, you know, you might have a better year and you're not going to have it every year. So, you better save your money and rather than go and buy a couple brand new truck or something.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: In the next year, you might not be able make the payments.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And that's exactly what's happened.

Female Speaker 1: So what's the difference between a regular bad year and this year?

Interviewee: I would say this year from what I've seen, I would say probably 30% to 40% of what normal years are.

Female Speaker 1: Yes. And then a regular like if it's just an off-year like saying the past a year that...

Interviewee: It would probably 60 to 70, 80, 70, 80%, yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Nothing big, you know, it's just a little [indiscernible] [00:35:10]. And then the price has a lot to do with attempt. And if, the less crabs you get, the higher the prices are. And I've always noticed in the past when I was crabbing up off of the Treasure Island Madeira Beach. And I mean the crabs are [indiscernible] [00:35:31], probably sold for \$4 a pound straight run. And then all a sudden, I come down here but what I was telling for \$4 pound a barrel where there is, six and seven airbag there. And now they're, you know, paying \$14, \$16, \$18 from medians and the large is there, you are paying 24, 25 more on the large. And then I got [indiscernible] [00:35:59] [00:36:00] and everything so by time, you know, sell them there you probably making about \$3 a pound.

Male Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Instead of the 7 or \$8 [indiscernible] [00:36:08] you use to make.

Female Speaker 1: So when the price goes up, you still have as many customers as people are coming here to buy stone crab are still coming some of them?

Interviewee: Right, they are still coming here, the majority of them.

Female Speaker 1: Does the customer like, doesn't change at all is it a different type of person who is coming here, who is spending more money?

Interviewee: No.

Female Speaker 1: No.

Interviewee: No, no. I have ha people coming in. They look at the price, and in the case they leave and they can't afford it.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And then I can't afford selling my last because I begin [indiscernible] [00:36:39].

Male Speaker 1: You have to reduce your margins when...

Interviewee: Oh, yes, definitely, definitely.

Male Speaker 1: When the price is up?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, definitely.

Male Speaker 1: So then you are not...

Interviewee: Yes. [overlapping] [00:36:50]. I'm not a one time there, I mean, you could – it worked just pretty much as the people that random business was marking them up \$10 to \$12 a pound. And that not always work on. If I paid \$20, I would try to get about \$6 pound mark if I could. Yes. And sometime you can't. And, you know, suddenly they're not buying quite as much. So I mean you drop \$1 pound, \$2 a pound and to move and then you're back in the same thing. All of a sudden you're paying as much what you are sale for it.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And I always said sell them by high and sale low.

Female Speaker 1: So, worst case scenario and I hate to talk about this. But hypothetically, what if this continued if we have another year like this and then another year like this, what do you think do you think we would start? You know, how would you react about that?

Interviewee: I would probably have to go to a different [00:38:00] crabs.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Do you know what crab, you would get them?

Interviewee: No, I don't, I don't. I though maybe this is box of crap I got it here. I'm having eight or nothing. And they just came out like yesterday. And they cost me is either \$11 or \$12 a pound and not only was there a medium large or whatever. But I told the guy that why is that look like, as it look like stone crab and I don't even know what he said. The girls that that work for me are not here today. But she told me, she said they finally got some of those crabs and they've talked about month ago. I said, [indiscernible] [00:38:39]. And I think that I think he told me there 10.99 and they come in, they were 11.99 but I did not, I did not try.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: But I've tried them out of California. And they looked like a stone crab but I didn't like it because the guy that brought them in [00:39:00], they get turn me off. He was buying them and he owns true locks restaurants. And then I think about 12 and they are saying nothing. And he bought them but, you know, the first one I opened up, I mean it had the brown it's like slime in that crab and I said my god what is that? And I sold some of them at about probably 50 pounds. When I sold some, people called me [indiscernible] [00:39:27]. I got to say just throw them away, throw them away and give me a credit, did you pay by credit card or cash, I'm going to give you the one the girl from. And we're going to refund your money right now. Yes, and that is terrible, experience, it was terrible.

Male Speaker 1: Oh my god.

Female Speaker 1: And then they said that sometime that where they caught him out there is something there. And they had to bring the crab, the whole crab in with them [00:40:00]. And they broke the claws off [indiscernible] [00:40:03] and then they brought the crab back when you were going out again the next time they must have kept them big live well then they throw them overboard.

Male Speaker 1: [indiscernible] [00:40:14].

Interviewee: Put them back, you know, in the are they going...

Male Speaker 1: Right.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: Well. So yes, so it sounds like that would be the option to switch to something important at something not even.

Interviewee: Yes. And that's all we could do, yes.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: I tried some one time they were they call them up Pacific crabs, and they came in and they look like a stone crab almost. But their claw was a little more rounded. But they weren't big. They were only about the [indiscernible] [00:40:44].

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, they are very small meat.

Female Speaker 1: And the crabbers that work for you, their crabber year around?

Interviewee: They crab during the season.



Female Speaker 1: During the season. And then what did they do offseason?

Interviewee: Some of them in the group are professional.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes. And they used to be able make enough money they could survive.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: But they'll never do it /

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: And they want to – are they talking about how is that affecting them [overlapping] [00:41:12]

Interviewee: I'm sure big time because Kit Johnson son went to jail for drugs.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: He is in jail there. He had he had a pickup truck. He owes me about, probably \$13,000 right now that I thought of to...

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And then I figured he was into something, you know, everyday 2, 3, \$400, they just didn't come up with stories you would ever believe. You know.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: And then finally. He come down by my house but not about 9 o'clock and thrown the story on me and something there and he said that I need [00:42:00] \$450. I said I don't have that right now. I did but I was not going to give it to him. Because I knew he is in the drugs. And finally I gave him, I gave him \$200. And the next morning, he was going fishing and went up, his boat still tide in the dock, can't see his truck. I heard later that day like show me the picture with his book in picture in the jail. They booked – got him with 4.75 grams of heroin.

Male Speaker 1: Oh my god.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female Speaker 1: That's awful.

Interviewee: So, whether that enough to classified them as a dealer or what?

Male Speaker 1: Right.

Interviewee: But he is in jail, he call me want me to bail him out. I said, I'm not going to bail you out. I know you are not going do drug in there. His mom and dad come down they were, his truck was impounded. So they did have the money so they impound the truck and it was \$635. I said, no, the wife and his brother said leave the truck there. Teach him a lesson. And I think he just paid like \$12,000 for the truck. It was a used pickup truck. So, I bailed it out. I got it on my house now. And then so I told [indiscernible] [00:43:11] people did not have the money like they used to.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: He would be right back in the drug, they said everybody had in mind. I hear story, they go on there and they buy brand new pickup truck.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: Can you tell us a little bit about that era, because it's very, you know...

Interviewee: Yes. And one guy run out of gas, he left it there. Went to pick it up the next day and it was gone. Went back and bought a new one. Didn't think about whatever break at any time.

Female Speaker 1: How long ago was that? How long ago was that?

Interviewee: In the late 70s.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, before I was even down there.

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: [00:44:00] So, I was reading something about lot of fisher is in the, they were working in the drug.

Interviewee: A drug, yes.

Female speaker 2: Drug industry.

Interviewee: I got to pick for this building r you could have put another bail in marijuana especially from the water, especially from the road and it never had door on top of the property. That's how wide open.

Male speaker 1: That was back in the 80s?

Interviewee: Yeah, late 70s.

Male speaker 1: Late 70s,okay, before you...

Interviewee: Because when I bought this property I come down to look at a boat the guy had to sale. And he was a buddy of mine told me up there and saying Pete, he said, you know, he said there's a boat down I want to look at it, he said, it's not [Indiscernible] [00:44:49] on water. But he says right up your alley. And It was a 53 foot financial boat without a 20 foot beam on. It was great boat, beautiful great boat and they kind of burn them out. They got to live [Indiscernible] [00:45:04] the property. And they burned out set that boat on fire and set another boat had on fire. And so, he told me, said I'm scared he said, yes, he is I'm going out of here. So, a man offers a boat and he says, no, I can't accept that. I think he wanted \$60,000 on it. And it's going to cost me 30,000 to put a new superstructure on it.

So, I think I offer him 30,000, 25,000 more. And so, finally he told me, he said, you know what, he said, I want to show you that fish house, is said you're out of my league. He said no, he said I got at lease or something on it for a \$180,000. He said I'll buy it but I will carry 100% mortgage on it. That's how I got the fishery. So, that's been 80, 84, 85 [00:46:00]. And then the first three years I have in the best year, I lost \$52,000. It had me up my knees. Oh bad.

Male speaker 1: Why was it so bad?

Interviewee: And it was just that I had a big payment on it, everything you know. And money wasn't; you know, money was, a lot harder to get back there that wanted to get that. And so, but and it finally got good. It's very good.

Male speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Then the storm was a little knock and everything and no insurance can buy insurance on there. That was about \$85,000 just in equipment to replace. Yes.

Female speaker 1: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: What with the storm? Which one?

Interviewee: Irma.

Female speaker 2: Irma?

Interviewee: Yes, Irma.

Male speaker 1: What about the previous one Wilma?

Female speaker 1: Wilma?

Interviewee: Well, Wilma yes, a very nice stay here at that fish house in Wilma. And the CNN news was there, I bought there and they were clocked in 148 mile an hour wind coming in through that building.

Male speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Male speaker 1: And what kind of damage did it have done?

Interviewee: I loss part of my roof here. I live a mile south of here. I've put the house up on sale and this buddy of mine and I were down there and you could feel the house starting to wreck a little bit. And I said Virgo, I said we're going to get out of here, I said this place is going to squarely. So, I took my cat, put them in the chariot, put them in the front seat of my truck. I got a four wheeled Dodge, raise up, jacks up a little bit. And I drove it apparently and we parked it right in front of the ice cream stand there. And we got out of the truck. We stayed here there was really no flooding, but it was this wind [00:48:00]. I saw a part of my roof come off and I had one of my crab boat side right there [Indiscernible] [00:48:08] before, it got them all off.

And so and another guy had come to right in front of about where we're sitting right there. He gave me a clothes dryer. He said, you know, I bought a brand new washer dryer, he said wash your [Indiscernible] [00:48:25] dryers good. You want to use it take it [Indiscernible] [00:48:27] took off and I grabbed that cord on it and it blew so hard, it went up and landed on top of one of these tables there.

Male speaker 1: Oh my god.

Interviewee: Yes, I cut the cord, and I wrapped around, I tied it off. That's the strongest cord I've ever seen in my entire life.

Male speaker 1: That's crazy.

Interviewee: Yes.

Male speaker 1: Wow.

Interviewee: And it blew my [Indiscernible] [00:48:49] we were over on this side. So., Virgo says, I'm going to make a run for the café there. So, he, but he run in there, and so I said the wind that whip come around, come out of the North direction by that. And I told him, I said, okay, I said hey there and I said I'll be there in just a minute. And I took off and it blew right out of the parking lot and I'm standing off to the side of the building.

I got to get back in there now. It's like awful a bit. And I took one minute run for that door, I mean, far up there and he opens the door...

Female speaker 1: Oh my god.

Interviewee: ...and then I was going back was [Indiscernible] [00:49:32] He said, where did you go, that's blew me, throughout the parking lot. So right then, I said I'll never stay here again.

Male speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewee: No more.

Female speaker 1: Okay. So...

Interviewee: Damas Kirk is the one that said.

Female speaker 1: Damas Kirk is the one you talk to?

Interviewee: Yes.

Female speaker 1: Okay. Do you have a phone number for him?

Interviewee: No, I don't.

Female speaker 2: [Overlapping] [00:49:54].

Female speaker 1: Okay, so we'll find him. And then Kit Johnson?

Interviewee: Kit Johnson. Yes, [00:50:00] I don't have a number for him.

Female speaker 1: You don't have a number for him. Okay. Maybe we'll find him.

Female speaker 2: So, I think Amanda mentioned on that, we would like to do this recording online so people to be able to listen in.

Interviewee: Yes.

Female speaker 2: Do you mind signing a consent form...

Interviewee: Yes, I will sign it.

Female speaker 2: ...that allows us to do that? Do you have a pen with you?

Female Speaker 1: I have a pencil.