

Interviewer: Okay, so we're here with Greg Adams. Today is August.

Greg Abrams: Abrams.

Interviewer: Abrams, so you say it in the.

Greg Abrams: Greg Abrams.

Interviewer: There you go. August 8th, is it eight yeah, 2019 and we're at his office in Panama City. Sure it is recording. Yes. Perfect. So, if you can start by telling us a little bit about how you got into fishing business? When did you start? How you got into fishing business, your family? How was involved before you all of that?

Greg Abrams: Well my father had boats when I was really young. And when I graduated, I went off to oil field. And when Clinton got elected I never forget, when Clinton got elected usually when Democrats get elected oil field tanks. So in the end so I come home started operated trip up to Alabama.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Greg Abrams: That was in 85.

Interviewer: 85. How old were you then?

Greg Abrams: I was 27 years old 23 I believe. I'm 62 now and operated *[indiscernible]* *[00:01:18]* for about two years and then I bought a bigger truck from Fort St. Joe originally.

Interviewer: Okay.

Greg Abrams: And then I bought my first boat which I named it after my older son Adam C and it was tuna boat, sword boat and snapper boat and there was a sea flex boat which is no longer with us. It sunk and then I bought and I named it Austin T my eldest son Austin Tyler. He is still fishing. I sunk in about three years ago despite of it. Then so right now we got 14 boats and a lot of people's got out of it that's the reason I have bought those people has just gotten out *[00:02:00]* because not it wasn't feasible for a lot of people and fishing changed the rules, the regulations, the closures. I 90 I made notes in 1990, warn. We had 1,800 with permits active as 1,800 boats fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. Today currently we have 757 boats, over a half is gone.

Interviewer: So what do you think?

Greg Abrams: Regulations, at one time we could fish red grouper 2,500 hooks per day and red grouper is like a, is there like a desert bottom. They don't hang around structural, around wrecks. They like a buzzard bird, they just wander around and they got caves, holes and barrows they call them which governments took pictures of them. They go down inside so now we got 750 hooks and you came we never catch promo. And so with 750 hooks all boats gone out of it. They're gone, they're not coming back. They give a reef permits and we can't right now we're outside of 35 pounds red group don't live outside of 35 pounds. They just don't, they're shallow water fish. And the government will not let us fish where they're at and especially in the summertime when we need to fish with the tourist. So, the regulations has helped but it has hurt because it did not put fishermen and fish houses into the equation. And they see there was once

[00:04:00] 160, 170 fish houses here. Now it's just me here in the Panhandle and then you got Destin then you got Ariel Seafood and Harbor Docks I'm the one who has got a nice house and those awesome boats. This on the water, you got one in Appalachia river sea food and there it used to be three or four fish houses over there. And the young generation coming up today is a different generation it doesn't want to work. Not just in our industry, construction industry, in oil industry. They just not in this, in the sea food industry is real hard work. It's not banker's hours, if you got to have a passion for it, you got to like it. It's been good to me, it's been good to my family, it's been hard. I was into reef fishing and then I looked then I want needed to get in tuna business. We got one time in the Gulf about four years ago, 30 years ago there was over 400 tuna permits in the Gulf fishing. Now, there might be 65 fishing and that's the reason is of the closed, they've closed three quarters of the Gulf of Mexico to where we can't fish for no reason. Dr. Fox few years ago, he was not a good person for the resource or the fishermen. He's somewhere in California now and he does some unrelated things when we agreed to quit live baiting, and close the canyon, which I'll show you real quick. [00:06:00] We give up certain canyon right here. There's a canyon it's a nice deep water

Interviewer: Okay.

Greg Abrams: And that's where swordfish spawning down. Okay. We going to leave that alone. And we going to this close this top box here and thereby agreeing on it the next morning that son of a bitch closed this bottom box off right here too so we can't finish here or here and now they won't let us go across the Zeeland which Mexican boats come up here and fish but we can't go down there and fish. So we can't fish and we're right in here in little corner right here is the only place we can tuna fish.

Interviewer: And this was in what year?

Greg Abrams: This has been let see if I see this here. I came I got much longer, let's see what year they closed this this has been about 15 years ago when they closed this, this right here.

Interviewer: And so as here. April oh this is just.

Greg Abrams: So this for King Mackerel

Interviewer: Okay.

Greg Abrams: This is a good map that people should have because if know.

Interviewer: If you don't have this and you don't have or another one of this.

Greg Abrams: No I got this from coast guard I can't it all day. I got this from coast guard.

Interviewer: Oh it's coast guard we can just... It's okay. I'll take a picture of it.

Greg Abrams: But it's see like this area is closed reef fish it's been closed for 15, 18 years. Madison-Swanson you can read, the middle ground which is right here this area right here we can't fishing there. You can't Long Island inside 53 on curveball for grouper, you can't fish in there I mean if you look, if you get this map and get you want to study it we got no more fish, damn we don't [00:08:00] and we're asked to go back into an oil field give this up but I had to what you're best in, I'm getting too old. So, and we got IFQ with the snapper which I've had to buy myself back in because I want tuna fish in my boat when they come up we knew there was a

lot and in fact branches involved 60,000 pounds and costs \$2.4 million I'm going to buy or a bunch of it in the bank's backing me because it's a good worth it but it's just.

Interviewer: So, right now you can fish for tell me let's review again what can you fish for and where?

Greg Abrams: All right. We can fish tuna's right here, this is all about right here we cannot fish in a big block weather be king fish there and there.

Interviewer: Okay.

Greg Abrams: You can't fish below this lane that's the Ease easy land.

Interviewer: Is easy.

Greg Abrams: Ease easy lane that's Mexican but I call it you can't go in the Mexican waters but the Mexican boats come over here and fishes they don't get in trouble if we go to via VMS they found us. Our government finds us.

Interviewer: So you see the Mexican boats.

Greg Abrams: Oh yeah but they ask us to bring them bait that. They can covers a lot of American captains is down there.

Interviewer: That's fascinating.

Greg Abrams: Like Mexico can keep Bluefin they won't we can keep them keep too but it's real, we don't even try to catch them anymore, we don't that could be in their way. So, we will avoid the damn January, February, March, April and May we don't tuna fish. That's when the Bluefin they say is here which is here so, we just stay away from and we do deep water fish elite grouper, smallish that type of fish. Now, we going ride boat catches snapper on, they can't [00:10:00] fish this little Madison-Swanson in steamboat and they don't look small, they don't look small but it's a lot bigger than you think. We're doing fish here, we fish right in here. Now we go long island south district Fathom curve they call it. All way down cat fish none of these in the shallow water. But catfish none of it down here this is all, this is just all closed from the sea and you can't be fishing right in here little place of a tuna right here. And you see I'm trying to show you this map but they will see this map I'll take him to Washington D.C.

Interviewer: You take it to Washington D.C.

Greg Abrams: Yeah there's a reason and there's more pollution out there because end of the day meeting lot of pollution today lot of dead zones, but they close these areas for no good and the reason they close this area they had but the end happy in this we had live hooks, when we should have live hooks lot of shallow water bring these accessories that's where we used to fish here right here. This was our prime from here, here was our prime tuna fishing and they should not go near right now there's more tune, doing recreational can go in for tuna fish, charter boat can go and fish.

Interviewer: Not commercial.

Greg Abrams: Recreational and for higher can use live bait like in Louisiana, all the boats go out to reefs they use live bait, we can't use live baits. Commercial fish has been step down and all of

these and we try to provide fish for 95% of the American people that doesn't have the resource to live on the coast or come down here from Iowa, [00:12:00] Michigan, Denver of the all over the country that's what we do. I mean I got fish more in shore, more in the sea. I got snapper, I want dinner with snapper and grouper. We see Chicago's getting snappers going by air freight. We air freight fishes more to go to out of airport for air freight. We send fish all over the country because they don't have a chance to this resource. But the government is like the national fisheries is now give him a big plus I thought it's a pretty good job, but our Gulf council that which got to remember from each state Mayor are like a bunch of children can't get enough. We're still talking about same thing 20 years ago. Right now I didn't get to meat I've been to San Antonio, I've been to Austin, Texas. I've been to Brownsville, Texas and it costs us a lot of money to go there for a week. But they don't get nothing done.

Interviewer: What do you think?

Greg Abrams: They don't get nothing done they talk about the same damn thing you've been to a council meeting.

Interviewer: I've been to one yes.

Greg Abrams: And you need to go for a few.

Interviewer: I'm going to my first next week.

Greg Abrams: Okay, now reef collected I have seen I got a fish house *[indiscernible]* [0:13:09] red snappers over there. So I'll go and visit man they are saying same story in got some radicals from Texas very radical that does not want to get nothing done and it I'm not talking about you can, you put Democrat or a Republican together give me a little while they work in some else guns they going to fix who's gun laws to where they talked about this morning the way it can make it work both levels to make it where big can get guns, they don't need guns. You see that mother she called the law and said her son should be able to buy that gun and you can picture him he looks like he's a and it happen the same was fishing. We're not, we're just sitting there we got problems out there and you are sitting here people doing it for all their lives [00:14:00] and we tell him what to do and puts on the council that what a snapper looks like or they could take Bluefin or Yellow fin and they make rules, and they will get nothing done. But now our safety people going to good job, but for what they got to deal with the council, Council is tough, then they won't do nothing that makes commonsense like the tagging program but I've already quit talking about the tagging program because it's not going nowhere neither a tagging program would keep up recreational, keep up having fishing cage. I mean, what's good for because *[indiscernible]* [0:14:36] they don't want to catch it but recreational see their name is way over and we know that everybody knows that. But I mean, it really don't bother me but give me a little more of that pie to don't just give to the recreational, in recreational fishing is really probably 90 days out a year because most recreational fishermen are deer hunters, Turkey hunters. Then are they hunting fish, it's like grouper busted going wild between treat I just feel I've been in a long time but if you go and trout fishing out there. Trout fish is outstand fish. They can fish all river, they are different kind of fish so. This is some, if you didn't have the passion for this people would do this I mean, now I got two young boys and still they want to fight it, they'll be the youngest in the business.

Interviewer: How old are they now?

Greg Abrams: Owl is 23 and Adam 28.

Interviewer: Okay, so they're coming up soon, it's a little bit required but I'll take a picture of that map because I think it's very interesting.

Greg Abrams: It's a good map I used to have some.

Interviewer: All printed I just want to make sure I get the right one when I print it. So I want to, so I want you said a lot of things already and I want to go back to some of them. [00:16:00]

Greg Abrams: Okay.

Interviewer: And one of them is you talked a little bit about council if you can tell me a little bit about so you told me a little bit about what do you think is wrong with it? What do you think that fix it?

Greg Abrams: Well the state, the state is got see Texas has got two, Florida's got two or maybe three or two and then they got a state person there. Alabama has got one and two. One interstate person. So the state tells their what to do? How to vote? And then you got Texas this there's always doesn't vote to confirm to no law, they don't want no regulations, they don't know nothing they fish here around [indiscernible] [00:16:49] one month last year they took it away now I'm going to fish 11 months, Four fish bag in it. Buys own right Florida we I think Florida had about 57 days or 67 days and that's two fish per person then we follow the rules, Alabama follows rules, Louisiana, Texas, doesn't and Texas if we could take Texas off the council, we could probably get some things done. And you watch it when you go to a council meeting. And I'm glad you're going because you don't get a firsthand to listen, and you need to set up but you all have certain sea shops setting up there and pay attention and just listen, it takes a lot of you got to listen and nothing but you need to get two or three council meetings. You go to this one they go to the next one, I think they going to have three months I think now. And you can got to next one and see if anything start gets done between them councils. Nothing gets done. And people know that and but you could make a council [00:18:00] to where it would work it's not commercial, commercial people they'd give us like they told us some curves and we've work with. We've got, we made it what people left has made it but we've had to do some hard work and different way of fishing we changed our whole lifestyle but, we've done it in the recreational produce same thing. I got about here are recreational friends, they don't understand why it's the way it is. So if you have been to a council meeting to see the money that's wasted and bureaucrat BS and I say about it but I used to Neil's I was harder Neil's 15 years ago. I was I'll rip him I wouldn't because he talking about his survival livelihood my key as college education, most with the college but young didn't always did. I mean, when you start taking a man's money out of his pocket, he's not going to be nice about it. He is not I don't care who he is, or what he does. Maybe he drives a truck, if he's a school teacher, whatever they don't get upset. So they don't stuff is just yeah, I don't know.

Interviewer: Let's talk about that like so one of the first.

Greg Abrams: Derby fish.

Interviewer: Derby fish

Greg Abrams: That's Derby fishing when he is losing but, we just paying years so when a fish hit the market one time. They was keeping the fish house put to reform – pay us money we were selling them and losing money and we asked them for a couple years and we can't do something else. We can't just say 14 days and then you did 14 days you have fish? It was a rat race. Now that's what they got amberjack right now amberjack [indiscernible] and you got 25 foot boats going out there making two or three trips a day off the rigs [00:20:00] I know it was about the fish in Alabama I know but I because we keep selling I got 9,000 fish got it under Neil. 9,000 pounds because restaurants won't put it back on the menu because it's not consistent year around. And we ask and we've ask and we've asked, big 500 pound tripling plus you got to have a back edge, you can't just go out there and catch 500 amberjack and come back in. You got to have other fish to go along with it. That means they can't just go back and forth, back and forth that takes the derby out of it. Then we'll catch the quarter and they haven't done nothing for the quarter. And they say they don't have money. It was \$790 million appropriated to studies last year from the Federal Government to the fisheries in the United States \$790 million. Now I'm doing research only five year. Decal, the red tide, the oil spill, the hurricanes. We're started right now. Different bait, the sardines, cigar, we have to get bait out of channel, [indiscernible] [00:21:16]. So we try, we've been in Washington last two days and our Congressman in Tallahassee that's how we found out how much money was wasted on studies. I'd say they wouldn't tell me what studies about say agriculture, agriculture will not work in the Gulf of Mexico. We got enough fishing as he is out there now it will not work. You put that in cages, in stagnant water that we have now coming out of Mississippi with the chemicals they never tell what happen. It would be a disaster for the Gulf of Mexico. But they pushed it and I pushed it and they wasted money, wasted money. [00:22:00] They got new cages, sink the cages during hurricanes that is to feed that you put in there pellets in the feed you put in there do what coincide with the chemicals and everything's coming from Ohio down to Mississippi fertilizer runoff is what cause big problems. So quit wasting money well, but the fisherman in the fish house we got right now. So we're trying that's what we had a process right now trying to get some help from red tide. We haven't had red tide up here as bad as we have is usually it's all down south get down Hardee in were phosphate mine right and last all in all. They have trouble down there too they don't have bait this year. They currently buy sardines from them before they get here and in bottom of here. They don't have any, hadn't got any, not going to catch any so real. So they're not there, we should be the sea food industry should be treated just the same as the farmers. We supply food just like the cattlemen, just like the farmers do we supply a nutrient to the industry if you look on the food table, you got poultry, you got beef, you got produce, you got sea food, but we are in the Commerce Department which I don't know what the hell we the Commerce Department for, we should be a natural resource. And we try we're working on that right now. We found trying to get together but is trying to come together if we don't we all will be out of business. If that's what they want hell pass out I never asked, I found some else to do or but by me I bought all the snapper I bought all the permits I bought the boats I bought a little recreation catch all these restaurants fish. Right now restaurants are jumping up and down for fishing right now. There is more restaurants today than it was five years because people don't cook at the house anymore. They just don't. This is the [00:24:00] nature people get fish, get delivered to their house, get beef delivered to their house it's changing our society is changing alright both parents have got to work don't have time to cook they got new soccer here, to get new baseball here. Everybody's running around so but fishermen are not getting away, fish house is not getting away and I'm not pulling out and understand the truth. We're not getting, the

farmers got I think they got into billions of dollars last year. In Nebraska, when did I look this up yesterday I can remember shit Nebraska got 700 something 800 corn, Nebraska. You know I don't know that much corn Nebraska I mean is and I'm looking at it's just there is nothing much that was left just take care and just give us a little bit. Are you the boss out because this year I have seen then like it with red tide and they say after oil spill in Nebraska in five years after six years, I think that's now the truth now seeing something going about that oceans is coming up it's not good. It's not, it's affecting us now and they said it won't take that long now we can see it. We can feel it we are out there on the water, I'll still go fishing. I won't fish this weekend, I fish two days and I still love fishing. But we're not too boss with the youngest people in the industry. I think David created various seafood which is good company his size got in military as soon as he gets retirement and he's going to come back and take over. There is Karen Bailey, she is young, [00:26:00] [indiscernible] [00:26:01] in Cortez she's first class. She's young so she'll be in and there will be a whole lot of people in this industry if the government keeps doing they doing and doesn't care about the future of the fishery, if they don't care get us out, pass out don't get regulate this out.

Interviewer: So let's talk a little bit about you told me that, the industry has received a lot of curveballs throughout the years since you started working like can you talk to me a lot about one of these curveball, one of the first curveballs and how you managed to survive it because you said there were like three fish houses just here and you were the only one now. I want to understand what did you do how did you manage what?

Greg Abrams: Well, I was tuna fishing and they shut the market all.

Interviewer: When was this?

Greg Abrams: This was about 15 years ago when they closed live baiting, and then they closed Dr. Fox is not. I will say it again he's not a good person. He got an agenda he is paid by a few foundation and different foundations that like few foundation right now he was trying to put me out of tuna fishing I spent a lot of money to take low amount of Tuna, we got from Mexico. For no damn reason. They want us to use green sticks which you throw and they've had studies the last three years they don't really make expenses if any get some money from the VP money they cannot pay expenses they end up in rit. Green stern that works on the East Coast a little bit but it doesn't work in the Gulf of Mexico.

Interviewer: What is a green stern?

Greg Abrams: It's a big pole that you got in the back of your boat you got lines running off like patrol platoon and it just doesn't work.

Interviewer: How do you fish tuna now I guess so long way?

Greg Abrams: But yeah that's way we catch them as long as. And North Island has bad name [00:28:00] because is it safe fishery from the back age and it doesn't catch as many turtles save catches and the fish it brings up we're able to sell them. We use every species and it catches. The mahi, the wahoo and now and they give us this has been six years ago. They made us use soft hooks just in the Gulf of Mexico, not only east coast. And now we come back with facts for hooks has straightened out. Soft 16 is we call them that mean having straight we sent then and we mail them, they tied sitting more. We still have to use soft 16 as a soft that will fish straight

out. We and other people's got to use them as and people in the Gulf of Mexico east coast I had to use them. So I said look, we use the soft hooks, won't you open this bottom block of that comes from Silver Springs Maryland that's a different entity then national fisheries. That's pledging and they won't buy it either. For instance shark fishing. Sharks is tearing tackle or upper tackle gears tackle gears is doubling, is doubling now because of sharks. When we used to shark fish it was a thriving business and we was going to VA hospitals, we was going to nursing homes but we hadn't we had it going on with sharks it was and they nail, you see unhook it okay. 199 directed permits right now and we got 244 incidental, incidental means you only catch 33 sharks but directly you catch whatever what a quarter hits. And there is enough [00:30:00] sharks out there, open it back up regulate it to where it can stand able to hit everybody, it hit people getting short bait, it hit tackle business and the resource, we can use high protein they took it away from us okay.

Interviewer: When did that happen?

Greg Abrams: That happened all about 15 years ago.

Interviewer: So what did you do while.

Greg Abrams: We just lot of people got out, lot of people got out and lot of people quit.

Interviewer: How many, how did you manage?

Greg Abrams: I just, well I got, I'm enabled about a handful of some bait to diversify and grouper, snapper, tuna and swordfish. So, we had to swap around, we had to swap gears, we have to it's a job like right now January, February, March, April May we're deep water fishing and tow fishing. And then we come in change all our gear takes about we have two weeks to change all the gear, put new gear on and then we go tuna fishing now. So that's what we're doing now which it just grouper. But there's only certain amount of us can do that lot of people can't do that and that's the reason why people have got out. I bought permits from people just gotten out of the industry what I've done and the permits that we have like 757 that means the government has took their permits back, you can't get a re-permit today unless you buy in the market they're not created by the government number one. There is no more reef permits. So now permits used to be \$5,000, now permits of \$18,000 to \$20,000 to buy a reef permit and that's what it costs. To lease snappers [00:32:00] you lease snappers is 375 before quarter to leave somebody to go out and catch them and you don't make a whole lot of money. In fact it turned us into a sharecropping back years go sharecropping that's what they go lot of fisherman doing sharecropping and that's wrong because you got people this here that doesn't have anything interesting to fishing they have a lot of money and they bought this quarter and they lease it out to fisherman and that's wrong now I lease a lot of fish from people in Texas as that go to the captains who he sold his fish he died of cancer. So I lease this large fish. I got a friend of mine that he got epileptic in he's gotten worse he has now moved back to his family I leased his fish he was a fisherman which I don't have a problem there the people who doesn't haven't earned these fish as bottles they had money now leasing to the fisherman and the fisherman is fishing for \$1.50 and \$2 pound. He is getting paid. That not right. But like you ask out in the industry stabilize the market but it's like we try and we go national fishery bank to get a bank where the young people can get some money or give some quota that they can never say oh, they can't lease they got fishing to get some young people in the industry. They got to do something to get some

interest because you can't afford to take, to get into snapper or grouper business right now it will take you a million half dollars and you would be in a heavy you would be you wouldn't you know see [00:34:00] 25,000 pounds snapper if you can buy for a million dollar. 25,000 you catch them in two weeks if you wanted to but you would have to go catching a little bit of time without the product. So, that's a problem but I don't know if it ever be solved of helping young people to get into the industry they need, they need to because national fisheries see they get 3% of our money. It's true.

Interviewer: It's true.

Greg Abrams: It's true. 3% of the gross anywhere from after expenses anywhere per boat to \$500 per boat again, and we had to pay every quarter. Mine usually around \$35,000 to \$40,000 that I'll send national fisheries each fish house has to do it if they got and if you don't pay that bill [indiscernible] [00:35:01] they really need some money which is nothing's perfect, nothing's perfect and like say I drove my trucks, I done up while back forth Louisiana back forth to New York. So I've done a little bit of all this now the freight industry lot of people got out of the freight industry. So I had to get in order I was hauling my fish now I got more trucks that I want to haul other people's freight because it would consistent enough for other companies to do it so, now I do it, I run in New York on Tuesday nights and Saturday nights, but it helped me it's been another way of putting this business keeping this business afloat is I go to New York, Philadelphia, Maryland every Tuesday night and every Saturday night, I'll pick up from Alabama crab meat, oysters, fish grouper or snapper [00:36:00] and all the way from Cortez I got truck just down there they pick up down here and we meet here every Tuesday night and every Saturday night we cross dock it in the trucks heading on. And that what kept me pay [indiscernible] [0:36:14] and I got some overhead and so I just, I just did try change with the government when they come with sudden just like the soft hooks that hurt us because now swordfish is getting too big because they're straighten them out and swordfish get too big and then customers don't be a double marker which marker is 100 pound 180 to 200 pound fish, double marker is a 100 to 200, triple marker is 300.

Interviewer: Why don't they want a double marker the meat is as good?

Greg Abrams: Hail up, they hail believe it or stupid it sounds the hail key hammer it they got more accidents, back accidents getting hurt, put it on tables and cutting it workman's comp. I mean that's when he first told me that I kind of hope because used to they want a 150 pound fish which they still do you get 200 300 pound fish it's a lot of fish to handle it's very hard, very difficult and Boston too sold 100 I remember about three or four years ago, these big fish is hard and I told we don't have the capability to get them on the table so that's changed we got a lot of swordfish out here. And in fact, sword fish say too much that what we are fishing already randomly wait, he's going sword fish under the menu, we fish sword fish and I'm lucky that I got sword permits that I have purchased. So now I can go sword fishing. So I have some swordfish and tuna fishing, few snapper fishing and very few I got maybe own boat grouper of fishing [00:38:00] we got 750 hooks they can make money. And you doing research on the grouper and Craig?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: If they I was hoping to give a couple of boats to studying especially down there were here at Cortez they need to take two or three boats go it always sounds a like in this red grouper and they can used what used to use 2,500 hooks that's what we used to use 2,500 hooks. Where they don't get it, if you're going to work hard you can strength from here but he will never set on 750 you can't do it then get red grouper made call, plus red ride. Obviously if two or three this that is add enough to the effect of the whole group of fisheries and but now after here this year, I've seen it me taking my boys fishing that we got a good recruitment and a little red grouper and black grouper I mean our fishery management here in Panama City, John who checks our fish he said that the government said that we have a good recruitment

[Background noise] [00:39:21] [00:40:00]

Interviewer: Yeah, let's talk a little bit about 1985 when you started in the business how the industry back then here is and what more you fishing?

Greg Abrams: We were fishing, we were pole fishing, doing long lining and we had lot of boats, we had lot of boats and we had some and they catch fish [00:42:00] and we have to catch fish and.

Interviewer: How did you learn how to fish?

Greg Abrams: Me I'm not a good fisherman no I catch them but I'm not a professional like the guys that made it and I go but I'm not, I'm not.

Interviewer: *[indiscernible]* [00:42:23]

Greg Abrams: I'll stay here or I'll stay on the water. Now on the water kind of nosy you when you are in telephones and in here are best reality you don't do that and that is a true fisherman, a true fisherman really he does not really care about what happens in here. We don't know about it they're they beat to a different drum. And they do. I mean now we got satellite TVs on some of the check in and watch this Fox News or CNN News on this as a radio that most fishermen don't really they go to get away that's what they doing above I mean five days at land they're ready to go that's what, that's in their blood. They've inherited from their daddies, most of them. I got a couple young boys my high school their family went into fishing, they just got into your family's to try to do tour them the LA fishing they like it and you got to like something to do it you know all that face reality like closer thought. I try to give not too went on they need an insurance *[indiscernible]* [00:43:38] I can relate to that I started with a carton wheel, *[indiscernible]* [00:43:46] I'm coming to work usually 6 to 7:30 leave here 6, 7'O clock night. I'm going to cook for our church this [00:44:00] morning for nice *[indiscernible]* [00:44:02] and we can cook at the buzzer the hospital for old church and so that's what that's what I do to do today. We don't have any boats coming in today we got. When you're leaving.

Interviewer: Going this afternoon.

Interviewer: Moving Saturday night.

Greg Abrams: You should come down tomorrow and watch us unload.

Interviewer: And by that time.

Greg Abrams: We start by 8:30, 9'O clock and watch on that you know John, he you should and got about their there he will become change the fish the FWC will be here to get what's your background in this how long you been in this.

Interviewer: I've been working in Miami just about five or six years now. And I mostly been very interested in red tide affecting the groupers. So I'm currently stock assistant person for red grouper and gag grouper and we're doing a scanned assessment coming after June.

Greg Abrams: Scan some *[indiscernible]* [00:45:03] fish. They don't multiply I see that year and years. For the rest he grow the bigger the year.

Interviewer: Red.

Greg Abrams: Yeah. We don't have no chickens over here. We call chicken, we do say any chickens. When you got rest, you get some probably get some, and you get some bags for scale which is not a true scale what we call bag for scale these yell them, yell them. What you get thought Louisiana also Alabama, Mississippi big scale. So they six boat that work out of leave, they are all be in today, today is Thursday. They would be in Monday, Tuesday so I will send the truck over there to get fish again. And used to know about fish there is course, different boats. Then we will cut bag and lot of shrinking [00:46:00] getting out of the business, I had about loses in Louisiana which I spend about *[indiscernible]* [0:46:06] loses above busting go in there. So my trucks go there. We got to have transport licenses all that down, we have to good change that. We got Cortez I going to cut couple of bag in Karen Bails fishing there when other come back there. I think which I know it's getting better I think it's getting better I mean we used to 85 we can go out there and tow a boat or ride boat, we get 3000 pounds in three or four day, red snapper, black grouper. We really got around dangerous trenches. So fish is coming back now where we able to do that in fact I want to remind a year above, we now in August end of September to look couple of boats up there always faster boats, more economical for young fisherman because they won't be out there 8 to 10 day. They would fish three or four day's fast boat, air-conditioned boat, wide boat. So it's changing. So with 8 knots, we were slide in 8 knots really fast. It day to get to where we are fishing. Now young boys they want fast boats goes in 12 knots. To get out there, get spots we got rigs and come home three or four days. They just don't come back there therefore I told them we complete circle we are not stalling. Now fast forwarded *[indiscernible]* [00:47:59]. They were able to [00:48:00] rolling on boats. That boat there, stone fish, tuna fishes and the other fishes in certain part year. So that it is home coming back with fast boat in lot of fishing is worse is going to come back to you. Coral reef got 767 permits, so lot of people in the industry. That's the whole Gulf of Mexico from Key West to Bryde's whale. There is not many boat active. And a lot quit due to restrictions *[indiscernible]* [00:48:35] which I pushed that my boat go caught that closer that's what so, I got three to five. That's all shrimping. That's 18 ago there is a lot maybe had big favors to national fisheries they got hurting them. So a lot close being in this system so that we can monitor these boats. And this system taking, law couldn't be able to do that and then the call in and we got call three out of four income through dark. We got to as changed where, it's too this made fisherman store what they do or sea in year. That's still *[indiscernible]* [00:49:24]. So got to work people just going out small room not cared and could get the money it not government fishing, we couldn't get money for fish. \$3, \$4 now we getting and boats are getting \$550 to the boat. So some \$6 sort of certain time of year. So just hanging out which hurts someone it help the other. So this is point. Government get pluses, busted out of this. Who can get the accounts straighten down now our governor we are working

hard on them. So that would get us some recreational [00:50:00] and commercial reputation. They are not fired. The Texas down under that, they not put. They put law on this just happen bowling. We been watched in what they say and we used to try to get the restaurant owner Son-law which was an attorney but background restaurants campus restaurants over 100 restaurant in Texas. We found him on council because he had background, to know what restaurants need, different down log run there, because this attorney get governor out there bounty money in, they put maybe put the right person because we got to something for grouper, we got to change something around, I don't know what it is we got like some charter boats get paid, they paid out once decided 20,000 [indiscernible] [00:51:03] see this red tide killed the fish. If red tide kill the red fish then they know we got problem which you don't know that to go and check safely they are or not there. But and they say they got the money, oh they got the money... they can get the money. And there some boat charter for free, actually got to do it. I will demonstrate this. I got fit boat on it all, I don't care just to find that what we got to do, because two boats looking into this and I want to make it better for them and had a [indiscernible] [0:51:40] . They hopefully they even had a world changing to where accounts what could do something. [00:52:00] But you need three council meeting, if you need somebody to expenses we will. To grab a loan we will, so you could see for yourself what the council is not doing, not a national fishery.

Interviewer: I listen to them, I listen online?

Interviewee: Okay. So you know and we see it. Yet, you do I know you can say but that national fishery is [indiscernible] [00:52:23] poor fellow he has done good job. He got, he said lot of things down here whole lot, I mean lot. We can't be perfect but he is done. He is working hard and that's what fishers is doing. So good change but our council is terrible. So that's each state they are not lets saying because you did council I don't what you red and produce, farming whatever you do, you need accounts work together. Maybe thanks them. That's why I recruit them lead something and will found what up red tide did effect. We call rehab it fish, red grouper when we used to fly, we have been coming here 17, 000. I could name 15 boats right now that captures he got that, boat who is that, that was the best of the best. I mean the best. I accused law they because they didn't have they will be the operators of the boat. They did own their own boat and they got to arrive. So that was the other thing. But have clear suppose wasn't there too. Straight dam straight the industry. [00:54:00] you know that, I know that, everybody knows that. Just show turn to shrink the industry which I just want had to that when we fish and thank god we could money out of it. We quit fishing for and he would fish no one. They will get that kind of tough getting go back DC and we rebound it, that's what we did, that's how we did, before I accused. Then it's not deep water grouper, tuna fish there is not many doing that but they have most studies at IFQ, they give main accountability. That even I have least fish where the people January, February, March, April, May but they had seen got a money doing stock assessment. I know how much money fall through stock assessment but the when the government told us yesterday how much they have spent in the fishery and the United State said \$90 million. The coastal town's effort, to get some of that money. We got to hunt that money, I'm reading all the stuff that we haven't read, we will board room, some to travel and get, we won't give some of that fish houses, maybe get some money. Fishery gets money, with red tide, with hurricane. It's mean not easy if don't have good bank work for that knows what we going through, they I mean they work with us. They work good with us. We not produce them that answers only. This is what we do but they got OEN and you got is your part down there I showed you that, what is you?

Interviewer: I'm a social scientist I started working two and half there.

Interviewee: Two?

Interviewer: Two and half, yeah.

Interviewee: You ain't got involved.

Interviewer: No, I'm working, I'm still working in *[indiscernible]* [0:55:58]

Interviewee: [Laughter] [00:56:00]

Interviewer: I started learning a lot...

Interviewee: There is watching.

Interviewer: last year I've been taking to lot of fisherman. That the best way to learn.

Interviewee: Best way to learn because we are chasing fish being lot now you might now want to hear truth I got every council do they want ride fish go back to these council meeting first they cost a lot of money and they going to give up fishing crew. And they got to get more camera, we got to eat and get nothing comes out of it. I used to pay expenses someone to go. Nobody wants to go well nothings comes out of it. Nothing happened what was going to happen. Most famous word the council table it. Table it you heard just table it, table it. Let's just face the problem. Let get it. When owner do it and then if it's we will fix it six months now. They never change it. That's the reason people fed up with council process. And if you have some good people and then national fishery when it first started me guess the first council probably 30 or 40 years when they come out reed fish which was 80 something I believe. 80s or early 90s. The council is made of lot of commercial fisherman, fish house, and general field. There used to people that was in the industry was only council. They got shut them out, there is no representation in commercial fisher which is this side of industry, this is us. We should have game, stake Mr. Yamaho, he sleeps, and I think we can go to sleep, we already watching. You got Bob shield, scientist in mobile they came talking more. He is been under [00:58:00] council for ages just got back home there. They took commercial fisherman or commercial boat owner all from good guy but I don't have I took him off the boat ship because he is been in the process for 50 years and he is been got to age now he is suffering and he can't sleet, can't even talk. I see him other day he can't talk but they put him back on the council why? Why? You had a good guy, great job that those businesses on there they took him off put his boss.

Interviewer: And who decides who goes on the council?

Interviewee: The governor. He pick three name, send name into the governor he fix three, he send then to the Washington DC to commerce department. And we got vote one, two and three. Today in commerce department. Like I said we shouldn't be in the commerce department we should be in natural resource. We was in there at Natural Resource, we were under natural resource till 1958 or 64 we was under it. We don't why they took us out of it. We would look at, we was under natural resource. I think 60.

Interviewer: So why do you think moving back?

Interviewee: Why? Because its resources, natural resources, commerce department is trading, it is commerce business. Just here is not resources this is Gulf of Mexico water. Water management it's all the above it's not, commerce is I think, I don't talk that we been, now we need national fishery down your own. National fishery. I'm for some don't give me wrong layer. But we shouldn't be under commerce we should be under natural resources because we catch resource that's natural. The only thing that is natural [01:00:00] no steroids, nobody had done that. This stuff comes out of Gulf of Mexico, mid-Atlantic and Pacific. Chickens and cows favored the hormones and every damn thing if you put in the ground, but the only thing that you can put this is natural is safety. It comes down to oceans. That's natural. They won't hear that either.

Interviewer: So you mentioned the red tide, recent red tide. So if you go back in, in your times, you just start fishing as soon like started you know.

Interviewee: We didn't have, we didn't have red tide back around is coming up like we did today. We didn't have....

Interviewer: But you observed the events infestation.

Interviewee: Yeah, we have, we have we had a red tide.

Interviewer: First one.

Interviewee: You could, you could know about when it's coming one, phosphate mining dumps down there or like Chevy dumps, [indiscernible] [01:00:53] will say nothing. Our government announced a law they replace the sugar industry he is doing a lot. Now lot of people by new governor I like him he's doing a lot for everybody non-republican, non-democrat. He's doing a lot for the state of Florida. And so if we can get that straighten out down there in Everglades [indiscernible] [01:01:16] knows lot of political leaders down there in Everglades. That's where we got to fix that problem down there because that farms [indiscernible] [01:01:24] there so we had a busted dam or something you know all that phosphate gets in this hot water you know all the about for last weird thing is the sugar comes from sugar plants down there. That's got lot to do with red tide, I do believe. It's just gotten worse here in the last six years, seven years. It's gotten worse, this thing stayed around longer. Beside sometimes more, more storm will come here [01:02:00] so we kind of got about you know, get it, get it out, get it, you know, get it, get it going, but it's not. It's more, it's now more frequent, but it's more like you either it's going to come north or stay there. And it's not that's do with Mother Nature, a lot of time to stay down there last this last two times they stayed down there.

Interviewer: What's the last time you said 2017, 18 so which year?

Interviewee: Yeah it stayed for south and then we had last year here. We had something we got in our beaches. That we had a little bit only. We had a little bit only but because you looking on both the beaches [indiscernible] [01:02:40] on the beach. We got chance to you and I let say where you are from?

Interviewer: [indiscernible] [01:02:50]

Interviewee: So Kern bio is she's got group was there most in Perdu notes. She's very knowledgeable, very honest. APBO fishing Cortez. She's a good person.

Interviewer: Cortez.

Interviewee: Cortez, she used to be on the counsel.

Interviewer: Well, let's break. Could you write it on?

Interviewee: She is, she is

Interviewer: Do you have contact?

Interviewee: Yes, will get run down, so Cortez.

Interviewer: Lenin Karen 941-794-1249.

Interviewer: And it's Karen?

Interviewee: Karen Bail. And out here. If you had a chance to go to St. Joe which is 36 miles from here to see Eugene Rafi. Rafi especially.

Interviewer: Well we're going to talk to Danny Rafield?

Interviewee: No, Danny is not in the business no more.

Interviewer: Right. But he's been...

Interviewee: He used to fly. He got two brothers. He used to fly.

Interviewer: But he choose another person.

Interviewee: He flew the plane. He crashed a couple of time. Dan is good guy and good people. He runs, they bought him out and he runs the... he still got percentage. He runs his food storage. [01:04:00]. He used to spot for the fish? The does and Eugene, Eugene Randy fishes that's the two brother younger brothers. That's her uncle Eugene. Their numbers 229-8229. He's real concerned about the bait. They know I mean, they get no bait. And that's what we all rely on them for bait. And there's no bait. And I wish we could we trying to figure it out red tide, hurricane, oil spill or all the above. But there's no there's just

Interviewer: You just said that number is Eugene?

Interviewee: Eugene Garfield 298-229.

Interviewer: you know their number by-heart, you calling them.

Interviewee: I follow bait from them and I'm from St. Joe. I bought all bait, I used to know every bodies phone number. I never knew 100 number. Dan telephone number. Telephone number Randy. I used to be. Let me see here. Eugene, he would love him and Danny both love to talk to Eugene. Eugene cell numbers 527-7524.

Interviewer: With 850.

Interviewee: 850. And then I'm telling you he's very knowledgeable and he was raised in and good person to talk to. Especially Eug is science orient to learn and see about this bait and Dan go down to Karen bail. So she's got for same bait and they don't have no bait. So this is the coastline they got their bait.

Interviewer: When did you first notice when did you start running into this problem of no bait.

Interviewee: They yeah, this year.

Interviewer: Yeah on March. We just start we start looking, they start trying to spot more we offshore fishing several weekends. [01:06:00] we start seeing pods would come up. We'll see them this year and we got more as here that rides the pass they go to ride straight hit the pass to the Gulf of Mexico. Ride for you get to the pass couple of boats and camp out there and had big baskets of live bait you'd get, 200, 300 bait all charter bust on. No charter got no amount this year. So it's people's that in this industry cares about this industry. They just not out and ride today. If this sort of money I'd be doing something else. But that guy who was buying, investing about 64,000 pounds red snapper. And that's been about four weeks ago, about a month ago we got him. The man is retired, if you work for two boards, I wouldn't be doing that I'm doing I'm doing future of them. Because there will be future in it for who's left in it, if we just get things straightened out and get things done in this council level to get things done in reparations got the right to fish we got rotten fish, but the 95% of American people and this is a real hard matter of facts in America people that doesn't have a chance to come from coast and go fishing to take seafood. They don't have an opportunity. They rely on us to work efficiently do that. If us to truck it there, I will truck it North. I'll bring back mushrooms. I'm bringing back soup to put this stock to-date. I got produce coming back to Plymouth, I got to silk going to Winn-Dixie Jacksonville what else I got? They know third [indiscernible] [01:07:39]. So that's what we had to bring back, you know, to pay for our fuel stuff. But they deserve product, just go and bring in your water domain it is our, our resources that not ours it's everybody's resource. So we catch it and we put it on Denver, Seattle and see you presume when I got right now, [01:08:00] today airfreighted go to fortunate fish in Chicago, Whole Foods in Atlanta, Seattle and Denver that name of a company Samuels in Vegas. That's real good fish for me today on airplane.

They got the rock these fish. It's not just visitors, it's not us we deliver in Panama City, we deliver in Miami. It's for everybody. But it takes us to do it. And that's what a lot of people don't understand. Though commerce, it goes into this fishery. Everybody makes a little bit of money. The waitress, the airports, the airfreights, the trucking companies, the insurance companies, the tire companies, a fuel, the truck drivers. Everybody makes a little bit of money off of natural resources, same things produce cattle, chickens everybody makes a little bit as we did and that's what it is. Nobody makes all this money. That \$5 for pay them everybody to make it. You feel company's car companies, insurance companies, clothing companies and geared tackle companies. Everybody makes it a little bit as a lot of people make a lot of money, a lot of little bit of money that a lot of don't people think they say recreational or charter boats and recreational. Recreational buys a Yamaha boat. I used it five times a year and he parks and draws and he goes deer hunt. People come down into motel. They come down here summer, they go fishing, and they don't fish but used to gather they will go out for our trips. They will look around, they come back. Some of them know to fish. They will be playing golf or they will be shopping with the wives, play on the beach. They used to 10 years ago people come down about two day trips. You don't have two day trips no more. They forget two day trips, they are two down about four trips. You do three a day. Four they tried, you did three, four hours and everybody's happy. You know, the generation change if you don't change with the generation. [01:10:00] that's what I've seen in the fishery and everything they don't eat that they used to, but they say you have to change the... it's like shark fans. Shark fans is not as popular with the

young oriental that it was with the older tradition because I have sold a lot of shark films I've been around them. I've clean them here, traveled here I got long drive there and drive from, *[indiscernible]* [01:10:27] for a friend of mine who is in shark fin business. Me personally I have ate it and fried it. The noodles are real pretty, gold but I also paid a big money for I wouldn't but that's an oriental thing that California which got Orientals together in different cities has got you know, like Chicago all citizen reached send fins up there. It's just different groups of people that like different time. It's like people come to Florida, they move grouper years and years ago. People just make two groups like two group as away without red snappers all the time. And then it reversed itself. They got to well other grouper. Now in the last two years is going back to where it was four years ago. Now snapper has become more popular in his you know time repeats itself. Now seen in the industry, now I got more colors of snapper today than I have grouper and I got big grouper down there, but I think that's only fertile snapper because this is a small variability in the volume and it is consistent because we used [01:12:00] to low mining, that was day 290 buck all I got *[indiscernible]* [01:12:05] now I think from Cape San Blas number of year, maybe about 57 permits 67 permits here in Miami or here to Keys that *[indiscernible]* [01:12:22] So you ain't got, you ain't got the numbers anymore. You're not noticing the hip you own regroup or assessment of sea if the red tide will kill them or if they all pushed up in there? Because I think fish we used to see fish with fins would travel we don't now permitting fish will but we have stationary tuna here. They sail in certain areas. We didn't know that till about probably 10, 12 years ago. In rent year, they would be fatter and we tax them and they stay there and then you got fish come and go from the Caribbean and make a circle and go out. There long and slender you need to travel to fishery column you not done you not now you're traveling fish or vessel stationary fish. And I didn't go to college but I know the fishing, I know 100 fish business. I know I've seen have tagged, we've tagged, I know Bluefin's come, Bluefin's go. Bluefin's normally spotted here to go. They spotted in Bahamas, spotted of in George banks also in South Carolina we went up there. In the government knows actually tagged them with specific, specific tags that we tagged Bluefin with that show where they go, where it migrate to, they migrate in May and they start, start back over again. But they do like the Northeast they don't mess with him they don't catch him up there. But [01:14:00] this year they've been asked not to catch him by people was banned. Leave, leave, and leave him there. They're not bringing them money. They're not worth any money right now. Some people not catching on but we not targeted. And as this first year that what happened, first year that what happened.

Interviewer: Why it doesn't?

Interviewee: I don't know. I love Japanese economy I don't know that they farm raised enough over there for them, younger generation changes you have different, different eating, yellow fish still popular. I think Yellow fish is more popular than Bluefin already is. And is just...

Interviewer: So tell me about, so we talk about the red tide like among the kind like what we call a disaster in the fishery what had the most impact on you on the business on the region, from the history, from the time you've been in the business?

Interviewee: Well the old spill hurt, red tide before them, hurricane before them.

Interviewer: The red tide before the oil spill?

Interviewee: No, we had red tide come up here not that much.

Interviewer: When was that 2008?

Interviewee: *[indiscernible]* [01:15:19]

Interviewer: And it wasn't there.

Interviewee: Yeah, they came in, income closer to Wallace we got a middle ground where I showed you. They got in that fishing area.

Interviewer: You know where it goes where the fishes?

Interviewee: Groupers, better for area grouper, well more grouper many times. I don't know why? You don't see any snapper in red tide. Damn, I don't know why they are faster or they move, red river he is lazy, well black river are real lazy. If you watch into the water bait get in front him. He looks at him like especially summertime he would go over and he chew [01:16:00] on little bit, here backup it is okay. And he like back and chew little bit and snapper take it and run with it. Just take it and go but you know this snapper but now we got more down South this year, past few now. These anybody cares what's killing down there, are no longer grouper is been kill.

Interviewer: People say a lot of groupers are.... any really anything in water if that time like Alford Meyer they said everything was getting killed.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: When recent one.

Interviewer: Except the projects as you said...

Interviewee: He takes the auction at? Takes the auction rate? You know.

Interviewer: Even crabs this year.

Interviewee: Really...

Interviewer: *[Voice overlapping]* [01:16:48]

Interviewee: That means, that's means it's in shallow. Yeah, we had only crabs last year and this year. Had a poor season last year. Now we having poor, poor mud last two years of red vermilion and I don't know if that comes back from BP vermilion return bad. I don't but I'm not seeing.

Interviewer: Although we are saying Central Florida that r vermilion as affect by red tide turf?

Interviewee: Yep, they might. Down here, reaching down there pretty I think about BP got it. Because we had no river that we used to, I mean we used to have dock out here in the morning time we are catching few molly for a while that we're going catch them. We are not at the moment come up *[indiscernible]* [01:17:29] most of the mornings you got herd molly though middle out there if you want to put some middle stocking and there feed alpha of look into the but we had no fish has shown up this year. And the old timers, tell you one time and I had when I was 12 years probably third when I was get into business. He had *[indiscernible]* [01:17:56] Down founder doing fishing all about barefoot [01:18:00] and he stick nothing he wouldn't feel it but he told me something I would talk well he's getting it he don't remember, he don't remember

we don't even not said he told me if you quit working fish, they could come in. Kid that's all I learned because I've seen in my time that is much as truth as truth can be. We got less trout, less red fish, less Macro Spanish and here is net managed state of Florida. Now you go to Alabama where you can net fish, you know net fish, I bought more about fiddler rays, Spanish mackerel, skipjacks everything out of Alabama. So you can still fish out there and came to Florida. Catching couple of crap in Mississippi, but you can't hear but down the fish will tell you, they're not into the recreational fishing, they're not here. And that means something, you quit work in a fish that will come. And they should know that the history, they should know that the government should know that because that comes from the man that was raised in fishery industry that they caught fish they salt them overwater. They built which you see Eugene, they showed some pictures where they built these racks above the water and they salted the marlin. That's what they eat. They put in can set them up in trains, sent them above trains up North people they knew that what salt fish. They tell you take. So that's got a lot to do a lot of things to know is got them, they got no problem with fish because they still need fish. But the state of Florida they usually down the East Coast you still got Spanish mackerel. They got more Spanish mackerel bought them from there. They still net fishing there. [01:20:00] In the Gulf you don't, that's got a lot newer category in science and it seems funny it makes a lot of sense because I've seen it, never under same patterns over here when floating predators *[indiscernible]* [01:20:12]. And that's what he told me never forget I mean he told me, when he told worse you got lot of things stick with, a lot of things don't that will never I'll never seen that because I've seen it happen now to sub a lot fish Alabama. My trucks over to three times we buy fish, Rodney and I truck bound for lady fish skipjacks. These are getting their upbringing here and we'll freeze them and will send it California.

Interviewer: So when the *[indiscernible]* [01:20:44] in 92 and you had boats that were fishing with *[overlapping conversation]* [01:20:53] what were they targeting?

Interviewee: Vermilion, macros, fish like Spotted Sea trout in winter, red fin, red fish in sager bay it took and I was just really getting into the business you know bigger and I took about a minute and half out of my brothers and I'm not going to forget that yeah they bring down straight.

Interviewer: What did you that you switch to fishery or?

Interviewee: No, they are started by brother. I started as when I was 25

[Phone ringing] [01:22:00]

Interviewee: There's another gentleman here. He from Joe. Martin Mover, he catches, catches lot of shrimp from bait and modal fishes. He got destroyed in hurricane. They took care of families on the bay he watches whole retail market I mean wiped him out. He is that will see him. Very good person needs these from be very salty. He is 229-6224 phone in his business. In this sales 527-7640.

Interviewer: So let's talk about another important category which is like market, market changes throughout there and how they affected you?

Interviewee: Well, you want some change. You got to create your own market in I had to do that with buying trucks. I think I've got six or seven Platinum fighters now. I didn't go to Denver or I didn't go to New York. I from fright trucks, which keep it in line.

Interviewer: When was this?

Interviewee: This think is about seven years ago.

Interviewer: And what happen then with the market?

Interviewee: I went just market changed where truck for going and I didn't run too *[indiscernible]* [01:23:54]. Now I run truck to Orlando, Fort Lauderdale last week. I didn't used to do that. [01:24:00] But that had open up the markets. People when they take order from you, they will know when you're going be there. They won't say a Hey, where is freight from? So I had to buy my own trucks to get the markets. I didn't go to North Carolina, now going to North Carolina but I have enabled me to go to North Carolina and bring back flounder, I bring back shrimp, I bring back salmon that get out the west coast I need to truck there in Interstate, we cross docket. Bring back crap they need from North Carolina here. I had to, I've had to stay just right here and here to create enough money everywhere we've sent a truck now we try to put something on it. If it's not freight or mushrooms something. Public produce of Winn Dixie, buy fish from other people. And bring it back here Rock fair got scallops coming. Weekdays Thursday I have scallops here in tomorrow. I have Salomon here tomorrow night floundering while my truck coming back, I will sell. The sea scallops from New Bedford. I'll send him I'll send him fish cargo mobile. Some of them reordering and my truck is going there. So you just have to create in transportation is a big key to the secret industry now. You got to, go a lot of places that used to you didn't have to go to. Now you got to go, in fact I just bought two trucks that will here should or have been here. They're smaller trucks but they can go to Huntsville, Alabama into Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville, Tennessee shit. But I got to go. That's the biggest fastest growing restaurant see in the country now Nashville, yes. And lot of shells that I used to sale seashells I sold in Atlanta and Birmingham has moved down. [01:26:00] they calling me. So I bought 5550 dodge pickup trucks and put a 16 foot body only but I will let them go to is just strictly restaurants now I will not go to a wholesaler because you in this truck here is going to be 25 pounds salmon, 25 pounds swordfish, 25 pound grouper, 25 pounds snapper, five gallon water, two gallons of scallops, king crab craws I'm going to get a restaurant that's what I'm going have to do.

Interviewer: Diversity of product.

Interviewee: You got to change used to it, fill up a whole truck make two stops and we done with it. Neil I've already have sales when he graduated Harvard University. He's been working [on natural for me. So just things you got to change with it, you know, you got to change with it. And then you can sit back not change and lot of people that the age because everybody's in the same industries might get over. That we all, we know we've seen everything. David *[indiscernible]* [01:27:00] he seen his dad he was in. He's seen the times change everybody that's in it have seen the change. He's good. He's on cigar minnow snapper committee. So he is very knowledgeable. You see him on the Council.

Interviewer: Well what happened on yesterday?

Interviewee: Again.

Interviewer: *[indiscernible]* [01:27:22]

Interviewee: Okay. David forget it. He knows a lot about him, made him argue we followed bait and when you make up, I call his New York forum. He picks up some of my in New Orleans called me. We work together used to 10 years ago, hell know we work together. Now. You better work together when we got business. Yeah, we used to *[indiscernible]* [01:27:44] you didn't, you didn't.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Someone, when did you guys started working together? Go head.

Interviewee: *[Phone conversation]* [01:28:00] No, we didn't work together. Hell no, oh son.

Interviewer: What was it like then?

Interviewee: It was tough.

Interviewer: It was competitive like...

Interviewee: It was red *[indiscernible]* [01:28:41]. There's a lot of others, there's quite a few of us out there. And it was you didn't you know everybody had a private customers stuck in a hole somewhere that you had it he didn't know about. He had something I didn't know about. So we all have a little bit of niche. And you didn't come he didn't come over my fish outside, so how to get his fish out. We do socialize, we go to meet you sit in his corner sit, in my corner, we go out to dinner I'm talking about I mean let's girl out of them. Just the nature of the beef in the beef business like Sysco and US Foods. They don't socialize. They are do this right here. And it when see the first freight coming when I'm in business about seven years ago about six years ago, things got tough. We didn't know the freight company got in so and Net Freight Miller C never got out of it. I bought my first tractor trailer started my own fish up to New York, and already have smaller truck filling Birmingham, Atlanta. But nobody else [01:30:00] put fish on me. We're going to put it on a guy *[indiscernible]* [01:30:04] I had about two years ago he went out of business. And man they hate calling me, shit they hate calling me but we already knew is shrimp down so much we knew we are about some fish and then one of the seeker are gone. Now my truck leaves here Friday night and goes to Alabama and starts picking up fish grab me over there, in my truck stops in Cortez down there picking a fish Friday bottle morning to meet there on the Saturday and we all and I got David's fish, I have Harvard Ox fish, I got Ryan's fish and Bascule. I got Karen Bails fish, I got Madeira beach fish, and I got everybody's fish. I don't care. I just decide because when you didn't realized how bad it was getting if I want to do the business. They've asked me to stay in and I didn't notice a headache for me now. It's the biggest headache I had to hire more driving buying more trucks. But this industry needed it. This industry falling because we didn't have truck, you didn't even trucking your product, you don't have business and nobody won't get in, it's a tough, tough business. That's tougher trucking is tougher than catching them. I'm not kidding. It is tough, tough. The margins real thin and real narrow to margins. This fields have truck high insurances amount. You got billboards hit by big truck soon. You got insurance companies coming after us, lawyers coming after us because they finder bender. But now this whole parking lot in this fish has to be loaded Saturday night. It would be three we drive them. Something going here, something going. And the import out of Mexico is [01:32:00] went down considerably based on fish in their waters they have been to

Mexico three times in the last four months. I don't buy fish I never had been a big Mexican guy. I'd go down here I knew some people's Americans down there. They have their own fishery. Maybe fit but again 600 bucks. He will cross got basket what's they have and you're seeing that market. It amazed me now they optimist fishing down there. But they've heard their fishery. Now our Nashville fishes with their about four or five years ago and start helping them they close two months out of the year now to try to bring it back and they have their own size catch it all small fish course, because it is as soon as what organic is done or size limits and things because you catch a small fish you even go in at one time you won't get out of there ain't you don't waste your bait because bait expensive you go home, somewhere else. So size limit is really helped our fishery come back to where it is herd because they catch one in threes. We don't even touch one in three. We can't bring them. We can't bring them in, we got size 24 see black river is 24 inches this year for commercial, and 18 inches on raven I mean I have to say I'm not going brown nails. Neil's happen to sell on. They have done some things you don't like but they've done some things you do like but going back again to the council they've made it, they've made us job to I don't want this trucking business. I'm promise you. My phone starts ringing when my phone rings past midnight damn problem. And I cried create my phone rings, either truck broke down, trucks running late, something's happened.[01:34:00] And my phone rings overnight and my phone from New York now says I'm in the business they start waking me up around 4: 0 I want to know what's going on. So my lifestyle has changed a lot to where now I don't sleep you know like you used to because I have to be on the phone manage these trucks, you can take your dispatch because his wife don't want my phone ringing 4'o clock in the morning. So it's changed but I had to keep this industry trucking industry to make this continue to get our fish out in the market all the markets. I like to sell the whole foods you go to third outage. I just got through my third outage that's where you see my place pretty for fish house. My fish houses brag my fish is pretty clean. I good but I had to go to a third order every year wants here. It cost me around \$3,000 to have this private company. I had to come out of my end of this year and then this next year I had to swapping use the same company twice company out of California fly over here have to pay a fair price and when they get on the plane here and they usually cost me \$3000 to \$5000 and my facility expected but if I will say a whole foods or Publix I have third audit. That's what I have to do. So that is just another way that business could use to. I wouldn't waste that kind of money on down I got have a \$5 million umbrella insurance and I wouldn't buy me another insurance policy to sell these companies but if I want to sell if I want to sell them seafood I got to do that. If not, I got to sell to the New York market get my ass whipped as anchovy. So I've had to develop new ways to market my fish, marketing on the internet and Facebook to my retail market and put another retail market on the beach to [01:36:00] just put it out there. I mean, internet is great tool. We started we look at it FedEx is meeting with FedEx here in about two weeks. They kind of work a process then you come and pick up FedEx every day and ship it overnight shipping kind of give me a rate where it is affordable, found some goal to hub, going directly to the customer, not retail marketing directed to the house. So that's what, we have to find. My oldest son do that they have focus more on that because he went work for Sysco and had work for Sysco for two years to learn the sales and all of it. And he'll be back. He works here on the weekend can be back here in October, full time. But he's got a lot of experience from and they don't dominate because our sale Sysco, they knew what he was doing. He settled him too. So you just got to change. That's it.

Interviewer: So just I don't want and a little bit interview towards the end now, if you I will ask you to reflect a little bit on your career and your time in the industry and tell me there's something you would have liked to have done differently perhaps?

Interviewee: I don't have any regrets. The only thing that I have regrets is the council. Sometimes you would leave the counsel, and you wouldn't know if he's going to be in business or not or the ruling would be would, I went Austin, Texas. A guy from Texas help me I'm trying to think of his name I don't know from a gag group. They would found put us out of business. And there were Bob General Tom has been therefore it is, and I got they didn't tell them, Bob Jones don't has it [01:38:00] but I talking from the heart and we got it passed by one boat. In that Council, when you got people that your life is in their hand, it is all for political reason. It'll age you, it won't stretch you to a point, our finances you got air plane financed up here. And you don't know is there's always, yeah there's no, there's no DIT for commercial fishermen is going to be there. There's no, there's no guarantee that's the only thing that I regret of not getting in us not getting all the natural resource like the farmers. We didn't find now we just in the last two weeks are now coming together with some people in going to see our congressmen, our senators Predue Georgia East Governor for Georgia. He's over natural resource for the President now. And we've already talked to him. We going to meet some people, we don't want nothing that we don't deserve. We need some help. So we can relax and know we got a future, some hail instead of sitting here going broke or not making no money because of natural resources disasters. It's like floods, they hit the farmers they hit, they hit everybody even us. But it's kind of our fault. We have like fisherman as never been able to come together. Always been we don't want this, I want that, I going to do this, I'm going to do that and I see that in the council meetings. We could never get it right on the same damn page. Never who I don't care. I'm a person that will compromise in and try to work it will go into his office. [01:40:00] before we leave now, we not eat lunch here but we don't come out and go solve his problem. That's my belief, that's my philosophy on that, on anything there is a problem, let's fix it. Let's try for two year, I don't we go back to the drawing board, try something else. But the council, these guys is retired insurance brokers, top lawyers. That's only counsel. They retire they get no chance, they don't give a shit. Whatever the CCA Coastal Conservation Association were in this industry called a Texas like say if it takes us personally we got to be President. Shit we wouldn't be in the business they put us out of business. Not being there. But they keep us guessing. The only thing we got solid is IFQ program that's not a guarantee they won't take that in. I'm in debt now and I'm going to bottle these big fish. I had to borrow some money put some property up in my personal name, personal guarantee. And that he's been stepping out there. You take a chance no I have been taking a chance on the laughing ball here cause of it. All mother brothers got here. I got to hear a word. Certainly I'm worried about I'm worried about it. I'm serious. I'm worried about I'm worried about my boys future, I took grandsons to movies night before. I'm looking at AMG he's five years old. My granddaughter and I'm sitting there I'm worried about our future. But the council is got to be fixed. It's got to be if it was corrected. The whole fishery for the recreational, for high commercial would be a better and would help many Neil. Neil for what they do is that you got a group of girls and a couple guys that do all the research for other council members. These summer going have been pulling up stuff be 25 pages. [01:42:00] And you can't read and it is baloney. Baloney I'm talking about but in time our people work for Neil's over stupidity is mostly Texas guys who does it because they try to disband everything Neil done to us. They're not good people they know how to say that, because there's enough resource out there and it

Texas was scared they would do what the state of Florida is doing everybody else is doing. They would follow the guidelines but they don't, they fish 11 months on the year, four fish per person but everybody else is in God's hands, no not Texas, we are bigger and Texas we're going do it what wanted to do and that's what they do. And that's what they doing, there that for you in the industry you know that. That's what's got me to the council that we people don't want to go any more. Calls is just browbeat each other enough is being done. Black say Amsterdam done a good job. They give him B plus rating for what they've done last 20 years. I mean, they've done some a base mistakes. They've learned from their mistakes. They've done some good and done some bad but in overall, I don't know in their sights, you know, but I think they need get out and feel more and talk to people of get does it. We take observers on boats. That guys just drove they don't need to be on the boat I can't get that good observers, they need special turbo's are mandated and I got no race boats I got some coming up, which I don't want to take boat, but they need to use the science and use it correctly. And then you would find 95% of people in this industry, wanted they have or they were not because left in it, [01:44:00] because there's not many people left in it. This is not an abundance of people left in this business and strong has survived this was what I'm saying. They found other avenues like David, David's big in the king mackerel. I chose to back off King mackerel I want to turn the boats? I want different route. So David is doing it too and I'm not messing of the kings that he really needs that and I need it and happen to better understand. I know I'm little turn king. If I need to truck run for him from Louisiana, we hold his fish to New York I know what king mackerel, New York. He won't get the truck and he misses. I hold he is getting mackerel. So we all work together now Karen Bail fish, plus our bond fish from her name. So it's all working peoples trying to work together decide to go and try to get us moved, we been get out of commerce department. We needs some payout. But David felt they able to stay. I want Neil's, we will Neil's. We need to buy and we need to sell, we need to do all rolling stock assessment. If you want to go on a boat, here come up here and we'll put you on -- air condition boat and show you teach her anything, we will go out by the day two or three days, I don't care what it takes, we will take any body fishing that wants to go and learn or to do some. See one time, David was doing stock assessment. I was offshore fishing, and I was checking a boat on regional it's kind of odd and I was out there. They had the staying in the boat out of Mississippi. They were sitting in trout in the middle of no man's land. I just happen to see it. I made a phone call. Let's see what the hell this boat set a trap and 20 tubes in and around these numbers about two hours later, [01:46:00] that boat drawn it's traps going on where he's supposed to be setting his traps where there is grouper. Now that was some of the bad things, they know exactly when you can tell them that they know exactly the phone call, I can tell you who took the phone call, and I have a cell number. And they were doing some research, not the correct way. They made the numbers look this way because of recreational and the CCA. CCA controls the council as they all CCA. Lawyer they just put in Texas CCA as where CCS where CCA conference Texas. That knew everybody knows about that and they remain strong. They are strong, they are powerful. And that's...

Interviewer: Well CCA, they know what CCA?

Interviewer 1: No, obviously I'm honestly I'm not that familiar with how the councils were founded and who sits on them. I hadn't realized the composition was so not Fisher.

Interviewee: What did you today just go everybody the council. They would tell me same thing I mean we used to go.

Interviewer: What is CCA?

Interviewee: CCA is Coastal Conservation Association. It's got little redfish everybody's bumper.

Interviewer: Is that, what I the club?

Interviewee: They just to be big club, fishing club. It's world's largest is made by most of doctors and lawyers that will split it by on the business. In fact the last meeting I spoke at they did like what I said. I said, Houston and Texas I don't know but kind of they ain't too smaller, but as Texas change the rules on separate file, here by looking kind of head went down and I said, didn't they take since commercial fishing 20 years ago has been out of it. Did all drop the bag from 20 to 10? That makes recreational call down separate trial. [01:48:00] He wouldn't answer me and he put under by CCA calls that they strong. As per New York farm they are strongest member of council. Every council numbers on there is been pushed by CCA. The lawyer just got total CCA. Yeah. And that has got a lot of lot of reasoning. And they doing it, they're not doing it for the resource. They do it for personal gain. So I've talked with people about this now maybe we shouldn't be doing that. So whether you don't know what there only 90% of people 90,000 people only knew what it means or what they're doing. But these lawyers and doctors and insurance company on high power people is there a little niche in they got enough members that they got the power from politicians. We went up cook for Commerce Department, me and David. Me and David and Louie Destin from *[indiscernible]* [01:49:09] and riding about from all over in seafood industry from Northeast or which companies lasted companies we could be probably around 600 people its Commerce Department. We do it every year to try to educate them try to do the deed. We do it every year, we fry the fish up there we fly *[indiscernible]* [01:49:27] ship out there and we do it every year. We'll see how we do, trying to trying to do more fly.

Interviewer: One more question, because I remember when you were talking can you tell me a little bit about your relationship with your fisherman like how it changed from there's briefly?

Interviewee: Well, where the fish we got now is like I'm not different, I'm running I don't know I'll call them both ride call. [01:50:00] And if you go run more by boat, you got to be married.

Interviewer: You got to be married?

Interviewee: Yeah married, Captain has got to be married.

Interviewer: We got more responsibility. He's going out there, going here. Mama, mama what the paycheck. She's got a car she's got a house. A lot of people put anybody now the crews they do what they want to. They have their own crews I know everything I want all my Captain's is married. And in I've have lost a couple good captains that I didn't have thought and they kind of rebels they will run wild. But a captain is married. He's going go out there and he's going to produce, he's serious about his job. He's not going do nothing illegal. He's not won't fish where he shouldn't be fishing. He's going play by the rules and pics that I couldn't do that but I've done it and I've been very successful with it. They said I couldn't have no alcohol in my dock. He had no problem. They play stick my rules. I don't have alcohol in my boat or my dock. It's just rule out going. I'm hard ass, don't get me wrong. Neil's know that I used to be a real hard ass. I'm brought out in my age. Now raising hell doesn't get much done, we sit and talk about you get some don't. Me and David just bangs we will be sticking out with yeah. and we're friends we

talk, we talk about every day you know and try to help each other if I'm going tied up for some snapper, if he in the time I'll share with him. We will just pay return back. So it is same rush, horse street, seafood same way. And you say you going New Orlando meeting?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I don't know but when I walk in act like you don't know me. Are you going?

Interviewer: No, I'm not going this time, but I've been to the Atlantic one. I was like, it was my first year [01:52:00] working there so I didn't understand what was happening?

Interviewee: It's very complex. It's not easy.

Interviewer: Every time it was like what are these people I don't understand what are they talking about? It was like...

Interviewee: It's is more than...

Interviewer: But I will there some *[overlapping conversation]* [01:52:16]

Interviewee: I wished you go to that. If you don't stay in it, you need to go. And you out here lot of.... you watch it on TV, you kind of float off a little bit. You don't catch every word. When you are having little cup of coffee walk away. But you're there. You get a coffee in the room, they don't have you outside, you sit there and you can listen, and you pay attention and you'll be able to be there sometimes we not, we can't be there because you are with Neil's. See we can't be leave there Mondays as closed doors, talks about life. Yeah, it is closed but you could be in there. So you know it'll but it's I will be there because I like to go at once. So I'm just to kind of keep face and I'll take my oldest son I'm sure he'll be able to go to teach him in maybe with our governor we can get some governors and I'm working on Alabama governor because I'm my ex-wife from Birmingham. So I know a lot of people in Alabama so I'm working. I'm working she's a female governor. She's very good. I'm working to some people up there for her to get the right person and not being biased just get the right person so we can get something done. That's all.

Interviewer: Somebody who knows what red snapper are?

Interviewee: You are right.

Interviewer: *[overlapping conversation]* [01:53:37]

Interviewee: Really, really you did see some of the people own it for vacation looking. And you drinks are paid, first class motel, in a city for giving vacation. Everything recorded you get to and hang out and get always mom.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. I'll stop the recording now.